

THE TWELVE MONTHS OF 20-08

As Lived By Jan and Gerry

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**In the first month of 20-08,
our true love of travel sent to us**

One Ayers Rock

(There are no more).

**In the second month of 20-08,
our true love of travel sent to us**

Two stays in Darwin

(one for pleasure and one awaiting a Crank Angle Sensor)

and One Ayers Rock.

**In the third month of 20-08,
our true love of travel sent to us**

Three Sleepless Nights

(dashing through East Australia, flying to London, and a wedding in Darlington),

Two stays in Darwin,

and One Ayers Rock.

**In the fourth month of 20-08,
our true love of travel sent to us**

Four Baguettes a Day

(Or so it seemed for our waistlines in Paris).

Three Sleepless Nights,

Two stays in Darwin,

and One Ayers Rock.

**In the fifth month of 20-08,
our true love of travel sent to us**

Five Hordes of Visitors

(In Paris came to us Pascal, Bertrand, Pam, Joan, and Mick),

Four Baguettes a Day,

Three Sleepless Nights,

Two stays in Darwin,

and One Ayers Rock.

**In the sixth month of 20-08,
our true love of travel sent to us
Six Striking Museums
(Louvre, Orsay, Arts Decorative, Arts et Metier, Assisance Publique, et Carnavalet)**

**Five Hordes of Visitors,
Four Baguettes a Day,
Three Sleepless Nights,
Two stays in Darwin,
and One Ayers Rock.**

**In the seventh month of 20-08,
our true love of travel sent to us
Seven times Seven Sudoku Puzzles
(In Basel in all the newspapers, as well as the Rhine and Swiss Ways)**

**Six Striking Museums.
Five Hordes of Visitors,
Four Baguettes a Day,
Three Sleepless Nights,
Two stays in Darwin,
and One Ayers Rock.**

**In the eighth month of 20-08,
our true love of travel sent to us
Eight Fros and Tos
(Basel and Zurich and Henau and Wil and Bischofszell,
and St Gallen and Seealpsee-Santis and Appenzell),**

**Seven times Seven Sudoku Puzzles,
Six Striking Museums.
Five Hordes of Visitors,
Four Baguettes a Day,
Three Sleepless Nights,
Two stays in Darwin,
and One Ayers Rock.**

**In the ninth month of 20-08,
our true love of travel sent to us
Nine new Berlin Bicycle adventures**

(Which we bought after searching and searching flea markets).

**Eight Fros and Tos,
Seven times Seven Sudoku Puzzles,
Six Striking Museums.
Five Hordes of Visitors,
Four Baguettes a Day,
Three Sleepless Nights,
Two stays in Darwin,
and One Ayers Rock.**

**In the tenth month of 20-08,
our true love of travel sent to us
Ten Dresden Pleasures
(Semperoper, Zwinger, Frauenkirche, Elbe, and more).**

**Nine new Berlin Bicycle adventures,
Eight Fros and Tos,
Seven times Seven Sudoku Puzzles,
Six Striking Museums.
Five Hordes of Visitors,
Four Baguettes a Day,
Three Sleepless Nights,
Two stays in Darwin,
and One Ayers Rock.**

**In the eleventh month of 20-08,
our true love of travel sent to us
Eleven Memorial Days
(Kristal Nacht, Remembrance Day, Unity Day, Thanksgiving and more).**

**Ten Dresden Pleasures,
Nine new Berlin Bicycle adventures,
Eight Fros and Tos,
Seven times Seven Sudoku Puzzles,
Six Striking Museums.
Five Hordes of Visitors,
Four Baguettes a Day,
Three Sleepless Nights,**

**Two stays in Darwin,
and One Ayers Rock.**

**In the twelfth month of 20-08,
our true love of travel sent to us
Twelve Christmas Markets
(Where we ate Bratwurst, Gulasch, Schweinesteak, Crepes, and Chestnuts,
and drank Gluhwein and hot chocolate, and bought holiday treasures),**

**Eleven Memorial Days,
Ten Dresden Pleasures,
Nine new Berlin Bicycle adventures,
Eight Fros and Tos,
Seven times Seven Sudoku Puzzles,
Six Striking Museums.
Five Hordes of Visitors,
Four Baguettes a Day,
Three Sleepless Nights,
Two stays in Darwin,
and One Ayers Rock.**

AND

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

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For traditionalists here is the more standard form:

**On the twelfth day of Christmas,
my true love sent to me
Twelve drummers drumming,
Eleven pipers piping,
Ten lords a-leaping,
Nine ladies dancing,
Eight maids a-milking,
Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,
Five golden rings,
Four calling birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree!**

Holiday Greetings and Best Wishes

for a Healthy and Happy 2009

Wow! The end of 2008 is but a week away. Our year can be summarized very quickly: Stays in Australia, Darlington/London, Paris, Switzerland, and Berlin during which time we passed from being nomads to settled (if not agricultural) folk.



