



# OUR BUMBLE

## EXPLORING EUROPE IN OUR MOTORHOME.

BY JOANNE & CRAIG.

# THIS WEEK

A whistle stop tour of Austria but the Grossglockner pass provided us with the drive of our life. We felt on top of the world with views across endless mountain peaks all set off against china blue skies. A wowza with one huge gold star. If there is one place in all of Europe we would recommend, it would be the Alpine drive, The Grossglockner. Once again, we were lucky with the weather, the timing (closes next week) and crowds (very quiet) although we were a bit worried with threats of avalanches.

In total we have travelled 319 kilometres in 4 days with nothing but blue skies and sunshine but boy its been a chilly at night, down to 1 degree.



## JANSA LAKE TO WACHT IN AUSTRIA

Above: The border crossing  
from Slovenia to Austria.  
Papers, Papers, Danke.

## FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER

We only expected to be in Slovenia a few days but loved it so much we ended up staying a few weeks, so now we have to dash across Austria. We need to dash because we need be Bad Waldsee, Germany by 9th November to have Vins garage door repaired. We have several hundred mile to cover in just under two weeks and with too much to see! Time for a tactical plan of action...skip Austria as we covered quite a bit last year and head for Bavaria Alps via Grossglockner pass!

With our new plan, by late afternoon we were back on the road. We climbed high up the mountain road to arrive at the Austrian border. As normal, we slowed and smiled like we were totally guilty of the most severe crime known to border control. As we looked at the young Austrian police lady she frowned and raised the hand. HALT! Vin screeched and stopped dead. Holy shit! Craig wound down the window and smiled. With a serious and stern look she asked for our papers. I jumped up, tootled off to the safe and fumbled for our passports. This was scary stuff! We have never been stopped before. We handed over our passports





and as she thoroughly checked our documents several armed soldiers examined Vin's exterior. You could feel Vin shaking in his tyres as they slipped a mirror up his back axle. With a nod and a wink all round they handed back our passports and welcomed us to Austria. Craig hit the gas, Vin responded instantly and we headed down hill passed the armoured tanks.

We wound our way down and then up then over then down, poor Tom Tom looked like he was hooked up to an ECG monitor. On route, we passed our first motor-homer in weeks and gave them the club wave before arriving on level ground, a massive green valley floor. Austria is like Slovenia but on steroids. Everything feels large, the hills, the mountains the quantity of trees the sheer size of the valley floor. It was certainly pretty but with everything so far away it was hard to appreciate it especially the beautiful autumn colours.

The light was fading and we needed to find a spot for the night. We passed lots on reasonable picnic spots but opted to cross the river and snuggle in next to the dairy cows. We parked up in the little farm village of Wacht. Surrounded by cows, bulls, horses and a donkey who clearly liked the sound of his own voice.

After our evening meal we popped on the heating, wrapped up in our nunu blankets, plugged in the hard drive and watched a few episodes of prerecorded Gogglebox.

**Above: Our parking spot in Wacht**



## WACHT TO LIENZ

Above: Rolling hills and lofty churches.

Below: Pharmacy in Lienz



## SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER

Apart from the donkey doing its occasional eor, we had a lovely peaceful night. After a stroll either side of the farm where we spotted a lovely hilltop church and massive waterfall, we set off to Lidl. Not a big shop just the basics as we want to use what is in the freezer then we can defrost it.

We parked up just on the outskirts of Lienz just beside the Schloss Bruck, the fortress of the counts of Gorz. The town sits at the junction of three valleys, this colourful town stretches along the banks of the Isel River surrounded by the impressive Dolomites. The town square was buzzing with people sat in the open air cafes enjoying the winter sun. We had look around the shops and up and down the streets. We found a small church and convent with some lovely paintings. Around the cloisters locals were holding a coffee morning and selling autumn candles and decorations. Craig took a shine to the chemist sign Alche Pharm and Laboratory.



Images Clockwise:

- ❖ Lienz town hall
- ❖ The main street.
- ❖ Statue in the main square.



After a cycle through the gardens and alongside the river we headed back to Vin. We had spotted a small car park just at the side of the river, so we moved and settled down for the night. After checking out the weather for Grossglockner pass we watched some more Goggleox and had an early night.

*BANG BANG BANG*

We jumped out of our bloody skin. I bolted upright and Craig kneed the back wall.

*What the hell was that, Craig?*

*Think it is some teenagers on their way out for the night*

*Frightened the living daylights out of me*

*Susshhh, go back to sleep*

After our mild heart attacks we slowly but surely drifted back to sleep until it was going home time for the teenagers and....

