



On the road with the Sunset-Riders

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FINALLY the time had come - I managed my first THURSDAY RIDE of the year! As I took a job as a school bus driver in February and therefore have to get up early in the morning between 5.15am and 5.30am, a late night out is not quite compatible with the responsibility I have with the school children as passengers. It's also not very attractive to drive across the city in the evening rush hour to meet up in Brüttisellen.

Well, on June 19 the meeting was at the Passerelle in Uitikon-Waldegg, at the Feldermoos car park, as it is officially called. I read in the chat that 'Stürmi' would also be joining us after his holidays in Scotland, so that was one reason more not to miss this ride.

If you start from Thalwil to the 'Waldegg', it makes little sense to plough your way through the city traffic (Sihlcity-Schweighofstrasse-Triemli): After all, the journey via Gattikon, Langnau and Buchenegg to Stallikon is right on the doorstep with a far more attractive route. I allowed 30 minutes for the journey, but didn't take into account the lively construction activity on this route in particular: as a former organiser of these trips, being late was not an option. So I trembled as I waited in front of the red light and eventually got there about 5 minutes early anyway.

It was just like 'in the old days': In the end, there were just under a dozen motorbike riders (I looked in vain for motorbike rider girls!) at the start and the plan was to ride in three groups. But when I saw that there were already 7 riders in the first group, I thought that this had probably just been planned. Then I saw Felipe standing at the petrol station with his oldie Kawa, and I thought that he would probably set off with the next group. But they drove past him without waiting. At least he knew the route. Unfortunately, he didn't turn up at the long stopover, but he was the first to arrive at the finish.

My tour guide was Yuriy, a training participant from my time as an active driving instructor. This year he took part in the cornering technique course 2 in Zug and surprised me with how well he knew how to handle the new machine. I had exactly the same impression in his group: he was very confident on the road, I was able to familiarize myself with two unfamiliar winding roads and he made very good use of the time available. The break after a good hour's driving was also very appropriate, as the second group caught up and we were able to chat. Most of the participants speak English, as they come from very different countries. You can already see this in the 'Sunset Riders Committee': only Dani Wanner and Andrea Hügli (yes, there are men called Andrea in Switzerland too) are Swiss-German, Yannis Kavvadias' roots are Greek-French, Andrea Cosettini is Italian and Felipe Saone comes from Chile. They all got to know each other at Tramstrasse 100 (or Apfelbaumstrasse in the last phase) when my learner drivers regularly took part in the THU evening rides (and for the L drivers too) learning trips I organized. As they loved them so much and I no longer wanted to commit myself to them after I retired, they took on this task and founded the 'Sunset Riders', a kind of motorbike club with its own website (sunset-riders.ch).

As a result, English is the main language spoken during the breaks and at dinner. Many drivers who still have little driving experience and little local knowledge and are looking for the opportunity to improve with experienced role models have also signed up. This was actually the original idea behind the regular trips that we used to organize at the Baumann traffic school, my first employer before becoming self-employed. Back then, however, we always had the same restaurant as our destination. With the founding of 'Tramstrasse 100', we went to a new destination every time. And, except on Ascension Day, the DO outing took place from May to the end of September. After the '1st May Rally' starting shot was cancelled, we extended the trips and started as early as April. We often had better weather in April than later in the year. Also, thanks to daylight saving time, it's already light again in the evening in April. As I now had a large team of committed and competent tour guides, there were usually double starts in good weather conditions: the first at 6 pm, then the second at 7 pm! As I had to work until 7pm, I usually took the second start. The start time now is usually at 6.30 pm. This is feasible for many people and it's also a reasonable ride length. Announcement and registration is organized via a chat, so if you want to 'get a taste', you can do this a few times without a membership.

Back to the ride: After we had started, we first travelled through Stallikon and Buchenegg, with a small diversions via Wettswil and Bonstetten. After Langnau, we travelled via Sihlwald into the Horgener Berg to the Hirzel Pass. We made a stopover in Neuheim before continuing along the smallest roads to the Hütten lakes, then Feusisberg and at Altendorf along the mountain road that starts at Luegeten. From Altendorf to Pfäffikon SZ via a road I had never travelled before and finally to the Rapperswiler Seedamm, where we stopped at the Rest. Seehof. Tour guide Juriy lives in Pfäffikon SZ, so it was a home game for him.

My opinion: I am very proud that the 'five guys' have implemented their idea so fantastically and now organize these trips on a regular basis. Their means of reaching people with chats and accepting registrations are adapted to the times. I simply had enough tour guides available so that no matter how many people eventually turned up, I was able to ensure that they were looked after.





Report in progress ...