



The much awaited date of June 13th having finally arrived, it was time to pack, take a last look at the check-list to make sure nothing was missing and head out for the João Paulo II airport to board the last Sata flight for Lisbon in the company of the Paz Ferreira couple. Despite the careful preparation of this new tour through Europe, we took advantage of the flight time to arrange the final details of this promising journey, which would take us on a 4 day round of the Austrian Alps, in a mountain route kindly prepared and given to us by my colleague Stephan Rissi, from the FJR Austria group.

Since departure from Lisbon was scheduled for Thursday, July 15th, I used the morning of our first day in the city for the usual last minute shopping at Motoponto, followed by a cheerful lunch with the 26 Azorean bikers who had arrived in Lisbon on that day to take part in the 8th Portugal de Lés-a-Lés.

In the afternoon, and in spite of the rain that fell over Lisbon, while the São Miguel Motorcycle Club headed north, towards Barcelos, where the rally would begin on the following day, I went to the facilities of Yamaha Motor Portugal, in Alfragide, to test-drive the new 2006 Yamaha FJR 1300/A and also to test the new AS model (electronic clutch). On the way there, in the IC 19, I ran into my friend Gonçalo Ferreira, from the FJR 1300 PT Group, who had arranged to meet me in Alfragide along with a surprise friend. While I was chatting with Gonçalo, already at the Yamaha Portugal facilities, I was pleased to see arrive my illustrious biker friend and former deputy Rodrigo Ribeiro, in his faithful Yamaha Tenéré. The chat was so pleasant and lively, namely about the last great national pro-motorcycling demonstration, of which Rodrigo had been one of the organizers, that I almost forgot the reason that had taken me to Alfragide – test-driving the FJR. Finally, I tested the two new FJR's: first the conventional model, with a clutch, and then the new FJR AS, with no clutch. If the first test had already left me with a strongly positive impression as to the great evolution registered in the 2006 model, after the first rather confused minutes of not knowing which of the gear selectors to choose – whether the new hand system or the conventional foot operated one – the new AS quickly made me yield to the charms of the new YCCS technology. So much so that, upon returning to the Yamaha Portugal facilities, I said: "this is the one I'll be buying when I return from Austria!" After having a few last words with the salesman and saying goodbye to my pleasant friends, Gonçalo and Rodrigo, I returned to Lisbon, always under light and uncomfortable rain. After the traditional pre-journey family dinner, at the "Marisqueira Ramiro", it was time to return to our children's apartments to finish packing and to try and get enough sleep so that we could be in good shape for another long adventure through Europe.

#### **Day 1 – 15.06.2006 – Lisbon / Toledo – 401 mi (645 km)**

Thursday morning was clouded but with a mild temperature. Nothing better for the beginning of our journey, around 10:30, towards Toledo.

With our GPS's duly programmed and after saying goodbye to our children, we headed for Badajoz, at a leisurely pace, since this year's trip had shorter stages, for a lesser physical effort. Still, after having lunch, at around 15:00, near Madrid, and when we were already on

the road to Toledo, which was under repair work (an almost constant sight on this year's journey), I was almost betrayed by the weariness. On a tight turn, where the road went from two to four tracks, divided by a central rail, I misread the GPS and I would've been going against the traffic were it not for the timely horn of a truck driver that alerted me to the huge mistake I was about to make. Even so, I was forced to break hard, in a dirty area, and only the ABS prevented us from bumping against the central rail. Still not completely recovered from the scare, we arrived in Toledo around 18.00, in time to settle in the hotel Pintor El Greco, located in a rather central area of this beautiful medieval Spanish city. Before dinner there was some heavy rainfall over the city, accompanied by a thunderstorm. Little did we know this would be another warning sign for what this year's journey had in store for us. After the storm cleared, we went on a sightseeing walk across this magnificent city, which was festooned for the celebration of "Corpus Christi", with beautiful bedspreads and magnificent floral arrangements decking the window sills, along the streets through which, during the day, the procession had passed. Our first day into this journey couldn't have had a more pleasant finale.