*BANG BANG BANG. Grrrr damn kids.*

Finally were drifted back of again.



## LIENZ TO GROSSKIRCHHEIM

**Above:** Colourful window  
baskets in Lienz.

**Below:** The view behind Vins  
parking spot.



## SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER

Tomorrow is perfect weather for the Grossglockner pass, so we finished Slovenia Bumble and then set off. A lovely drive up, up, up before lunging down a very steep road. Captain Craig put on his Tiff Nidel (not sure of the spelling?) voice and provided a running commentary as he guided Vin down the valley. It was beautiful and just like a nice drive on a sunny day with fantastic views all around. Passing forest, lakes, and pastures all protected by the mighty glaciers. Its funny, you look up at the fir forests and it is not until you stop and look do you realise how many blinking fir trees are there. The hills are so high the thousands of trees are just lost, a mere little dot. Forest upon forest of conifers, spruce, larch (the only European conifer to lose its needles in winter), the Austrian pine and the Arolla pine, with upward-curving branches that remind me of an elegant candelabra. A wonderful range of greens with the odd golden tinge from the shedding larch.

We pulled in at a stunning little village. Parked up at the top of the valley next to a little water wheel and admired the view. A



couple of turns down the valley and you could see the white peaks of the mountain pass. So excited, I can tell you how buzzing I am. Craig as you would imagine is chilled and horizontal as if tomorrow is just another day.

This year, we are driving to the pass from the opposite side, so the drive will feel very different. With that we started to chat about last years drive, it was so fab. It is by far the best drive of our life with the most stunning scenery. The Romans started the road (no surprise there!) but it lay hidden until 1930 when a bunch of engineers discovered it and decided to create an alpine pass. It is a 30 mile drive with the highest road at 2571m and once inside the Hohe

Tauern National Park it covers 29 towns, 304 separate mountains, and nearly 250 glaciers, it is awesome. Along the way, you can stop at various points and visit various museums like the classic car exhibition.

With a busy day ahead, we had an early evening meal and went to bed early.

**Above: Our parking spot for the night complete with waterwheel.**



## THE GROSSGLOCKNER PASS.

Above: The mountains behind  
the start point, Heiligenblut

### MONDAY 26 OCTOBER

Today we ascend the Grossglockner Pass, rather than read about the journey we have taken photos so you can watch the journey and hopefully get a better idea, besides Joanne would just write the words “beautiful this,” - “beautiful that” a million times and bore the hell out of you all.

Our Bumble verdict: B B B brilliant, you have to drive over this thing if it's the last thing you ever do, just do it soon.



Images Clockwise:

- ❖ Waterfall before entering the National park.
- ❖ Our destination above Heiligenblut in the
- ❖ The snowcaps are getting closer.
- ❖ The toll booth at the park entrance.
- ❖ Craig chuffed as we only get charged the same as a car €24.50 and not >3.5t €41.



Clean the windows, nothing should spoil the view.



Wild deer on the road sides.



Turn left at Guttal and start our ascent.



Windy roads just keep going up.



Time to leave the amber tree line.



Yes that is a tunnel - Hochtortunnel



The tunnel approaches.



Ascending from the valleys below.



Rugged peaks now getting thicker with snow.



Quick stop. We're well past 2300m at this point.



The Pasterze glacier lake half frozen

Last winds of the road before we reach Franz-Josefs-Höhe



Joanne walks over for a better view.



We finally make it to the top of the pathway.



Time for a selfie.



Another frozen lake below the Grossglockner peak notice the strange circles.



Snow and ice, Joanne is a happy bunny.  
Craig not so, he hates the cold.





A glass viewing platform opposite the Grossglockner.



