

ISTANBUL CLASSIC AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION

This is Anki's and my attempt to describe our journey to Istanbul. The difficulty of the matter is to communicate the warmth and hospitality we felt during the entire stay. You had to be there to understand.



The background to this trip is that we met Ilker and his friends on Wheels & Wings in Varberg in the summer of 2009. We were then invited to attend the greatest motor festival in the history of Istanbul on May 29 to 30. No Guts No Glory! Anki and I said YES immediately. However, the festival was canceled at the last minute but it didn't matter, this gives us a reason to go back again next year.

Tuesday, 25 May we leave from Arlanda Airport, Stockholm.

When we arrived in Istanbul Ilker was there and picked us up. After a 30-minute trip, we arrived at one of his friends, Jamal, a guy with a company (Onur Oto Elektrik) that dealt with renovations and car electronics. He had a small but impressive garage with loads of stuff. I found four hubcaps on the wall the first day, which I was allowed to buy later and bring home. A funny thing was that most stories and pictures hanging along the walls were Swedish. Even our famous 58 AKE hung in Istanbul on a garage wall.

At Jamal's we also met one of the guys from Varberg (Cuneyt). He stood there polishing his Chevy 62, a car in original condition and few miles on the meter. After many greetings, smiles and two beers with a Turkish pretzel, he drove us to the hotel in style. Great fun.

[\(Photos from Jamal and journey to the hotel\)](#)

When we arrived at the hotel we checked in, unpacked a bit and then went up to the hotel's roof terrace (on the 9th floor) where we drank a WHOLE BOTTLE of champagne, Bollinger, in the true spirit of James Bond. Anki started to open the bottle, the cork shot into the air, missed her nose with a close shave and landed somewhere out there in Istanbul. If somebody died, we do not know to this day. She (and all her clothes) smelled of champagne all night though. 😊 😊

[\(Pictures from the hotel roof terrace\)](#)

Wednesday we spent getting to know the surroundings. We visited the big famous Bazaar and Dolmabahce Palace. A grand palace in European style inspired by the Louvre in Paris and Buckingham Palace in London. The Palace Construction was commissioned by Sultan Abdülmecit I and was finished in 1856 after 13 years. It was also the home of Atatürk when he was in Istanbul. A fantastic place with stair railings made of crystal, antique silk rugs, candlesticks of ebony and chandeliers weighing 4.5 tons. Unfortunately it was forbidden to take photographs inside the palace but it is absolutely something you have to see when you visit Istanbul.

Thursday we were also more tourists than old greasers. We visited an underground water cistern. It was like stepping into a partially water-filled underground cathedral. Yerebatan Saray, or the sunken palace in the heart of Istanbul is a sensational experience for all senses. We also visited Topikapi Palace.

[\(Photos from Yerebatan cistern\)](#)

[\(Photos from Topikapi Palace\)](#)

We walked most of the day 'Long Walk no-goal' and Ove became a bit introvert after a while, not knowing that he had a fantastic culinary experience in front of him. We were picked up at the hotel that evening by Ilker and his wife Zeynep, who invited us to a fabulous dinner. We went to a hotel with a rooftop terrace along the water below the Blue Mosque and the experience was magical - as taken from a Thousand and one nights. We let the images speak for themselves. After dinner there was Backgammon and hookah, a very nice way of ending the day. Note that Anki's BIG smile is not caused by any illegal substances in the pipe. It's actually her natural state, to smile with her entire face. "Love You" ☺

[\(Photos from dinner with Ilker and Zeynep\)](#)

Friday was also a day of sightseeing. We visited the Blue Mosque and as our bodies were both tired and worn out after days of walking, we had a Turkish bath in the afternoon. The feeling of lying there being scrubbed and washed by an unknown woman was strange. However, it was over quickly and it was extremely comfortable and priceless too. We ended the day with a lovely fish dinner and a bottle of wine at a restaurant with a fantastic view. After spending some time on the roof terrace again, we went to bed quite happily that night, greasy and a bit sore.

Saturday morning at 08 o'clock Ilker picked us up again. Now it was car tourism, big time! Ilker drove us along the Bosphorus with the Black Sea in the north and the Marmara Sea in the south. We stopped for a great breakfast and the next stop was a Car Museum, scale and design was not something one would have expected to find in Istanbul. A woman, who inherited everything from her father, owned all the cars and the museum. Outside we found a Ford Fairline convertible, it belonged to the President of the Club, which has existed for nearly 20 years in Turkey. The pictures speak for themselves.

