

Australia 2003

December 5th and 6th, 2003

Zurich - Perth

The main reasons for this trip are Ruedi's immigration into Australia and also a visit to OKA, to measure the vehicle. One could almost call it a business trip!

Because Ruedi still has to watch his back a bit we allow ourselves the luxury of travelling in Business Class. Singapore Airlines offers real beds in their Business Class.



Us being used to travel Economy Class had no clue about how Business Class functions. First we carry our hand luggage on our own into the first floor.

Then because we were so busy organizing our over-head compartment we don't realize that the Stewart is waiting for us to pass the jackets on to him to be placed on a clothe rack as in Business Class one is not supposed to squeeze his tuff into the over-heads

Susi's brother Hans-Peter who was travelling with us until Singapore gives us a short intro into the dos and don'ts in Business Class.



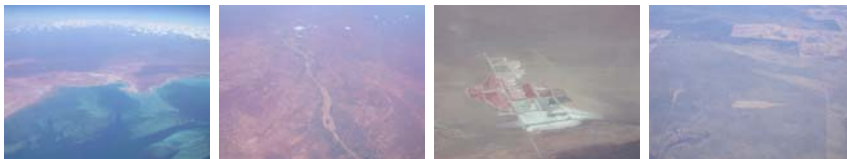
When taking off in Zurich a famous song from the 70s from Reinhard May come to our mind " ... über den Wolken muss die Freiheit wohl Grenzenlos sein ... " (translated: " above the clouds freedom must be frontier-less ...").

Uetliberg and Lägern are raising their tops out of the clouds. Flying over the Säntis we leave Switzerland in direction of Singapore and Australia.



During the first 4 hours of the flight we are almost stuffed with food but we enjoy it enormously. Business Class is very special, one could easily get use to it. But it is so bl... expensive!

In Singapore we separate, Hans-Peter continues on to Brisbane and we catch the next flight to Perth.



The Australian continent welcomes us with beautiful sights.

Soon we touch ground in Perth. Full of anxiety we queue up for immigration.

Ruedi presents his Swiss passport with the permanent residency visa and is waved through after a short check in the computer.

A bit surprised he ask the immigration officer where we need to go for the immigration.

She was a bit amused and told us that this was it, the immigration process had already happened in Switzerland.

All she had done was register the fact that ruedi had actually immigrated to Australia in the given time window.

Relieved we made the way to the baggage claim area and to the rental car.



In the hotel we are already expected and welcomed in a friendly manner.

Soon Ruedi sits on the balcony of our apartment and plays the guitar in his second home-country.

December 7th - 18th, 2003

Perth and surrounding area; at OKA

We have 2 weeks time to measure the OKA and get all questions answered. In between we enjoy Perth.



View of Perth from South-Perth and from the Kings Park.



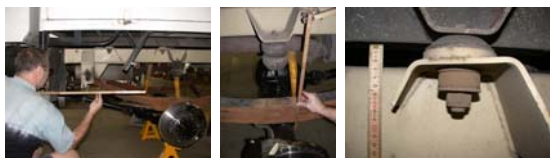
In the Kings Park many Australian flowers like Kangaroo Paw, Bottle Brush or Warratha are blooming



On the way to OKA in Bibra Lake we see a Black Boy.
The grass tree has its name because it needs to be burned down to grow and in the dark it looks like a boy with his spear is standing behind it.
We also see blooming Christmas Trees. They bloom at the beginning of the rainy season in December, at Christmas, hence their name.
One day we drive to a lake for lunch and find a group of black swans.



Due to the fact that our vehicle only exists on the drawing table at OKA they have prepared some vehicle parts for us.
Even though we receive CAD drawings of the important parts of the new vehicle an existing vehicles is measured with a tape-measure beside it an photos taken of all.



We need the most details from the wheel-arches as we don't know yet if we need to build wheel-arches into the cabin or not.
This depends on the total height of the final vehicle. We aim not to exceed 2,96 meters (max. height of the larges container).
Thus the displacement of the wheel is very important.



The driver's cabin also is inspected. We see that there is plenty of extra space in the dashboard for extra gauges e.g. for additional tanks, etc.



To give us a better understanding of the size of our future "house" OKA has prepared a bus-body.
This body is chosen by four operators and is an ideal indication of the aspect ratio of length and height.
We realize that the wheel arches of the bus-body are different to the ones of the pick-up truck we have already measured due to the different weight it needs to carry.
So there we go again all needs to be measured.



The chassis of our OKA is already assembled. It is a funny feeling to see one's future vehicle un such a state.
We are able to measure the location of the air tanks which is important for the intermediate frame.
Even though we have the exact drawing of the zero line in that view the tanks are not apparent.

In the evenings Ruedi is busy updating his drawings.
Every so often he needs to check with the engineer and double check his findings.

Soon we realize that even if we go for wheel arches and reduce the inside height to 1,85 meters we will never manage to stay below 2,96 meters.
We discuss the fact with Alex from Alu-Star in Germany and get the list of required measurements for the intermediate frame from him.

Since OKA cannot give us a definitive date for the delivery of the truck to Germany we collect as much data as possible to be able to build out "house" even without having the OKAS on site.

Dispite the many hours we spend at OKA we find some time to have a look around Perth and its surrounding area.



In the harbor of Freemantle the Maritime Museum displays an retired submarine of the "Oberon" class.
The tour through the boat shows the cramped conditions on board.
We are both happy to be outside again.

After almost 2 weeks at Perth we travel to the Gold Coast for the wedding of Susi's brother Bruno, visit Susi's father and stay over Christmas.

On December 26th we leave Australia in direction of Switzerland for the last 1 1/2 years.
On the way to the airport a small mishap happens ...



Susi drives to fast and we receive a fine for 100 AU\$!

The next time we come to Australia we already will have embarked on our tour of the world.