### **Day 2 – 16.06.2006 – Toledo / Barcelona – 478 mi (769 km)**

The morning of the second day was radiant and we took advantage of it to see a bit more of the fair city of Toledo, before heading out to Barcelona, around 10:00, going through Cuenca and Valencia. Up until lunchtime and under a radiant sun, we crossed the beautiful Cuenca range, in a mountain road with excellent pavement and dazzling vistas over the central Spanish plateau. Near Teruel, where we stopped for lunch, the weather changed suddenly. The sky darkened quickly and after we'd had lunch and were back on the road, we were surprised by heavy rain that caused us to lose sight of each other as we were leaving the city. It was nothing the GPS couldn't solve and we ended up meeting further ahead, under a bridge where I had taken cover, on the way to the highway for Valencia. Further ahead, we once again came upon road works and an endless white trace and heavy police control forced us to follow a long and slow line of vehicles almost all the way to Valencia.

It was then that one of the visor holders on Elisa's helmet broke, one of the sides of the visor coming loose. On our next stop, I called our son, André, so he would search the Web for Schuberth retailers in Barcelona, but we didn't arrive in time to find the stores open. Since the following day was a Saturday, we would only be able to solve the problem in Italy. Thanks to the improvement in the weather conditions and the excellent highway between Valencia and Barcelona, we managed to make up for lost time and were in Barcelona by 18:30. There, waiting for us, were my sister, Ani, and my brother-in-law, Manuel Carreiro, who had left Lisbon a few days before in their Honda Goldwing GL 1800, to enjoy a few days in the beaches of Southern Spain. It was only thanks to luck and the pleasantness of the manager of the Ibis Barcelona Cornellà that we were able to get rooms in the same hotel. I didn't remember that, on that weekend, the MotoGP of Catalonia took place, until we were overtaken by hundreds of bikers, many of them travelling at high speed, in the highway between Valencia and Barcelona. By then, it was too late to make reservations. After an invigorating shower we all went out for dinner in the centre of Barcelona, where we had an excellent paella and walked through the broad and crowded "ramblas" (avenues), enjoying the city's frantic nightlife.

### **Day 3 – 17.06.2006 – Visiting Barcelona**

As planned, this Saturday was occupied with a lengthy bus tour of the beautiful and spacious city of Barcelona, through which we had already passed several times but which we had never properly visited. A radiant but not too hot sun made even more pleasant the visit among the wide avenues and the majestic monuments of Barcelona, many of each built by the famous architect Antoni Gaudí, for instance the unfinished Cathedral of The Sacred Family. It was a wonderful day.

Upon returning to the hotel, we had dinner and waited until close to midnight before heading

out to the harbour and boarding the luxurious "Grandi Navi Veloci" ferry headed for Italy, more precisely for the harbour of Genoa.

#### **Day 4 – 18.06.2006 – Ferry trip through the Mediterranean**

This day was entirely spent aboard the ferry, "Fantastic", enjoying the swimming pool and the tanning beds. In spite of some wind, the day was magnificent, allowing us a comfortable and peaceful trip to Genoa, where we went ashore around 20:00 of this Sunday.

We programmed our GPS's and headed for the Iris, a three star hotel, once again without having made any reservations. This time, though, we were not as lucky as in Barcelona. The hotel was full and all we could do was to look for another hotel. We ended up staying at a four star hotel of the "AC Hotels" chain, by the highway, at a lower rate. Sometimes, it's all for the best! Since it was getting late and the hotel's restaurant was closing, the receptionist directed us to a very homely pub in a narrow close to the hotel. Dinner was served on the covered terrace of the "O'Connors Pub", in a rather cool and informal ambiance, typically Italian, to which was added the infectious good disposition and charm of the waiters, who insisted in filling the glasses with a delicious "Chianti" wine. It was a party marked by joy and happiness!

