

TRAVEL LOG.

I am sitting on the balcony of the Acropolis Suite at the Athenium Intercontinental on a Saturday morning with nothing better to do. Mom is sound asleep and CNN International is repeating the same stories over and over again. The suite and the balcony are beautiful and the majestic view of the Acropolis, the warm but soon to be very hot morning sun in my face and the background traffic noise below all make for an excellent relaxing environment to write a travel log.

The Swissair flight from Toronto to Zurich was a dream. Its either Business Class or Swissair service (and I suspect the latter) that makes your flight so enjoyable. The food and beverages keep coming and the quality is superb. Excellent choice of carrier for the Sales Excellence Club.

Arrived in Zurich a few minutes ahead of time on Sunday August, 6, 1989

Zurich is an old historic and very European city. The drive into town was brisk but expensive - sign of things to come. The Seidhoff hotel was O.K. but the service less than mediocre. The room was not right and we had to wait for an hour to get a queen size bed. The humidity was awful and both Mom and I felt ... [Mom just told me that Alon & Sharon are downstairs what a surprise its only 8³⁰ in the morning and we didn't expect them until tonight. I'll continue this log once the kids go to Israel as I'm too excited and I want to spend as much time with them as I can] nauseous as the humidity, overeating and the long trip got to us. I went around the block a few times to regain my wind.

T gather we crashed, but by the afternoon we were ready to go for a stroll up and down the famous Banhoff strasse. Zurich is very European, very proper but somewhat stern. The weather turned beautiful and it felt like the old Saturday afternoon strolls in Israel. Zurich is expensive as we found out by paying some \$40 for a real light meal at a sidewalk "cafe". Because of the short stay we took the "Zurich by night" 3 hrs. tour including a drink at a typical Swiss "pub" with a pretty decent band playing both International and Swiss folk songs. A boat trip on the river and across the lake and a late night stroll in the old city.

Monday, August 7

The plan was to take the Interlaken - Grindelwald all day bus tour. It was raining cats and dogs when we boarded the bus at 8:00 AM. We were quickly told that the tour is cancelled as there were only 9 people on the bus where 10 is the minimum. I couldn't believe it! I was about to offer to buy the 10th ticket but that wouldn't do it either. Two old ladies got off the bus and that was it. Quick thinking. We headed over to AVIS used up our 4 days free AA rent-a-car coupon and headed on our own to Luzern (not included in the bus tour) Interlaken and Grindelwald. It worked out fantastically. The scenery between Zurich and Luzern and on to Interlaken is out of a storybook. Exactly and even more impressive than in the postcards. Awesome. Green valleys, cuckoo houses on the mountain sides, the imposing Bernese Alps, the lakes and even the smells of the country were literally breathtaking. First stop at Luzern. One of the most beautiful, picturesque cities in the world. The lake surrounded by the mountains, the flowers, the parks, the stores... everything. The Dying Lion sculpture at the park was very impressive. I was so sorry we

didn't have a camera. Mom wouldn't let me ask somebody to take our picture and mail it to us... just know Mom. On to Interlaken, We couldn't believe it but the country side was even more beautiful. Had lunch at Interlaken in a sidewalk Cafe' on the main drag. What a beautiful resort town. One could spend days vacationing there and not be bored. It combines the beauty of the country, with services of a city, (class hotels, shopping and even a Casino) and a vacation atmosphere second to none. Proceeded to Grindelwald, well worthwhile trip up to the highest point you could drive by car. The majestic view of the Jungfrau Joch, the highest mountain in Europe (12,000+ feet) was magnificent. Decided against the 1 1/2 train ride to the peak (at \$100/person) not because of money but time. Took the cable car from Grindelwald to the terrace cafe' instead. The view, the bright sun and the cool breeze were ideal. It felt like a dream. The drive back to Zurich was faster (as we took the Highway route) but just as beautiful. We were tired and we crashed. A beautiful day, everything worked out perfectly and it was well worthwhile. Switzerland is as beautiful as, or even more than we expected.

