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SWITZERLAND

May 15, 2011

Dear Reader

I hope that you are well and happy. Here at Casa Carmen, The Martin Family household in Zürich, we've recovered from the deep despair of the aquarium disaster. Cheerfully...

"Mother's Day is right around the corner," I thought. *"I need to find something for Nazy,"*

Knowing that Nazy was not **my** Mother, I sent high priority reminders about the pending celebration to Mitra, Darius and Melika.

"I'm still not comfortable," I thought. *"Perhaps I should find a card - or something."*

I was mulling over the options when Nazy got home - and got right to the point.

"Where are you going to take me for Mother's Day?"

"But you're not my Mother," I said.

Nazy stared at me.

"Of course, my dear, that doesn't mean that we shouldn't have a wonderful time on your special day," I said into the silence.

"Are you trying to recover?" Nazy asked.

"Recover? Of course not. 'Recover' makes it sound like I did something wrong."

"I think, Dan, that it would be fun to do something special on Mother's Day."

"Naturally, my dear. That's what I was thinking, too. In fact, why don't we go shopping..."

"Shopping? **You** want to go shopping? On Mother's Day?"

"Well.."

"Mother's Day is Sunday, Dan. The shops will be closed."

"I meant shopping, eh, now." I replied. *"I'm really having to scramble today,"* I thought.

"Hmmm." Nazy replied. "I do want to look at the vegetables."

"A bridge too far," I thought. "I didn't go vegetable shopping with my own Mother," I replied.

"It's **broccoli** season and Jemoli has a special on **artichoke**." Nazy wasn't daunted.

“Do you think we can find some delicious **zucchini**?”

Nazy, too stunned to speak, just stared at me.

“Or maybe some **collard greens** and **kale**?”

In the end, Nazy handled the vegetable acquisition tasks, while I (prudently) bought a dozen yellow **roses**.

Astute observers will note that the “Where will you take me on Mother’s Day” question had not been answered. Nazy, **astutely observing**, noticed as well. She suggested that we query www.myswitzerland.ch for ideas and assistance.

“See Dan,” she said looking over my shoulder. “There are a lot of waterfalls in the Bernese Oberland....”

“I like waterfalls,” I thought.

“... and you like waterfalls,” Nazy concluded.

I booked dinner at an appropriate restaurant and the next morning, directed by Claudia (the navigation computer) we departed for the ‘Valley of 72 Waterfalls’ in the Lauterbrunnen district. Once we made it to the highway, I was serenaded in stereo by Claudia (“Attention: There are traffic problems on your route.”) and Nazy (“You’re going too fast; speed cameras are everywhere!”).

“Yes, Mother,” I mumbled

Our destination, close to Interlaken, was a glacier valley with steep, almost vertical walls, and a plethora of waterfalls. (We may not have had much snow this year, but thanks to global warming, the glaciers are melting.) The weather, which was clear and sunny when we left Zürich, turned partly cloudy - but still warm. Our first stop was the Trümelbach Falls fed by the meltwater of the Jungfrau glacier. According to the website, these falls flow at 20,000 liters of water per second and carry more than 20,000 tons of boulders and scree each year. These cascades are, for the most part, inside a mountain, a fact that the Swiss viewed as a challenge. Tunnels and a cable car were built to make it possible to see the flow.



At Trümelbach Falls

We drove on to the base of the Schilthorn, a 2970 meter peak in the Alps. The ubiquitous restaurant at the summit was one of the sets in the James Bond movie: *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service*. (In the movie, Telly Savalis appeared as Blofeld). Ticket purchase negotiations at the base of the mountain were typically Swiss.

“You do not want to go today,” the ticket seller noted. “It’s cloudy on top.”

“Will the clouds clear when we get there?” Nazy asked.

“It’s cloudy **now**. That’s a live video feed,” the clerk said as she pointed to a TV monitor. “There is nothing to see.”

“But the clouds could go away,” Nazy noted.



Ignoring advice, we took a series of 4 funiculars to the summit (the view *on the way up* was wonderful), had lunch and looked into the fog before heading back.

Later, on our way to dinner, we stopped at the Staubbach waterfall. This one features a 1000 foot vertical drop and was described by Lord Byron as “the tail of the horse of the apocalypse.” (Which makes it sound rather ominous.)

The clouds that you see in the photo are exactly the ones that obscured our view from the Schilthorn. Usually we break through the clouds on the way to the mountain peak; this was the first time that we entered the clouds upon arrival.

The Lauterbrunnen Valley is really beautiful. The photos (more of which are available on www.seat26b.com) convey, at best, only an indication of the grandeur of the area.

While Nazy reminded me to “drive carefully”, Claudia provided navigation assistance for the journey to the restaurant in Brienz.

The Lindenhof Restaurant was at the end of a very

narrow, incredibly steep and exceptionally winding road. In addition to the cuisine, the site had great gardens and a wonderful view over Lakes Thun and Brienz. It was a wonderful Mother’s Day; I’m looking forward to Father’s Day.

Take care and Cheers,



Staubbach Falls