#### **Day 5 – 19.06.2006 – Heading for the Austrian Alps – 291 mi (468 km)**

After a well-slept night at "AC Hotel Genova", it was to head into Austria, more precisely for Dornbirn, the picturesque hometown of our friend Stephan Rissi, starting point for our much awaited journey through the Austrian Alps. The day was radiant and, around 10:30, we were leaving for Milan, the first stop of the day, so we could finally acquire a new visor for Elisa's helmet. So we did and, around noon, my Garmin left us right outside a Schuberth distributor, on the outskirts of Milan.

The visor replaced, we took once again to the road for Dornbirn, which forced us to cross part of Switzerland. Surprisingly and for the first time, we were forced to acquire, at the border, a 30 euro stamp for circulation within the country, an exorbitant price considering the few kilometres we travelled through Switzerland. Furthermore, close to the Austrian border, we came upon another ample stretch of road under repairs, with huge lines of traffic, mostly buses and trucks, which we overtook in succession until we were free of the infernal and polluting jam. Around 14:30, already in Austrian territory, we stopped for lunch at the first city we came upon. We were quite hungry but, unfortunately, we could only get some sandwiches and cakes at a cafeteria because, in Austria, outside the larger cities, restaurants close early. Back on the road, we arrived in Dornbirn around 16:30, going directly to the "Berghof Fetz Hotel", a small family-run mountain hotel, on the outskirts of the city, that had been recommended by our Greek colleague John Salakidis, also visiting the Austrian Alps, and who would join us and Stephan Rissi for dinner that night. While we were awaiting his arrival, we made use of the time to get some rest, delighting in the tranquil scenario that the hotel's generous balconies, profusely decked with flowers, offered of the mountains. We could've hardly found a better calling card to begin our alpine journey!

John Salakidis and his wife, in their grey FJR, didn't arrive at the hotel until 20:00, also coming from Switzerland and, around 21:00, we all met with Stephan Rissi – the nicest of people – for an excellent and lively dinner at an Asian restaurant in then centre of Dornbirn, our common passion for motorcycles being the main topic of conversation. I also ended up accepting Stephen's kind invitation to join the "2007 Austria Tour", of which he is a co-organizer, in the company of other 154 FJR-owning bikers from 10 European countries. The meeting, to be held in June of next year, promises to be a great celebration!

Having said our goodbyes, we returned to the hotel, eager to begin, on the following day, our long awaited tour of the Alps.

#### **Day 6 – 20.06.2006 – Beginning our Alpine journey – 303 mi (487 km)**

After a delicious home-cooked breakfast, served in the terrace of the hotel's restaurant, we left Dornbirn around 9:30, headed for the Alps, thus beginning the 4 day and about 1.243 mi

(2.000 km) course, kindly prepared by Stephan Rissi. The weather was magnificent, with mild temperatures, ideal for motorcycling. After refuelling the motorcycles, checking the tires and the oil, and programming our route in the GPS, as we were leaving Dornbirn, we immediately came upon magnificent and sometimes narrow mountain roads, that were surrounded by luxurious vegetation and that, once in a while, crossed small rural villages, well-preserved and flowery, always built around a chapel or church, with high and beautiful gothic towers, lost among sumptuous valleys and mountains, in a breathtaking landscape, that became increasingly beautiful and imposing with the altitude. Around this time, we were crossing paths with several other bikers, that were equally touring the Alps and whom we would invariably salute the biker way.

Since the daily stage went little over the 280 mi (450 km), we had enough time to stop at the more interesting places and enjoy the majestic alpine landscape, with snow covered summits and mountainsides intersected by graceful waterfalls that would swell the many small rivers that we crossed by passing over beautiful traditional bridges, many of which still built out of wood.

Already knowing about the meal times in Austria, we stopped shortly after noon at a roadside restaurant, where we exchanged our first feelings about the trip. We had only travelled the first 124 mi (200 km) and we were already entranced with the beauty of the Alps, which surpassed our best expectations!

