





It again. I'm back. It's Tuesday morning, we're on our way to the mountains. We tried to open Swiss bank accounts this morning, but the minimum deposit was 2,000 SFR. We planned on opening it with USFB. The status that comes with a Swiss account would have been nice. It's foggy out now, and I can just see the outline of the Alps on the horizon.

Have you received a tape from the Potchinsky's? We made it while in London and Scotland. Hope you enjoy it. It was a lot of fun to make. We got pretty silly at times. Please save it for me.

I don't know if I told you about seeing Van Morrison at the Prince Albert Hall. The concert was good, but not what we expected. He played his music with a different tempo - much to fast. It sounded like completely different stuff. The Prince Albert Hall was unbelievable. It looked like it was right out of the movies as an opera house or ballet. It was very glamorous. All the people were dressed in casual clothes. It looked pretty silly.

Wed morning, 9am - I'm on the train again, this time headed from Rome to Florence. We decided to train from Milan to Rome overnight to get about seven hours of free sleep. It worked, but now we have a 3hr ride back to Florence. In first class we have seats that recline together to form couchettes, we were packed together & it was pretty uncomfortable, but better than getting to Florence late at night and not finding an open youth hostel.

Yesterday in Milan was the best! We walked to a mountain, one of the many, and started our trip up then and windy roads. The base of the mountain was all grape vines and farms and cute little villages. We ended up stopping at the top of the grape farms. It was quite a hike. Above that would have been free rock climbing. I wasn't up to it - too dangerous. The view was gorgeous!

Carte 24x30 - N° GE 4113 - Reproduction interdite  
GENEVE  
La Rade et le Jet d'Eau (130 m)

I went camera happy of course. We stopped at a high point and relaxed for a while. It took us about 2 1/2 - 3 hrs to walk up and about

1-1 1/2 down. what a workout. I did get to leave my luggage at the station. It wasn't locked up, but I chanced it. It turned out okay. Helen, John & Sandy carried their packs. They are insane. Oh, you'll love this - on the way up, church bells were playing from one of the small villages. Fresh mountain streams were flowing also. It was fantastic. There was only snow on the very tops. I can now say I've hiked in the Alps. I can't believe it.

From Milan we trained to Milan and then on to Rome. Dinner in Milan was good, cheap Italian pasta. My first real Italian meal.

We met an American journalist on our way to Milan. His name is Barry Kastleman. He works for CBS radio in Minnesota, on the Presidential Elections. He decided a month ago he didn't like the candidates and that it was a boring race, so he came abroad to travel. He had some great stories about big, influential people he has met and knows. We had a long discussion of politics & the US during the entire ride and dinner. It was really interesting, he was completely against Dukakis so we differed there. (I did send in my ballot).

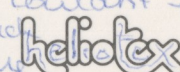
It's Saturday, the 5th now. I'm on my way back to London. It's about 17 hrs of train and ferry travel plus a little waiting here and there. I'll rest at where I left off. We left ~~Milan~~ <sup>Rome</sup> for Florence. Florence is a neat city. It's so packed together. We saw Michael Angelo's David and the Duomo. David was so perfect. He was gorgeous. The leather market was my favorite. I was so tempted to buy a coat or shoulder bag, but didn't have the money. The slippers looked great too. I'll go back when I'm rich.

Our group split up in Florence and we didn't take full advantage of what was there. At this point in our week,

we needed a break from each other. We were all on each other's nerves, so I didn't have as good a time as I could have, but still had a good time.

We trained through the night train to Munich. Munich was cold! We froze. We walked around the city for a while, window shopping. The Christmas decorations are on full blast. The toy stores are just as good as Schwartz.

In the afternoon we went out to Dachau, the concentration camp. It was a definite eye opener. We were able to walk through the barracks, crematory, gas chamber, and all over the grounds. The museum there had fantastic (can that word be used here?) pictures and loads of info - I wish I knew how to read German. It was all very interesting and depressing. Imagining what all the people went through was a downer. We actually walked the path they walked into the gas chambers. The entire place was silent, everybody just thinking. I'm glad I went, it was quite a history lesson. I wonder what the kids here are taught in school about the Holocaust.

We went from there to dinner at "Weinwald". Sounds German doesn't it? I had half a roasted chicken. It was the best. The seasoning was fantastic. After that we wanted to go to a "Bierhaus" for some German beer, but we couldn't find one that was open, which made no sense to us. We went  near our hostel.

which was out of the center of town, and it was so cold to walk to an open bar. We ended up in a restaurant