Tuesday August 8

Trip to Athens was smooth. Business Class travel is not too shabby. Landed right on time (3:50 PM) in one of the hottest days of the year (37°C). Mom "insisted" on paying 5000 Drs for an air conditioned limousine, instead of waiting 10 minutes for a 2000 Drs. Taxi ride into town. But... that's Mom. The Inter-Continental is as impressive as we remembered it from 1985. We switched to an Acropolis view room (majestic, particularly when lit at night). A nice Bar-B-Q dinner by the poolside with a Greek duo and traditional Cypriot dancing. A perfect evening... but Greece ain't cheap

Wednesday August 9

Had breakfast with Elias Ordelis, went to the Singer offices, met with George Radicaopolous, the American Express salesman and sketched out the agenda for the April meeting. The Singer folks are warm and wonderful. Mediterranean hospitality at its best. Walked in the afternoon heat to the Amex Offices to review specifics and allow them to prepare a quote. Ended up with a complimentary full day trip to Delphi and a promise to do the best to get us a return flight to/from Mykonos or Santorini for next week.

We dined at Dionisos at the foot of the Acropolis offering the most spectacular view of this famous structure. We haven't missed yet on the food. It is fantastic everywhere. I keep gaining weight at a frightening pace. We both promised to start a diet on our return home.

Thursday August 10

A full day tour of Delphi, I enjoyed it immensely, Mom less so. Lunch was excellent at the Vouros Hotel, better than we expected. Bought the table cloth at Avahova for \$90 USD (asked for \$180 to start with... the usual Greek bargaining). Crashed at the hotel till 9³⁰. Went out for an expensive dinner (again) at a Taverna in the Plaka with an excellent floor show and exquisite food (again).

Friday August 11

Wednesday I met with Georgia the J.C. Sales Manager only to find out that she was with BT Minneapolis and organized the Summit Conference for Control Data in 1985. She switched us to a gorgeous Acropolis Suite (huge with a huge balcony). Met with Georgia and worked out the specifics. Reviewed the room selection and agreed on a "blow-by-blow" agenda.

Lunch with the Singer folks, Elias, Dimitri and Katherina at ... where else Dyonisos. Nice folks. Presented them with a Gift (for the office) gave it to Katherina. Picked up the quote from Amex and was back at the I.C. by 3:00 PM. Spent the afternoon by the pool, snooze and dinner with Elias at a beautiful restaurant under #136.

Very pleasant dinner and conversation. So far were betting a 1000. Even when I was away Mom really enjoyed herself and we're having a great time. We thought the kids might surprise us and be at the hotel when we returned ... but it was a longshot and as it turned out they didn't know that we would check in before the 12th. My fault.

Saturday August 12.

What a wonderful surprise. The kids arrived at 8:30 AM when we really didn't expect them before tonight. They look great. Alon looks healthy compared to when he left. Tanned, relaxed still very thin but good and healthy looking. Sharon is strikingly beautiful with a gorgeous tan. What a pleasure to see them. They couldn't get over the luxury surrounding them - not only is this a \$500/night suite but compared to the places they stayed in ... a paradise. We had breakfast by the poolside, swam, read and talked and talked catching up on all the stories. The kids were genuinely happy to meet us. The feeling and atmosphere was wonderful. We spent the afternoon strolling in the Plaka, bought a couple of T-shirts for Eyal and took the kids to ... where else ... Dyonisos for the best dinner they had in months. Being together was wonderful. I wish ^{Eyal} you were with us as well.

Sunday August 13

We slept in really late (11⁰⁰⁺). Mom suggested we spend the day at the Astir Palace where we stayed in 1985. This was a real winner! The place is wonderfully luxurious, a beautiful private beach, salt water (huge) swimming pool and probably the world's most expensive (but fantastic) Buffet luncheon (almost \$50/ahead!!!). You only live once ... what the hell. Alon and I raced each other swimming, Alon won hands down on the push off race (twice) but I beat him on the dive and swim race. At the end Alon was pooped and began to understand what smoking cigarettes can actually do to you. Sharon went in to the pool a couple of times but Mom (as you'd expect) didn't even bring her swimsuit. A beautiful and entertaining day. Another winner! At the poolside I met Noel Rutgers from Central Det. ^{Since what a coincidence} ^{we finally} ^{could get} ^{a flight from Mykonos on the 19th we on Friday changed our plans.} ^I ^{met} ^{Noel} ^{Rutgers} ^{from} ^{Central} ^{Det.} ^{at} ^{the} ^{ARMY} ^{MEET.} ^{lost} ^{out.} ^{it} ^{Many} ^{of} ^{us} ^{was} ^{holding} ^{an} ^{International} ^{UO} ^{meeting} ^{at} ^{the} ^{ARMY} ^{MEET.} ^{contest,} ^{Corfu} ^{was} ^a ^{possibility,} ^{Vienna} ^{was} ^{the} ^{most} ^{desirable} ^{but} ^{timewise} ^{unattainable} ... would you know it? we "had" to settle for Paris. So tomorrow we're off to see the kids to Israel and we're going to Zurich - Geneva and by train to Paris. It's probably going to cost us an arm and a leg (it already did!) but I hope it'll be worth it. This trip so far is an Olympic winner!