Unfortunately, the afternoon wasn't as pleasant, once again due to roadwork, namely in a tunnel that crossed an enormous mountain range, which we painstakingly managed to go around with the help of the GPS, forcing us none the less to an incursion through Southern Germany, in a total of 62 additional miles (100 km) that made us waste a lot of time. Because of this, we decided, mid-afternoon, to follow the highway directly to our destiny for the day, passing near Innsbruck, where we had already been in 2002. Already on the road that would take us to "Pension Schiederhof", in Mittersill, we stopped for dinner in a small mountain town. Back on the road, night was falling when a thunderstorm and heavy rainfall surprised us. We were not too startled since we had been warned about these sudden weather changes in the Alps by a group of Italian bikers that had boarded with us in Barcelona. When they heard that the Alps were our destination, to our dismay, they said: "oh, you should take your rain suites..."

Having arrived at our destination, and after an invigorating shower, we spent the remaining of the evening fraternizing, in the common room, with the pleasant family of farmers, owners of the inn, that Stephan had indicated to us, as well as with two other German bikers, son and father-in-law, who were also touring the Alps.

### **Day 7 – 21.06.2006 – 2nd day in the Alps, passing through Italy – 306 mi (493 km)**

A radiant sun prompted us to an early rise and, after an excellent homemade breakfast, we still had time to hose our motorcycles in the farm's stables, kindly made available by the owner.

The motorcycles were once again shining as new when we left the inn, among friendly waves of goodbye.

We continued following the fabulous alpine mountain route, mostly made between the 3.300 and the 6.500 feet (1.000 and the 2.000 metres) of altitude, stopping several times to enjoy the beautiful scenery and register it with our cameras. Of the six of us, only my sister and my brother-in-law, Manuel Carreiro, had already toured the Austrian Alps, some ten years before, and even so they couldn't stop praising such a superb and imposing panorama.

We arrived at the Italian border close to noon. After the border, we rode down another beautiful mountain road, with a wonderful tar coverage, that wound around a huge escarp and that took us to the picturesque Italian town of Cleulis. It was the first time I crossed tunnels, dug in the escarp, curbing almost 180 °. I made sure to enjoy the adrenaline rush to its full extent ...

That day we had lunch at the La Perla hotel, Italian "retro" style, in the spectacular Northern Italy alpine region – the Dolomites. It was during this lunch that I decided to order the new FJR AS, and I ended up closing the deal, over the phone, with the Yamaha dealership in Ponta Delgada.

Back on the road and due to a misinterpretation of the GPS, we ended up leaving our planned course and, again due to works in a tunnel had to return to Austria via the same road we had

used that morning, later re-entering our initially planned route, after crossing the Italian border. On our way to the peaceful town of "Weissensee", where we would spend this second night, we started seeing signs indicating the mountain range of "Grossglockner", one of our trip's high points, the greatness of which we could already perceive in the horizon, further raising the expectations for the third day of our journey through the Alps.

At the end of the afternoon, we arrived to the small town of "Weissensee", which overlooked a vast and tranquil lake of the same name, just in time to choose an hotel and get settled in. We ended up choosing the "Hotel Kolbitsch", another small and welcoming three stars family-run unit, quite comfortable and with an excellent price (25 euros per person for each night, breakfast included), with the room's balconies facing the lake, that faithfully mirrored the outlines of the surrounding mountains. Unquestionably a dreamy place that deserved a more prolonged stay, were it not for the somewhat tight schedule of our journey.

Since it was a day to be marked, we celebrated the birthday of my brother-in-law, Manuel Carreiro, with a dinner in the terrace of the hotel that also overlooked the lake. We sang "Happy Birthday", and after he blew out the candle on the improvised birthday cake, the evening stretched out pleasantly.