"Magnetic" Termite mounds, Litchfield National Park, Australia

In mid-March we finished up a five-month trip to Australia (that had started in late September, 2007 in Sydney) with a marathon drive from Adelaide, South Australia, "up the middle" to visit Ayers Rock, the Olgas, King's Canyon, and Alice Springs and then on north to Katherine, Litchfield, Darwin and Kakadu and then back south again almost to Alice Springs before swinging east towards Queensland and the coastal town of Townsville. From there we followed the coast south to Sydney, stopping little except to dip our toes in the ocean and admire the fabulous landscape.



Hawks Nest Beach, Teas Neck, Australia.

In Darwin we unexpectedly met up with a friend from Jan's Tübingen days whom we hadn't seen in 30+ years and who saved our sanity just by being there for us. In Brisbane we met the daughter of old Bradford friends. If we include our friends from Canberra, relatives by marriage, and Jan's old boss (and now also friend) from Melbourne, we are surprised how many people we are connected to in Australia.



Royal Air Force Museum, London

Mid-March, we flew to England and spent a month in Darlington celebrating a niece's wedding, visiting an old friend in Scotland, generally catching up on all things related to the Bates family, and going through our loft (attic) to see what we stored and forgotten. Our flight to London was with Etihad Airways and via Abu Dhabi. The previous year we'd bought a round trip, Sydney-Sydney, knowing that we'd definitely go back. This time, although we knew we wanted to come back down under, especially to see New Zealand, we didn't want to commit to an exact date.



Fountain, Versailles Gardens, Versailles, France

In mid-April, we crossed the channel to France and installed ourselves yet again in Veronica's lovely apartment in the 20th arrondissement of Paris. We spent a terrific three months filled with everything and nothing. Paris is now a city we know very well and every time we stay we get to like it more. We spent almost a month entertaining guests: they came from South Africa, the south of France, England, Germany, and the USA. A bumper crop! We also made a flying visit to London to celebrate friends' 60th and 65th birthdays. Oh Eurostar! You are so convenient!

After much trying we opened a French bank account; that may seem like nothing but we mention it because it was truly an amazing achievement. The account was needed for another achievement, the climax of an effort that started months before we arrived in Paris: getting a Velib' (the city-run rent-a-bike system) account. Sadly we managed it just weeks before departure and were only able to use it a handful of times before our stay was up.



15th Century Rathaus (City Hall), Basel

From Paris we went, ten days apart (Gerry first; both by 2-hour TGV), to Basel to take care of Leo The Cat in exchange for low-cost accommodation in a very large apartment. After so many small hotel rooms in Australia (and our even smaller tent) we felt like we were floating in this place. We elected to go to Basel on a whim, not really knowing anything about this gorgeous city on the banks of the Rhine. We spent a rather idyllic couple of months there getting acquainted with Swiss history and politics and dipping our toes gingerly into the bath of German language. As if there wasn't enough to distract him, Gerry got hooked on Sudoku in the free local newspapers.



Seealpsee, North Eastern Switzerland

We completed our stay in Switzerland with a visit to Swiss friends we met in Mexico in 2004 and complemented our introduction to urban Switzerland with a taste of their village life along the banks of the Thur river. And very pleasant it was, too, especially thanks to the loan of a pair of world-travelled bikes and some of the most lovely scenery anyone would wish to have in their backyard. We even managed to climb a small mountain (Ebenalp) and convince ourselves once again that Switzerland has to be the world's most beautiful country.

While in Basel, we found ourselves another apartment to rent, this time in Berlin. A young American-German couple wanted to spend some time in the US and we got to be the lucky ones who take care of their flat while they're gone. We signed up for nine months with the idea that we'd have lots of time to study German, Russian, and work on overdue projects like restoring our website (it's now back at www.chandlerbates.NET). You can see lots more of our pictures there and at www.photopolis.at.)



Weihnachtsmarkt (Christmas Fair), Berlin

We've been in Berlin four months: In that time we've bought bicycles and cycled all over the city, enjoying new perspectives on all the things we saw in 2005. Now we've five months more to go and can already see that we'll run out of time before we run out of things to do.

In December we have been learning all about German *Weihnachten* (Christmas) and *Weihnachtsmarkts* (Christmas fairs) and *Weihnachtsman* (Santa Claus, for whom Gerry is often vocally mistaken by passerbyers) and have enjoyed the abundance of sausages available and inspite of our "don't buy; don't store" policy have picked up a few souvenirs at the fairs.

Because Gerry is only automatically entitled to a 90-day visa we had worried a bit about the rental contract we got ourselves into: what if he left Germany and wasn't immediately let back in? Happily that is now solved: between the first draft of this letter and our sending it to you Gerry has finally been granted a visa to stay in Germany for up to five years if he wants. (As long as he stays married to Jan that is, who as an EU citizen helped get him that wonderful permit.)



So as the year of 2008 comes to an end and the year of 2009 begins, we wish you all everything you would wish yourselves and hope that our paths will cross very soon.

Gerry and Jan