Alon and I went to the PLAKA one more time while the ladies (lazies) stayed behind in the luxury of the T.C. Perjola & Cafe' Vienna restaurants. I owed Alon a shirt he saw the night before because I lost the swimming race. We traced our tracks, replaced the flannel T-shirt we bought the night before. (Mom kept saying that it cannot be done, particularly when I wore it all

day - but of course that's Mom, Mrs. Proger herself) Walking the PLAKA by night is a real experience, the people, the shops, the Tavernas, the smells, sunflower seeds... its so folksy. We found Flor's shirt but not the one I liked as that particular store was closed. (saved an easy \$20) Two Savorlekis on a bun (Pita) and home(?).

Monday August 14

6:30 wake up call; 7:15 bus to the A.P. Surprised to see the hotel bill, I was not charged for the ^{last} two nights on Georgia added.

The I.C. is first class all the way by any country's standards. Met Yael & Kobi at the A/P - Immediately. Had plenty of time to talk, exchange stories. They liked Bulgaria and the family as much as we did and seemed excited with the whole trip. We spent better than an hour-and-a-half all together.

The kids and us are in the air now (The Et-AI flight took off just ahead of us.) They to Israel We to Zurich - Geneva and ultimately Paris. Another little "surprise" at the A/P we were upgraded to first class for no apparent reason.

From hereon in will see what a budget vacation looks like, I'm sure its going to be tough after Athens.

Would you believe it, on the flight from Zurich to Geneva as we were watching the flight map... Mom says: "what do you think about going to Nice instead?" We both got excited with the idea of spending the rest of the week on the Riviera. As we arrived in Geneva we checked out this possibility but dropped it quickly. The next direct train was not until midnight or so arriving Nice @ 8³⁰ AM or a milk run leaving at 5 PM and arriving @ 1:00 AM.

We're now on the TGV train to Macon on our way to Paris.

The railway system vis-a-vis reservations is just as sophisticated as the airline system. We would have lost a lot of time and would have been beat going to the Riviera. We'll leave it for next time.

We arrived in Macon after a very pleasant train ride. For some reason I thought that Macon was where I stopped in 1984 when I drove from Geneva to Paris with Ave. I quickly discovered it wasn't it. We stopped at the tourist office and decided to check into a one star hotel in the old city, steps from the tourist office. What a contrast to the Athenaeum InterContinental.

A small, clean room in an old house with friendly and personal service. What you'd expect it to be. This evening we strolled all around the old city of Macon - this year 200 years old, and beautifully European. Because it was the evening before the 15/8 holiday and in August when half the people, at least, are on vacation, the town was literally deserted.

We spent a beautiful evening, topping it with an excellent meal in a side walk Café Le Picarade where the food and the wine are ~~unforgettable~~ ^{unforgettable}. We have decided to hire the services of the hotel manager, Georgette, to take us on a guided tour to the wine country the next morning. We didn't sleep too well, the Church bells are ringing every 15 minutes... all day and night long.