### **Day 8 – 22.06.2006 – 3rd day in the Alps – the "Grossglockner" – 167 mi (268 km)**

Since the expectation over visiting the famous "Grossglockner" was great, we rose early, taking advantage of another radiant morning for a walk around lake "Weissensee", strolling by the many wooden piers, that had little rowing boats anchored, reflected in the clear water. It was an extremely calm and quiet scenery interrupted only by the occasional fish jumping out of the water. By this time, we had completely surrendered to the incomparable beauty of Austria, as well as to the great hospitality, warmth and civic spirit of its people. Still, it was time to return to the hotel for breakfast and to head, finally for "Grossglockner", where we arrived at around 10:30. On the way, we crossed paths with many other bikers, equally headed for one of the most beautiful European shrines of motorcycle tourism, also known as "The Motorcycle Heaven".

After paying a toll of 17 € and receiving a set of maps, leaflets and even stickers, we made our way to the top of the mountain, without stopping for a coffee at one of the many bars and restaurants, all with the yellow plaque "Bikers welcome". As we were driving up the mountain, along many other bikers, that almost made us feel like we were in a meeting, the snowy patches that speckled the mountain became larger, although the temperature was pleasant and the air clear and fresh. Following the direction in the map we'd been given, we headed first for the "Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe Visitors Centre", with many stops along the way to enjoy the fabulous mountain scenery, among breathtaking cascades, lakes and streams.

When we arrived at the "Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe Visitors", we parked our motorcycles in the huge lot, where there were already hundreds of others, to enjoy the majestic view over the highest mountain in Austria, the "Grossglockner", with 12.460 feet (3.798 metres) of altitude, where, through one of the slopes, runs the longest and most imposing glacier in the Alps, the "Pazterze". A dazzling and unique landscape, which we enjoyed for a long time. We were back on the road, headed for "Hochtor", at 8.212 feet (2.503 metres) of altitude, one of the highest parts of the route, from where we once again enjoyed the magnificent view over the surrounding mountain range, as we wound our way through one of the most beautiful roads we'd ever crossed, an with excellent pavement too!

Next, we drove by the beautiful lake of "Fuscher" and stopped once again at "Edelweißspitze", the highest point of this alpine circuit, at 8.435 feet (2.571 metres) of altitude.

Satisfied with so much beauty, I took advantage of the winding descent to the "Grossglockner" east tollgate to ride with some of the faster bikers. Once we had arrived at the tollgate, we had to wait some time for our travelling companions, who had chosen to make the descent at a more tranquil pace...

We had lunch in the terrace of a pleasant restaurant, located in Ferleiten, just after the tollgate, with a superb view over the mountain. On that day, it was Carlos Paz Ferreira's turn to close a deal with Motomil on the purchase of a new BMW K1200GT, he had been admiring for a long time, in exchange for his Honda Pan-European ST 1300. Our tour of the Alps was beginning to seem more like a business trip than a leisurely journey ...

As we were finishing our lunch, the "Grossglockner" mountain fell under the cover of dense black clouds, a sign familiar to the waiter who advised us to get back on the road and attempt to escape the bad weather that was approaching rapidly. We only managed to go a few kilometres, towards Hallstatt, the village where we would spend the night, before a diluvian rain fell upon us. We tried to take cover under a bridge but, since the copious rain would not stop, we had to proceed to Hallstatt under the most difficult weather conditions we had ever faced. We could barely see the road and our suits were completely drenched. The rain was so intense that, due to the spray projected by a large truck, the Paz Ferreira couple lost sight of us, having to resort to the GPS to find the way to Hallstatt, a narrow and winding road, in the midst of a dense forest, which made the thunderstorm even more frightening. In one of the many curbs, my FJR left the road, going into a pasture. It took an emergency manoeuvre and a bit of luck with it to get the motorcycle back on the road without falling. Still, the motorcycle kept behaving in a rather strange way, over the wet tarmac, its back tire slipping repeatedly. I thought it was Elisa moving in the back seat that was causing it, but she insisted that she was still ...

