



Item: Fast Lane #19 in 2022 Petergram (#114 since 2020)
Date: **Saturday, May 7th 2022**
From: Peter Sontag writing at 5:30 am from Room 419 at the Steigenberger Graf Zeppelin Hotel in Stuttgart, Germany
To: Our Fast Lane Travel Customer Family and Friends at home in Australia, Canada, Europe, Iceland, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa and in the USA!
Subject: **My 2022 PCA Spring PORSCHE Treffen report to date!**

I. PCA Spring TREFFEN Report to Date:



Friday, April 29th – All preparations are in place; Wendy packed the trip suitcases in logical order so that the items I need last are on the bottom; my trip “bible” is complete, including a list of the inventory of the content of the two “big” suitcases for the trip. Given that Delta no longer operates **DL 116**, which was the wonderful non-stop flight ATL – STR, instead, I now have to fly TPA-EWR-FRA-STR on **United**, code shared with **Lufthansa**. No problem.

Except, at 11:16 am today Lufthansa e-mailed the following message; **Your flight LH 128 on 1.05.2022** (remember that dates in Europe are written day.month.year) **from Frankfurt/Main to Stuttgart is cancelled**. Now, this is not exactly the message I was hoping for. I have to check 3 large, heavy suitcases (because our customers get a present every night in their room, and I am bringing them with me from the US). So, rather than conveniently checking luggage through to Stuttgart (STR) I now must pick up the luggage in Frankfurt (FRA). No problem – I called one of our European Staff members, Johnny, to meet me in FRA on May 1st and assist me to get on an **ICE Train** (Inter City Express, i.e., a bullet train) to **Stuttgart Hauptbahnhof** (main train station), conveniently located directly across the street from our traditional 5-star hotel, the **Steigenberger Graf Zeppelin Hotel**.

Saturday, April 30th 2022 – Luggage checked TPA-EWR Newark-FRA. Paid \$200 for the “excess” luggage permitted. Flight on a UA AB 319 uneventful on a beautiful sunny day. Arrived in EWR and the monitor showed that my connecting flight LH 0403 was departing from **Gate C125**. Experience has taught me to double check with a human. Sure enough the departure was actually from **Gate B62** – a different terminal reachable by airport train. No problem – took the train – the Lufthansa 747-800 was sitting there waiting for me at the gate.

Allyn, our agency manager, did a wonderful job using my accumulated AmEx points



to get me a business class seat. She'll do that for all of our customers, so you don't have the hassle with hours on hold (we charge a small fee for that service). Excellent Lufthansa service on this 7½ hour flight to FRA. Lufthansa



now has this fascinating new feature: Flight Cameras. On the TV screen at your seat, you can now watch the scenery underneath your plane. Was fun flying over Boston and Cape Cod. Flight was totally smooth and very pleasant. Excellent dinner (I chose the salmon and a light Pino Grigio) and breakfast was equally delicious. I enjoyed my coffee with my usual Bailey's. The captain apologized that at dinner all courses had to be served on the tray simultaneously because they were short two flight crew.

Sunday, May 1st 2022 – Arrived in FRA five minutes early. It seemed that my gate was 100 miles from passport control and the luggage belt. I had one of the electric golf carts drive me – great service. Passport control no longer stamps your passport, but you stick it into a machine, like the Global Entry Device when you return to the US. At luggage, for one Euro you can get a cart, but you needed to do that with a credit card. A very nice porter helped me. There is also a service in FRA, for a couple hundred Euros, that meets and greets you at the plane, gets your luggage and escorts you through passport and to curbside or your train.

Johny was waiting for me, and we went over to the train platform. German trains are very efficient, and the signage is easy to follow. It even tells you where to stand on the platform so it's easier to find your reserved seat. You don't have to shlepp the luggage to your seat, but there are storage areas right where you enter the train. It's only an hour high-speed ride to Stuttgart. During the trip a flight/train attendant offers to bring you refreshments. As we approached Stuttgart, I called the Graf Zeppelin Hotel and they sent a porter with a cart to platform #6. It's helpful if you tell them the platform number (which is displayed on the monitor in the train).

COVID Concerns: inevitably we get asked multiple times daily:

1. "When will I need the digital registration form for entry into German?"
2. "When and to whom do I need to show my inoculation certificate?"
3. "Do I have to wear a mask on the flight?"
4. "What is the current COVID situation in Germany?"
5. "What about restaurants in Germany?"