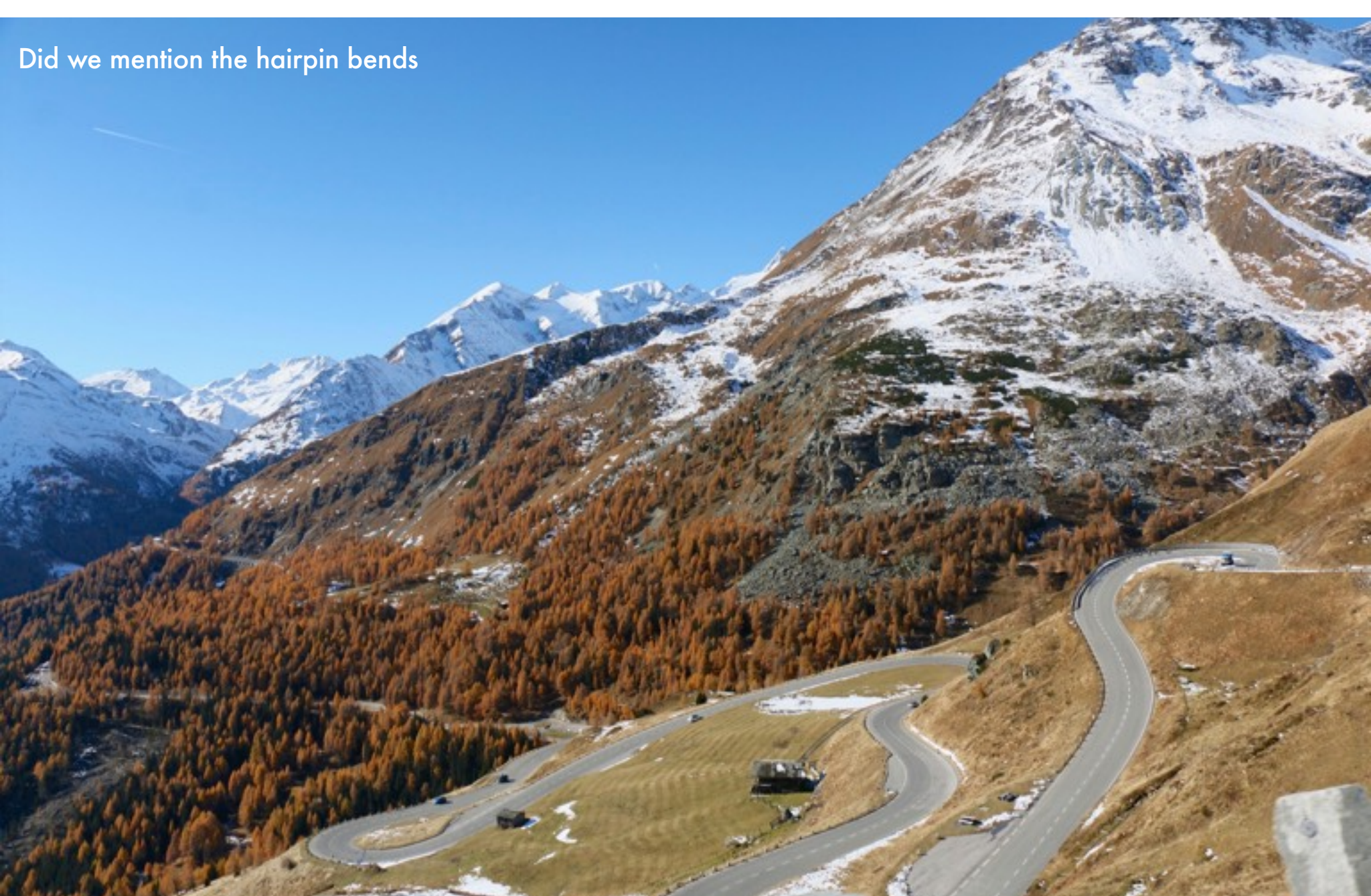
Joannes fancies a closer look at Austria's highest mountain. 3798m or 12,438ft





There is also a multi level museum at the top, bloody horrible building, looks like a multi-story car park but the exhibits are OK. One floor is cars, another is bikes, It also houses an eco level and an alpine floor.





Then back up the other section of the pass.