Finally arriving at Hallstatt, completely drenched as we were, all we wanted was to find lodgings quickly. We stopped at the first fuel station we could find and asked the employee to direct us to the nearest lodgings. After a few phone calls, we ended up staying at a nearby inn, the "Gasthof Hirlatz", that had only one fault: an unbearable smell of fritters (I had enough of those Austrian breaded steaks!). But, what we really wanted was to take off our wet suits and boots, and recover from that troubled afternoon. The rain was so intense that the ABS system of the Honda Goldwing stopped working, water got into one of the trunks of the Pan European and even my sister's cell phone, stored inside her coat was beyond repair. Since the rain kept falling heavily into the night and the weather reports we saw on the web were anything but favourable, we started equating the possibility of cancelling the last day of our tour of the Alps and avoid the bad weather, going through the south of Germany. Little did I know that, on the following day I would be forced, for other reasons to cut the journey short ...

#### **Day 9 – 23.06.2006 – Abandoning our journey through the Alps – 376 mi (605 km)**

On the following morning, it was a torment to put our gear back on. It was still damp, though it had been hanging in our balconies. While we were checking the motorcycles, I found out my rear tire was worn to the wires in an extension of about 20 centimetres. This explained, in the worst way possible, the strange behaviour the motorcycle had exhibited on the previous day. I had planned on substituting the tire upon our arrival in Ibiza, near the end of our trip, but the excesses committed on the fabulous alpine roads had left visible marks. Since I always put together a travel folder, which among other information includes the contacts of Yamaha dealerships on the areas I'll be travelling through, all it took was a phone call to Motorpoint, in the nearby city of Munich, for the tire replacement to be arranged.

Though the morning was dark, with some light rain, we still visited the historical centre of the magnificent ancient city of Hallstatt, located by the lake of the same name. It's a very beautiful city, a must see. Not even a few low clouds could spoil the dazzling panorama.

We headed for Munich, on the highway, at a moderate speed due to the condition my tire was in.

We arrived at Motorpoint, in the outskirts of Munich, close to noon, and had lunch while they replaced my rear tire, as well as that of Carlos Paz Ferreira's Pan-European, as a matter of caution, since it too showed clear signs of wear. In truth, these were the most expensive tires we ever paid for, due, naturally, to the need and the lack of opportunity. Still, we learnt our lesson!

In the afternoon, we followed the highway to the Austrian border, passing near Dornbirn, where we had started our alpine journey, then following to Switzerland and stopping, late afternoon, at the hotel Ibis in Rothrist, some 30 mi (48 km) away from Berne.

#### **Day 10 – 24.06.2006 – Return to Spain for some time on the beach – 656 mi (1.056 km)**

Still with the majestic scenery of the Alps etched into our retinas and surrendered to the kindness, hospitality and politeness of the Austrian people, it was time to head once again for

the Iberian peninsula for the usual week at the beach to end the holidays, again in Ibiza for the Paz Ferreira couple and us, and in the South of Spain for my sister and my brother-in-law, Manuel Carreiro.

Fortunately, the weather was fair, with a pleasant temperature, and that made it easier for us to cover several hundred kilometres, first headed for Perpignan, in the South of France. We then decided to stretch the day's journey to Barcelona, in a total of 656 mi (1.056 Km). The day was marked by an unexpected sidetracking at lunch time, caused by the intense weekend traffic in the French highways, so that the crew of the imposing Goldwing ate lunch alone, later meeting with the rest of us in a nearby service area; and also by a troubled arrival at the Ibis Hotel, in the outskirts of Barcelona, located near the "Circuit de Catalunya" which, because it had been recently built, was not yet marked in our GPS's. Nevertheless, after many twists and turns, we finally arrived at our destination for a well-earned rest.

### **Day 11 – 25.06.2006 – Headed for Ibiza and southern Spain – 245 mi (394 km)**

From Barcelona onward, and as it had happened already in the beginning of our journey, "the three magnificent" would go their separate ways. While the Paz Ferreira couple and we went to Valencia to board the 15:00 Acciona Transmediterranea ferry for Ibiza, my sister and my brother-in-law headed directly to the South of Spain.