The short answer: Europe is back to normal. Wearing a mask has become optional, it is up to you. No one asked me for the digital registration form nor was I ever asked to show my inoculation certificate. Lufthansa required that you wear a mask on the flight. In Germany, currently, you only have to wear a mask on public transportation – like the S-Bahn, on the 10-minute ride, from the PORSCHE Museum back to the hotel.



Restaurants are completely back to normal, i.e., wearing a mask has become optional.

Today, three of our customers arrived early. They walked around downtown Stuttgart, got as much sunlight and exercise as possible to overcome jet lag. What a beautiful 51-degree day. We met in the lobby at 5:00 pm and walked (less than 10 minutes) up to the **Lautenschlager Wirtshaus Restaurant**. A wonderful local place with both indoor and outdoor seating. Johny

had reserved a table for us inside. When we arrived, big German pretzels (Brezen in German), butter and ice water (a rarity in Europe, which I make sure the restaurants have for every one of our meals) were waiting for us on the table. Everyone ordered a la carte and the beer and wine flowed nicely. Today everyone needs to go to sleep early after a trans-Atlantic flight. Welcome to Stuttgart!

Monday, May 2nd 2022 – A wonderful breakfast buffet is waiting for us in the Zeppelinos Restaurant on the ground floor of the hotel. Johnny, in the meanwhile, is at the ADAC (German AAA) to buy the Autobahn permits for Austria and Switzerland for several EuroDelivery and Custom trips in the next few months. Met a couple more customers in the lobby and gave them maps of downtown Stuttgart with some walking options. The Schlossplatz and Markthalle are a “must” for new arrivals. The display of vegetables, fruits, cheeses and those gigantic loaves of the Holzofenbauernbrot (farmers’ bread baked in wood burning stoves), all organic, of course. It’s similar as the famous Les Halles in Paris only more organized and cleaner. Foods also from other parts of the world are available in rows and rows of food stalls. When you walk out of the Markthalle, inevitable you say . . . I wish we’d have one of those at home.



Tuesday, May 3rd 2022 – Another scrumptious breakfast buffet helped get the day off to a good start. According to our tradition and absolute requirement, we commenced with the mandatory **drivers’ briefing at 11:00 am**. I had prepared a lively PowerPoint presentation about how-to drive-in Europe and what to do and, more importantly, what NOT to do. There were lots of questions and everyone had a crisp understanding as to what to expect on our first driving experience tomorrow. **Speaking of Experience:** This is perhaps where I should share with you a sample of some actual questions customers have posed in the past:

1. The Autobahn is a free for all?

NO, it’s not. In fact, the fatality rate on the US Interstate Highway System is 2 ½ times that of German! There are compelling reasons why it is safer on the no-speed limit sections of the Autobahn. Read on.

2. The Autobahn everywhere has no speed limit? Switzerland is not part of the EU, you are crossing an international border – the Swiss have a very strict 120 kmh (75 mph) speed limit and it is rigorously enforced – even if you’re just 5 kms over.

3. What about other countries? All other EU countries such as: Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, France, Italy etc. have a strict 130 kmh (81 mph) on their Interstates. Speed cameras are everywhere and you will get a ticket in the

mail. If you **get a ticket** in the mail or via e-mail, and you will, just ignore it? **Don't.** That's OK if you never want to go back to Europe again – they have computers and a long memory – plus they'll come after you with a US or Canadian law firm. You don't want that. Please just call us and we'll process it for you by wire transferring the funds to the issuing authorities. Depending on the complexity of the ticket, we must charge a fee between \$160 and \$500 per ticket plus the fine. FYI, PORSCHE is required by law to relay your contact points to the local authorities in case of an infraction.

4. My new PORSCHE **displays the speed limit** on the dash board as I am driving and I can rely on that? **NO, you can't.** We had a case of a customer driving in the no-speed limit section, right outside of Stuttgart, his dashboard said "No speed limit" however, there was a small temporary construction site and the workers put a temporary 80 km speed-limit sign on a tri-pod. That customer blew past that sign at 220 kms. He was video recorded. The police were waiting at the hotel for him. If you exceed any posted speed limit in Germany by 150 kmh, you'll lose your license for life! It took every ounce of persuasiveness from our local staff not to have his car impounded. The fine was in excess of €8,000 (approx. \$10,000)! The worst part was the headlines in the Stuttgarter newspapers "Amerikaner Rasen auf der Autobahn" with the evening news displaying the video. Concentrate on the traffic signage.
5. **How fast am I going?** Once you are over \$100 mph and more, resist the temptation to look at your speedometer – let the person next to you do that. Let's say you'll do a conservative 120 mph, and you look down and it takes you 3 seconds to focus short distance and then you look up again. You will have gone about 530 ft . . . a football field is 360ft.! At a 150 mph in 3 seconds, you cover the distance of two football fields. There is no replacement for common sense.
6. **If there's a slow poke in front of me, I just flash my lights or honk?** **NO, please don't,** it's absolutely not allowed. In fact, if the person in front of you has an accident, although you didn't even physically touch them, it could be construed as your fault. In our experience on the no-speed limit sections of the German Autobahn near Switzerland, you sometimes get a slow Swiss driver in front of you – just be patient and hope he goes home soon.