Tuesday August 15

We have just returned from the most wonderful one day trip we ever took and a day we shall never forget. I remembered the town I was in before - Beaune (Bonn) 100km north of Macon. We drove to Beaune, Chateau de Pomard, Meursault, the medieval village of Brocignon, the town of Cluny and its famous Abbey and tested the Pouilly Fuisse' white wine before returning to Macon. Words cannot describe our enjoyment, the magnificent scenery of the famous Burgundy wine country and the warm, friendly and almost family like hospitality of Georgette. We haven't gotten the bill yet for this 275km trip... but

whatever it is (and it may be as high as \$200) it was worth it. The Post Cards will have to speak for themselves and my only real regret is for not having a camera with me. (which I was desperately trying to buy somewhere - except that all stores were closed for the holiday) Let me go and take a shower now after a long, warm and tiring but wonderful day. (I wrote a nice and genuine letter for Georgette). Even ground beef ~~steak~~ and french fries w/ Bourgoulais red wine taste delicious in France.

Wednesday August 16.

The hotel ^{bill} was a relative "steal" \$80 for two nights including a nice breakfast. Georgette drove us to the train station personally, and walked with us to the dock, waited for us to be seated in the car, we kissed before hand and she was waving her goodbyes as the train for Paris pulled away from the station. If I had any preconceived notions about the friendliness and hospitality of the French people, Georgette destroyed them all. My first encounter with Paris was not too good. Gare de Lyon where we arrived an hour and a half after leaving Maastricht, is huge. I was trying to change our train tickets to Zurich to an earlier time and got myself into a bit of an administrative mess. I changed and unchanged the ticket and spent an hour and a half I didn't have to. It didn't matter as it was raining heavily anyway. We arrived at the hotel at 2:00 PM. The hotel is in St. Germain de Pres on the left bank and for the price is o.k. Today I spoke to "All My Children" in Israel and Toronto and it felt good - all seem to be having a great time.

At 4 PM we went out to take in Paris. Paris "ce magnifique" we walked the Champs Elysée, watched the sights, sounds and people (mostly tourists) and generally admired the beauty and grandeur of Paris. We (two old "cuckers" with bad feet and backs) walked for five hours before returning to the hotel. The last hour of which was murder even though we walked through the most pretty and action packed parts of town St. Michel square which we marked down as a definite night out destination. We literally crashed and at 10³⁰ went out for dinner right next door. There are Brasseries here every 10 yards and the food in all of them must be of the same excellent quality. We walked the food down in a short walk. Mom loves Paris, even though she almost died walking, got a strange rash but was smart enough to go out after all. The thing I miss most about this trip is not having a camera. Paris is a photographer's heaven. As a result I'm buying Post cards left right and centre.

Thursday August 17.

This morning we agreed to take it real easy and in fact didn't leave the hotel till 10³⁰. We walked a little down St. Germain, shopped a lot at "Old River" (only to discover later that they have a store at the Promenade in Toronto) hoping Eyal would like what we bought for him and had a present breakfast at a sidewalk Café (millions of them in Paris). We walked to and visited Ile de Notre Dame. This is by far the most impressive place I have ever been to. The grandeur, the architecture, the sheer size, the windows, the grounds and gardens... hard to explain to someone who was not there. A lady stopped us and begged to take a

#8 Polaroid picture of Mom and I. Little did she know how timely ~~it~~ was and how willing a customer she found in me. That's the only personal photo we have of our trip except for the weekend in Athens with the kids. We spent some more money (who's going to pay for all of this; the VISA card is suffering from plastic fatigue) buying Sharon some magnifique Parisienne outfit. Almost missed the bus tour to Versailles. Made it just in time and enjoyed it immensely. The Palace of Versailles and its magnificent gardens should not be missed. We are back (by Metro) in the hotel now and are resting before our evening excursion for dinner (not again?!) and whatever. Mom is not interested in visiting Place Pigalle (the centre of French erotica) which is a shame as it is a landmark not to be missed while in Paris. Maybe I'll be able to talk her into it after all. We're going to snooze for a couple of hours (it's now 7PM) this tourist business is not only expensive its very tiring as well. So we had another dinner ~~at~~ another quaint restaurant somewhere on the left bank. The odds of missing ^{on} good food and good wine in practically any restaurant are ridiculously low.

Friday August 18

No rush again this morning, after a small (and quite expensive by comparison) breakfast, arrived at the Louvre around 11. The grounds, the imposing old wings of the Louvre colliding with the new pyramid shape sunlight strike just right away. The place is huge and there is no way to see it than by foot. We did! Three hours of it. It's wonderful - no question about it. The enormous painting, the sculpture collection and the musts: Mona Lisa and the only other Leonardo Davinci to reside at the Louvre.