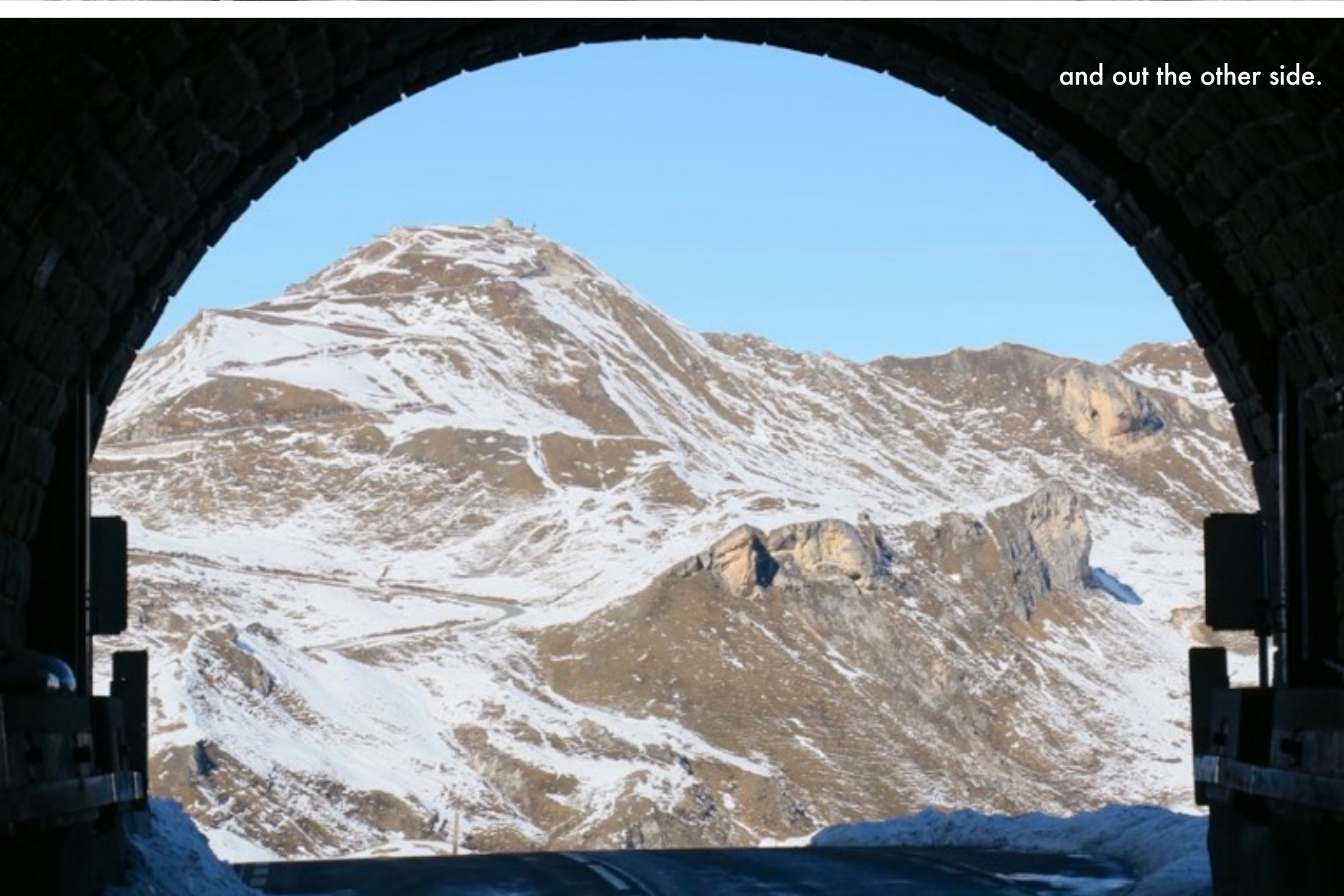
And up.