[\(Photos from the first museum\)](#)

After walking around a lot on the first stop we went on to the next collection. The owner of the entire collection, Cengic Arsay, met up outside. There stood his latest acquisition, a 2010 Corvette with 680 healthy horses under the hood. (I was not allowed to drive it even though I asked nicely.) Cengic was a super nice gentleman, and was of course given a Wing Club Cap as he had a number of wing cars in his collection. I found one of the 58 convertibles that exist in Turkey. He had also bought a 60 convertible that was going to be completely renovated. Besides that, he had a vast number of cars in his collection. If you think it looks a bit unorganized it is because he is expanding to accommodate even more cars. We will probably meet him in the U.S next autumn; he plans to go to both Carlisle and Hershey to shop. Enjoy more pictures.

[\(Photos from the second museum\)](#)

On the way back we passed yet another museum. It was created by one of Turkey's wealthiest families. This was an incredible facility with lots of items. They had everything you can think of - industrial products, cars, boats, planes and lots more. I publish all the pictures we took here as well. Maybe not interesting for everyone but certainly for me.

[\(Pictures from the industrial museum\)](#)

As a grand finale we visited another one of Ilker's friends. It was the father of the friend he visited in Varberg in 2009. Here was a renovation of a 46 Woodie going on and in the yard was also a 1966 Impala - one of the nicest I've ever seen. There is a movie clip of the V8 included with the images, the sound is poor but still... ☺

They also built small boats in the garage, just because they enjoyed it. Now there is a Wing Club sticker in their garage also ☺☺ Watch the pictures and enjoy.

[\(Photos Woodie and Impala\)](#)

Sunday morning 7:15 we went to the club's first outing for the summer. We started from the hotel in Ilker's Chevy pickup. He took us out of the worst traffic and then we were transferred to a Chevy 56. Our driver enjoyed it just as much as we did. He did not speak much English, but we understood each other anyway.

Along the way to the ferry berth (to take us over on the Asian side) more and more cars joined us, the news had obviously travelled fast. When we finally arrived at the ferry there were about 20 cars in line, all waiting for us and we were warmly welcomed. After parking on the ferry it was breakfast time!

Imagine our surprise when most of the trunk lids opened and all kind of delicacies in the form of food and drink were presented. There was a great atmosphere on the car deck after that. When we drove off the ferry a journey full of honking, waving and smiling faces followed.

We made the first stop in a small town, where we drove all the cars out on to a narrow pier. There were lots of people fishing on the pier, but that did not seem to matter. Everyone thought it was awesome that we came and we all had ice tea and cold beers.

Anki and I thought this was the actual outing, but no!! We left the pier accompanied with strong horns, waving and numerous ovations from the people we passed along the road. When we reached our goal, we were in the midst of some olive groves out in the middle of nowhere. There was a restaurant with an upper floor in the form of an open roof terrace, where we were served a lunch with all kinds of delights in an endless row. The food just kept coming until everyone was satisfied and happy. In the meantime, we talked with lots of nice people who were both curious and interested in us.

The local newspaper also interviewed us during this lunch. The trip was good advertising for the Ikod club and also for us. I again publish all the pictures we took, enjoy.

[\(Photos Sunday outing\)](#)

Monday was a day of reflection and rest before the journey home. My hubcaps was delivered to the hotel and there were also some gifts in the bag: a small metal car from Jamal's workshop and a clock from the club. I had brought a number of hats, stickers and shirts from Wing Club, they are now scattered among our friends around Istanbul.

In conclusion I would just like to write a few more lines:

When we came home we hade some very tough weeks ahead of us for different reasons. You meet many people during your life journey, and you should remember some things. There are people with different upbringing, different cultures and different skin color. They have different values and different languages. However, there is one thing that most of us have in common regardless of any differences - a big heart, combined with humility and respect for other people.

We wish from the bottom of our hearts to thank you for friendly hospitality, and a wonderful stay in Istanbul.

Unfortunately I have a problem with names – but we wish to give special thanks to our hosts for the week, Ilker & Zeynep, to Cuneyt and his wife and of course to Jamal from Onur Elektrik. We also give special thanks to our driver during the trip – thank you for the safe transport with a fantastic car. We would also like to thank all the others I do not remember the names of who have helped to enrich our stay in an unforgettable way.

Warm greetings from a sunny Sweden from Ove & Anki

Classic Chevrolet Wing Club

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