After arriving in Ibiza, we crossed the island, towards Santo António, to stay at our favourite hotel in the island – the "Blau Park" hotel – which has an excellent rate, free covered parking and a splendid beach front location.

As it had been the rule, we once again came upon extensive road work, with a lot of police vigilance.

### **Days 12 to 17 – Sun, sea and beach in Ibiza**

These were another six excellent and relaxing days spent in this magnificent Mediterranean island that pleases us so much, not only for the beautiful welcoming beaches, but also for its cosmopolitan nightlife, both in the euphoric centre of Ibiza and in a recently constructed bar area, by the famous "Café del Mar", facing the sea, in Santo António, where you can enjoy excellent bars, with restaurant and swimming pools, and with direct access to the sea and nautical sports, allowing you to savour a fine dinner, having a flaming and romantic sunset as background, for instance at the Coastline Café.

In the city of Ibiza, dinner in the castle area and a daytime climb to the top of the walls, from which you can view practically the whole island, are a must.

Since we changed beaches nearly every day, we covered yet another 671 mi (1.080 km), which is quite a lot in an island with an area of merely 221 square miles (572,6 km<sup>2</sup>).

Since all that is good must come to an end, on Friday, June the 30th, it was time to pack once again and board the Baleària 20:00 ferry, for Denia, a harbour located at 62 mi (100 km) from Valencia, where we would spend the night before returning to Lisbon.

Except that, due to the "32nd America's Cup" and other events taking place in Valencia we could only find a hotel with vacancies at 2 in the morning: the Express By Holiday Inn Valencia-Bonaire, near the airport, on the way to Madrid.

### **Day 18 – 30.06.2006 – A marathon return to Lisbon – 610 mi (981 km)**

Since we wanted to be in Lisbon to watch the match between Portugal and England for the Football World Cup, we slept only 5 hours and, at 8 in the morning, we were already riding our motorcycles, on our way home. It was a hard, but not impossible, marathon, of about 620 mi (1.000 km), to be covered in less than 8 hours (considering the time difference between Spain and Portugal, which played in our favour).

The weather stayed fine, with a mild temperature, which made the return journey much easier. As it had been the hallmark of this journey, when we were reaching Madrid, we once again came upon roadwork, nothing a motorcycle couldn't overtake with a certain ease, but that did just the same slow down our progress. We stopped only for quickly refuels and for a few

"jámon" sandwiches, already in Estremadura, in a filthy roadside bar. The great quality of the Spanish "jámon" was the only thing it ...

We continued our marathon, with strong complaints from our passengers, who were getting tired from the intense rhythm we had imposed on our machines, that day. Once again, the motorcycles proved their great quality on the road, not registering any technical problems throughout the whole journey. We travelled 609 mi (980,6 km) in just 8:32 hours (7:22 hours driving), which corresponded to an effective average of 83 miles per hour (133 km/h). We finally crossed the Vasco da Gama Bridge at around 15:00, Lisbon time, arriving at the apartments, in Olaias, around 15:15, just in time to have a shower, after the usual family celebration of our arrival, and to watch the football match, as was our purpose. And it was certainly worth the effort watching the great victory of our national team over England!

On the following day, I could still find the energy to take part in the 3rd FJR 1300 PT lunch, that took place in Rio de Moinhos, in Alto Alentejo. I travelled another 220 mi (354 km) in the always pleasant and fun company of other 52 fellow FJR owners, thus closing with a golden key my memorable 2006 journey through Europe.

### **Statistics:**

**The best:** Visiting the "Grossglockner" mountain

**The worst:** Having to replace the rear tire

**Total miles:** 4.502 mi (including 671 mi in Ibiza)

**Total days:** 18

**Average Fuel Consumption:** 38,17 miles per gallon (7,4 litres/100 km). Our best average was in Ibiza with 47,88 miles per gallon (5,9 litres/100 km)

**Technical problems:** none

**Total cost:** About 2.500 euros per couple, not counting our stay in Ibiza.

**Visited countries:** Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria and Germany

This document belongs to the following website: <http://pierre.inazores.com>