We then enjoyed a delightful lunch of local "Maultaschen" and a couple of other options. The "Feldsalat" was unequalled. Johnny then took the group after lunch to the stunning Mercedes Museum. From there the entire group was taken by our private motorcoach to the PORSCHE Museum. Five participants had ordered their PORSCHEs through the PORSCHE Museum. As our motorcoach arrived in front of the Museum a gleaming row of beautiful P0RSCHES was waiting for us.



Everyone had their passport, international driver's license, credit card and lots of anticipation ready. The paperwork was a snap. Johnny took tons of pictures, and we were ready to roll. The folks who had rented their PORSCHEs from the other two rental companies already had their cars delivered and waiting for them at the hotel. One of our staff members escorted that



group on the S-Bahn from the Porscheplatz-Neuwirtshaus to the Hauptbahnhof station (a 10-minute ride) right at the hotel. They got there before me and my group of four PORSCHEs behind me. Five o'clock traffic in Stuttgart. By the time we returned to the Graf Zeppelin Hotel the 3 PORSCHEs from the other two companies were delivered – 2 911's and a Macan. Everybody was happy.

The only place where masks were mandatory was on the S-Bahn, i.e., all public transportation. The Mercedes and PORSCHE Museums as well as restaurants have a masks optional policy. Frankly, the entire experience is relaxed and unchanged from the "old days" in 2019. Furthermore, the Ukraine conflict hardly makes the news here. It seems farther away than in the US where the media blares the daily "War in Europe" headlines. No one talks about it nor worries about it. Of course, the Germans help on the humanitarian side, but there is zero difference in the day-to-day life of the people on the street.

At 6:00 pm we met in the lobby and took the ten-minute walk down Königsstrasse to the Schlosspark and our favorite restaurant there, **Carl's Brauhaus**.

Johnny, as always went ahead and had ordered Flammkuchen and Brezen appetizers along with delicious local beer and superb local white and red wines.



Everyone ordered a la carte. The most popular dishes were the Wiener Schnitzel, Bratwürste and the inevitable local specialty Maultaschen. The Apfelringe mit Walnusseis dessert was a big hit. We strolled back to the hotel, had a round of drinks at the lobby bar and got a good night's sleep.

Wednesday, May 4th 2022 – At 8:30 am our staff drove all of our cars up from the garage and lined them up in the hotel's court yard. I then conducted the pre-departure briefing, went over the navigation and some last-minute instructions. Our staff, in the meanwhile, had programmed all of the NAVI systems in the cars with the key destinations for our drip into the



Alps. To say the least our drive was exhilarating. All walkie talkies are charged and we ready to depart. The hotel staff blocked the right lane and we departed as a beautiful group with my Panamera as the lead vehicle and the Macan as the wing man. One of the couples mist the first right turn and drove through a long tunnel to the Nekar River. We were on the Autobahn A-8 within 15 minutes. The fun part was that they beat us to the lunch venue. The moment we were past the STR Airport we entered the first no-speed limit zone and we travelled at a comfortable cruising speed of 120 mph. I made a stop at the first Autobahn Rest Stop for a pee-break and to make sure everyone was OK. I have never seen bigger smiles on anyone's face – everyone was very OK. For our next spectacular drive, we headed south on the legendary A-7 Autobahn – virtually no traffic and no speed limit. As we go closer to Austria the Alps rose out of the mist and the view was breathtaking. We arrived at our lakeside restaurant where an amazing table was set for us. Thomas and Wendy did a fantastic job in the preparations. For a little extra fun, rather than go directly to our Chalet in the mountains I wanted to cross over the Fernpass and go into Tirol. It started drizzle, the traffic was heavy and there was a detour which would have taken too much time. So, we went as high in Austria as the Zugspitzblick and from there



headed to our Bavarian Mountain Lodge. We arrived at the Berghöhe – and what a magnificent place it was. The fresh air, aroma of the mountain flowers and the occasional ding of a cowbell made it a wonderfully relaxing evening. All rooms

had balconies and amazing Alpine views. After settling in we decided to have an informal meeting at the bar – delightful. The chef had prepared a superb four-course dinner. Everyone was amazed at the quality of the cuisine, the ambiance of the rooms and the amazing service of the staff – all dressed in local dirndls, of course. Life is good.

