

A smart journey of more than 48 kilometres of nature on Mount Grossglockner Alpine Road

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Every driver will gladly gear down here - with its unique panorama, Mount Grossglockner Alpine Road has always had a special attraction for the drivers of special cars. Over a distance of 48 kilometres, its tarmac winds up to an altitude of more than 2,500 metres on and around Austria's highest mountain. This road of 'automobile bliss' has been the venue of many a rally, make meeting or vintage car drive. And to the 'pilots' of the tiny town racer smart - who are coming to the 'Europa-Sportregion Zell am See-Kaprun' from 24th to 26th August to participate in the big international fan meeting 'smart times' - it offers an opportunity to experience the magnificence of nature very closely.

A craving for sensation on asphalt: it is its original purpose that makes Grossglockner Alpine Road so special. Although it connects the province of Salzburg to the province of Carinthia, it was build for totally different reasons. From the very beginning the impressive landscape was the main thing about the road - and to make this landscape accessible for the increasingly popular automobiles, planners in Carinthia and Salzburg had been working on ideas for this panorama road since 1922. Construction engineer Franz Wallack was in charge of the project that took more concrete shape in the year 1924. Work finally began in 1930. Until the opening of the road in August 1935, up to 3,200 road construction workers were employed there.

According to statistics, about 60 per cent of Austrian drivers enjoyed the 'twisting natural experience' already in the year of its opening. Just under 50 years later the volume of traffic was finally too heavy - by 1984 the width of the road had been increased from six to more than seven metres. And the bends also had to be softened by being significantly widened. Even today countless road workers have to remove any possible sources of danger from the road every day without fail - from freshly fallen snow to large pieces of rock.

Apart from its sights and free exhibitions, Grossglockner Alpine Road offers some mountain inns and places for a rest. After passing through 'Hochtor Tunnel', with the border line between the provinces of Salzburg and Carinthia in its middle, motorists come to 'Wallackhaus'. This historic mountain inn originally served as a canteen for the road construction workers. The route surprises travellers with something special and interesting behind every rock ledge. For that reason, it is a paradise for a relaxed trip in your car - either a very traditional drive in a vintage car or an expedition into nature in the smart town racer.

There is more information on the 'smart times 2007' and Grossglockner Alpine Road online at www.europasportregion.info.

General Information:

With its 14,000 beds and two million overnight stays a year, the 'Europa-Sportregion Zell am See-Kaprun' is one of the most important holiday regions in Austria. At any time of the year, the region offers its guests a very varied range of holiday choices. During the summer months it convinces with ideal conditions for all kinds of sports - from golf or walking to biking to water sports. Its special highlight: you can always ski on finest powder snow here - even in warm weather. It is the glacier of Kitzsteinhorn situated at an altitude of 3,000 metres that makes this possible. Visitors of the 'Europa-Sportregion' can quickly and easily reach day-trip destinations like Mount Grossglockner, the mountain reservoirs of Kaprun, or the City of Salzburg where Mozart was born. Moreover, Zell am See-Kaprun offers its guests a unique mixture of events - from great concerts to first-class sports events.

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