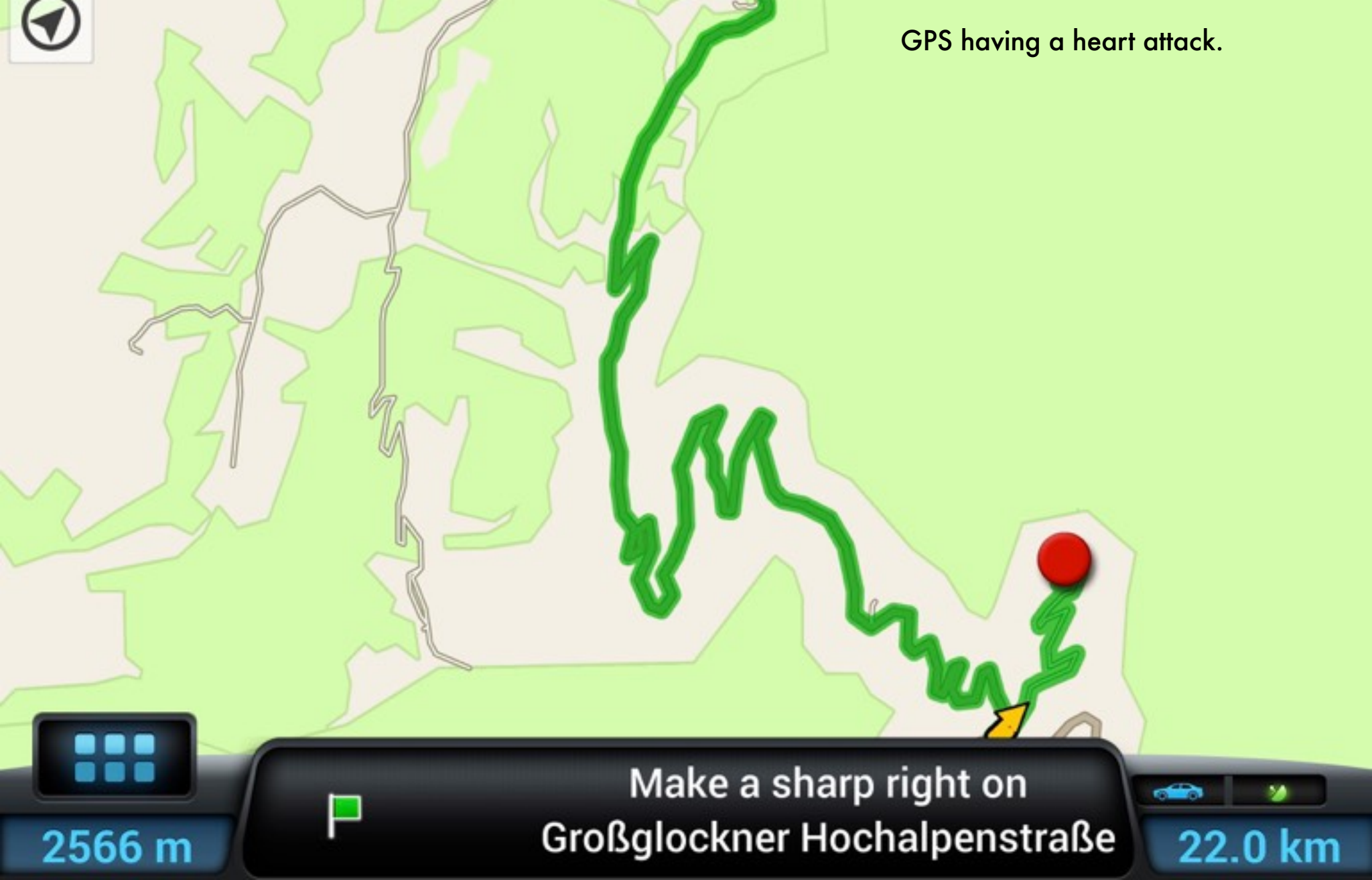


Through a  
tunnel full of ice

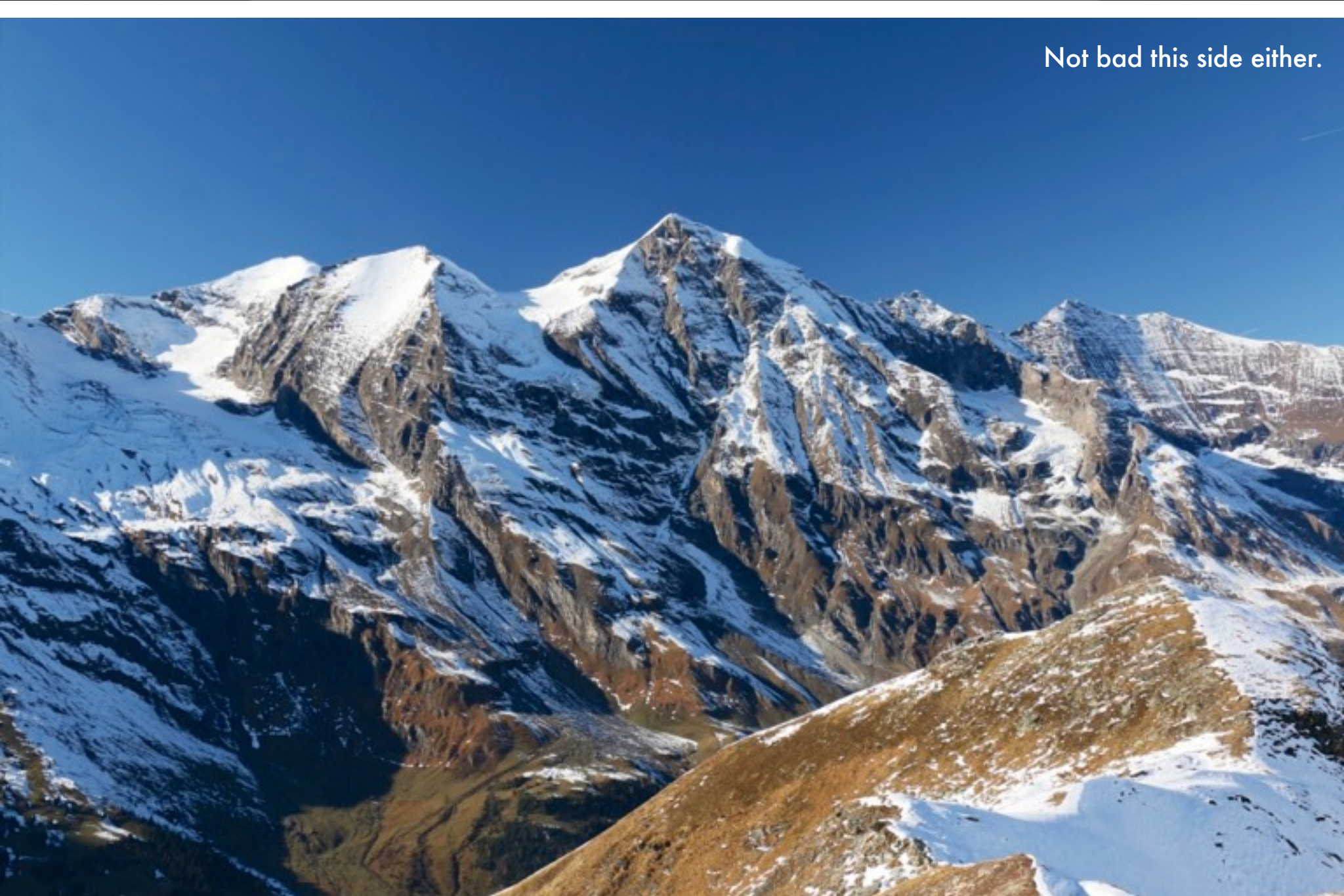


and out the other side.





GPS having a heart attack.



Not bad this side either.

A few more bends, then a few more.



Time for a lunch.



'She' has a walk.



'He' makes a pan  
of lobby 1.6 miles  
up a mountain.  
(Lancashire hotpot).



The Edelweiss-Spitze is not for motorhomes and is weight limited, Craig smiles at me and has to go up it to the very top. Eeekk



Spot the odd one out, Vin's highest climb to date at 2571m



The views are worth the effort getting here.





Land Saltburg in the distance.



A message for Betty my mum.



## FUSCH TO LOFER THEN ON TO GERMANY.

Above: Lofer's mains street.

Below: Hotel signage.



## TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER

I peered out of Vin and looked straight down the valley to the pass. I felt sad. I love everything about this place and if I could live anywhere it would be here. With that, I put the Grossglockner back on our bucket list and decided it ain't ever coming off. I said goodbye to our neighbours the llamas and the pigmy goats before we headed off to Germany.

We followed the river all the way to Bruck and then took a swift right in to the fuel station. Here is one of the cheapest places in Austria and at €0.99 per litre we filled Vin up to the tash.

Not long and we were travelling through long tunnels. It felt weird, we've not been through a long tunnel in ages. Just as you pop out of one and gasp for air you are straight back in to the next. Then finally, the tunnels came to an end and we were greeted with green meadows, limestone mountains and a bunch of low lying clouds. Everywhere you looked cows, cows and more cows. For some strange reason I like cows. They are harmless, they look cute, they mow the lawn, they fertilise the



Images Clockwise:

- ❖ Lofer's church.
- ❖ A guest house in town.
- ❖ Lofer's church spire.



grass and they are so trusting and stupid that you cannot help but you like them. I would have a pet cow just to talk to, much too stupid to know what to do next, but happy just to be with you. And of course, it would be called Ermintrude. So when you see photos of cows, you now know why!

We were in the Gastein Valley and following the crystal clear Salzach River. Craig spotted the sign for Lofer and we turned off. Half time tea break! I popped on the kettle whilst Craig went in search of some fresh water. After a nice hot cuppa we set to and filled Vin with water before taking a toot around the village. Lofer is very pretty, set amid valleys, rivers and forests, it has a very laid back feel. A nice village square, church and theatre. Quite a few ladies were out doing their community clean, which we think is just fab. Everyone mucks in and keeps the village clean. Not only makes the place look nice but gives a real sense of community spirit.

Refreshed we set off again, following the river and avoiding the Pinzgau mountains. A huge wall of stone that means we have to a great big banana drive in order to get to Bavaria. A few kilometres down the road and we entered Germany. No border crossing just a small road side sign saying Germany...tune in next week to find out where we venture in the Bavarian Alps.