Thursday, May 4th 2022:

After a lavish breakfast we headed out of the mountains and north on the A-7 to Pfaffenhausen for our tour of the famous RUF Automobile Company. Wow – did they roll out the red carpet for us. We enjoyed a very detailed tour; were all given a lovely RUF gift bag with some goodies in it.



One of the engineers gave us a fascinating tour not only of the parts of the factory where they will modify your existing car, but we received a detailed review of the cars they are building from scratch with a carbon-fiber F-1 cockpit and a frame exclusively designed by RUF. We were awed and impressed that the price of a RUF starts at €900,000 (about one million US\$). What's even more amazing is that they have a back log of about thirty orders! I was thanked multiple times by our participants for including this visit. What has changed from the "old days" is that they now charge €50 per person for the tour – but it beats Disney World.

After RUF we drove wonderfully windy country roads up to the A-8 and headed to Stuttgart. There was a little traffic jam because tree lanes narrowed to one due to some landscape maintenance. We arrived timely at the planned Rast Station in Denkendorf on the Autobahn. I filled up all the cars with premium 98 Octane and went inside to pay for everyone. We then continued with no speed limit to the B-27 and then slowly to Stuttgart. The entire Spring Treffen team drove to the Hotel, and everyone could unload their luggage or co-driver. I then lead everyone back to the PORSCHE Museum where we returned those amazing cars we enjoyed.

We returned to our hotel in 10 minutes on the S-Bahn (45 minutes by car on a Thursday afternoon. Dinner tonight was enjoyed at the elegant CUBE Restaurant on top of the Art Center in Stuttgart. They had prepared fabulous filet mignons for us and local wines flowed freely. We, of course, had the best tables with an amazing view of the Schlossplatz and the Castle.

Friday, May 6th 2022 – PORSCHE Factory and Museum. Yesterday, the folks in my office forwarded me this e-mail from the PORSCHE Factory. Remember the factory was closed for months and they had no tours. Some customers who signed up and cancelled because there was an element of uncertainty regarding the possibility of a PORSCHE Factory visit. I kept telling people to relax. I have been doing this for 45 years and it will be our 200th trip this year. I'll get it done!

A notification from PORSCHE AG in Zuffenhausen: *Fast Lane special offer:*

- 11:00 – 12:30 tour of 911 production **only for 10 PAX**
- 12:30 – 13:30 Lunch at Christophorus
- 13:30 – 14:30 Museum Tour
- 14:30 – 15:00 Free time for shopping
- 15:00 – 17:00 Taycan factory tour **2 groups each 10 PAX**

For your info: *the Spring Treffen group of Fast Lane Travel is the first group since 2 years visiting the Porsche factory!!*

The Factory visit end result: I had a meeting with two PORSCHE executives to do some future planning. However, the immediate result was that in addition to **the above honor of the 2022 PCA TREFFEN being the first group in two years to visit the PORSCHE Factory, EVERYONE** was able to enjoy the **entire program** above – not just 10 participants!!! I look forward to Louise Swartzwalder's article for PANO. We returned to the hotel and an hour or so later, had our private deluxe motor coach take us the legendary **Stuttgarter Stäffele Restaurant**. This is where they serve the Onion soup in a real gigantic onion. It was a raucous evening with lots of cheer, promises of coming on another trip and exchanges of well wishes.

II. Fast Lane Update: Fast Lane Travel Update: Based on current inquiries and registrations, THE most popular European trips are the PCA Fall **TREFFEN** and **Tuscany #2**. If you are planning to come on the **PCA Fall TREFFEN** in **Stuttgart**, you should sign up **NOW** please! Thank you.

A. The annual **Twelve Alpine Passes** is **SOLD OUT**. We can get PORSCHEs, but the hotels in Switzerland have no more space available. Thomas has done an outstanding job enhancing this awesome experience by extending the drive in **Austria** to Innsbruck plus in **Switzerland** now including the renowned town of **St. Moritz**. It gets better every time we conduct this trip. Passo dello Stelvio and eleven more passes, here we come.