A complete collection of Rembrandts, and masterpieces of Goya, Rafael and in the sculpture department of course Venus of Milo, give you a sense of being there. I'm hurting too but Mom probably needs a vacation on our return, all this walking is destroying her tender feet. Thank goodness her rash cleared up. Mom is a real trooper. It's not always easy to figure out if she's a "happy camper" but I know she's enjoying herself immensely. We are using the Metro now quite freely and in fact its quite easy and very efficient. We went over to the Bastille to see the new Opera (designed by a Canadian architect) Its enormous in size, modern in design and difficult to accept as a classic Parisian monument, which I'm sure it will soon become. The square itself and the monument are very impressive although it seems that this is where the seamy part of town begins. We hit the rock at 4PM and Mom is still sound asleep at 7:45 as I'm writing this update. We don't have plans for tonight but in Paris you don't have to have plans. Mom still resists checking out the Place Pigalle, so other than another gorgeous dinner who knows what will end up doing. Paris is much more sympathetic than I imagined. It must have to do with the fact that most Parisiens are on holidays and the town is literally owned by tourists. We are going to recommend to Alon and Sharon to shorten their stay in Paris to probably 3 night maximum. We just can't see what they'll do here and enjoy doing for 5 days. (Knowing them Versailles is out. The Louvre probably long enough to hit the Mona Lisa etc.) Unless they hook up with some company and go to bars, listen to ^{jazz} music and

~~and~~ watch people from a sidewalk Café vantage point who knows if they'll enjoy Paris as much as we did.

Alon probably will get on the food wine and elaborate Menus. I wonder why but Mom and I just mentioned it yesterday that our vacation seems to ~~have been~~ much longer than the 10 days ^{it has been my long.} (as of last night) Normally that would indicate that we are not having a good time but this is the farthest from the truth. I think it is because we accomplished so much in a short time:

We really got to see Switzerland instead of just passing by. Athens was a two part affair - the first 3 days of business and the weekend with the kids. The tour of wine country was magnificent and unique because of Georgette's company and three days in Paris to top it off. It almost seems like we had four or five different vacations in such a short time. Anyway with the exception of my moments of worry about my health and before we add up the bills on the return flight - this holiday ranks as 10 (plus).

Saturday August 19 / Sunday August 20

This morning's stroll to "even the score" and buy something for Alon was very costly. Mom and I agreed on a good buy and then in typical fashion Mom says let's take this one too. The morning started out nicely alright, showered and awakened by the Israëlies just below us who of course behave like they own the place.

Shopping is done, the damage is complete, we're heading home. Final look at St Germain De Pres and Oratoire Paris. Arrived ~~at~~ the train station way too early with a good two hours to spare. We're headed for Lussanne where we might spend the night before proceeding to Zurich and the flight home!

We were awfully smart if not lucky to take a 20 minutes connection to Zurich where we arrived with a terrific headache at about 9:00 PM (PARIS-ZURICH in less than 7 hours - not too bad!). Headache because we just happen to choose the Nursery car (playground for screaming kids). The train takes us right to the Airport where we did the smartest thing. Checked out our luggage, re-arranged it, checked in to the Toronto flight and went to the... Mövenpick Hotel with nothing but hand luggage. Mom got her shot at the Mövenpick ^{after} which we thought we missed at Zurich on the first day. The Hotel was wonderful, the atmosphere beautiful and romantic and the whole idea of sleeping in late and no pressure on us whatsoever vis-a-vis the check-in procedures worked out tremendously. Mom was in a good and romantic mood. ~~I guess~~, as she actually admitted this trip was much better than she expected.

We are now at the Zurich A.P. The flight is delayed 30 Minutes (unusual for Swissair) We are heading home to the rigors of normal living, resolved to start a stringent diet beginning tomorrow.

This travel log won't be complete if I didn't go right to the very beginning when I discover Friday night that I didn't have a valid passport. The details will be told many times over, I'm sure. The point is that by 2:PM Saturday - on the day of departure I had my passport having made the first meaningful contact with the passport office in Hull at about 10 AM. This is one trip we are sure to remember for a long time.