2022 Fast Lane PORSCHE Trips in Current Planning V-113						
From	Date	To	Date	PORSCHE Tour	Highlight	pp Dble
Mon	2-May	Sat	7-May	PCA SpringPORSCHE TREFFEN in Stuttgart	DEPARTED for Stuttgart	operating
Tue	31-May	Thu	9-Jun	Twelve Alpine Passes PORSCHE Fest	Awesome Alpine Driving	\$ 12,998
Sun	5-Jun	Mon	13-Jun	The 90th 24-Hours of Le Mans Luxury Tour	Pit Pass, "50-yard line"	\$ 18,498
Sun	11-Sep	Sat	17-Sep	Original PCA Fall PORSCHE TREFFEN Stuttgart	Factory & Museum	\$ 6,498
Tue	20-Sep	Thu	29-Sep	USA Carolinas Fall Colors - Tail of the Dragon	six spaces still available	\$ 11,998
Tue	20-Sep	Sat	1-Oct	Alpine Adventure: Beautiful Switzerland & Italy	details announced shortly	\$ 15,698
Wed	21-Sep	Sat	1-Oct	Come Home to two Peters' Austria	Moved to May/June 2023	2023
Mon	3-Oct	Sat	15-Oct	Tuscany PORSCHE Fest & Interlpen #1	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
Wed	12-Oct	Sun	23-Oct	Tuscany PORSCHE Fest & Interlpen #2	Register ASAP, selling out	\$ 15,498
Sat	29-Oct	Tue	8-Nov	Romantic Wild West - THE best of the USA	Don't miss out on this trip	\$ 11,998
Note: due to the doubled gas prices in Europe we may have to add a modest gas surcharge						

B. Coming Home with two Peters to Austria: We were compelled to **move this trip to 2023** since European Hotels in Tirol, Steiermark and Vienna, Austria are sold out for the balance of 2022. The demand for travel, understandably, has gone off the charts. We've been busy with the preparations for the Spring TREFFEN and haven't had a

minute to focus on finishing the 2023 schedule. Thomas, Catherine, and I will be working on it and publishing it very soon.

C. The **TUSCANY PORSCHE Fest #2** is still available. I have reserved our favorite Tuscan estate overlooking the Montalcino Valley. From our dining terrace you can see the renowned luxurious **Ferragamo Golf Course** . . . and, yes, you have the time, and we have the privilege for you to enjoy an optional round at Ferragamo. If you are an equestrian our estate has horses available for you. Of course, a pool, tennis court, a soccer field and hiking trails are yours to enjoy. This is by far THE most popular of our European trips each year. We haven't been there since 2019 for obvious reasons and they are ready with the wine tasting, cooking class and open arms.

D. Our **US PORSCHE Fest** trips are a very attractive option for you if Europe is not in the cards for you this year. So, bring your own PORSCHE, Corvette, '62 Cadillac, Lexus or whatever, to our superbly planned and organized **Carolinas** and **Romantic Wild West** tours. We conduct both US trips in THE most desirable time of the year in each location. The **Fall Colors of the Carolinas**. If you cannot bring your own car, we will assist you to rent one from PORSCHE Drive Atlanta or the Phoenix PORSCHE Dealer. Please check out these links: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coKJcxb0nII> or this one <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8tGOBhxkdQ>

I. **My Final Thoughts:** Academics' Efforts to Change a Lightbulb:

- How many **Princeton** students does it take to change a lightbulb?
Two---one to mix the martinis and one to call the electrician.
- How many **Brown** students does it take to change a lightbulb?
Eleven---one to change the lightbulb and ten to share the experience.
- How many **Dartmouth** students does it take to change a lightbulb?
None---Hanover doesn't have electricity.
- How many **Cornell** students does it take to change a lightbulb?
Two---One to change the lightbulb and one to crack under the pressure.
- How many **Penn** students does it take to change a lightbulb?
Only one, but he gets six credits for it.
- How many **Columbia** students does it take to change a lightbulb?
Seventy-six---one to change the lightbulb, fifty to protest the lightbulb's right to not change, and twenty-five to hold a counter-protest.
- How many **Yale** students does it take to change a lightbulb?
None---New Haven looks better in the dark.
- How many **Harvard** students does it take to change a lightbulb?
One---he holds the bulb, and the world revolves around him.
- How many **MIT** students does it take to change a lightbulb?
five ---one to design a nuclear-powered one that never needs changing, one to figure out how to power the rest of Boston using that nuked lightbulb, two to install it, and one to write the computer program that controls the wall switch.

Sorry, It's a little sparser today – I'm in Stuttgart – it's late and I'm going to bed. Please stay safe, healthy, and look forward to the great times we will have together again on the MANY fabulous **PORSCHE** tours in 2022. Please register for one of our **USA PORSCHE Tours** – we really should get out now and have some fun!

All the best to you, Peter

