

with a flaminia to portugal



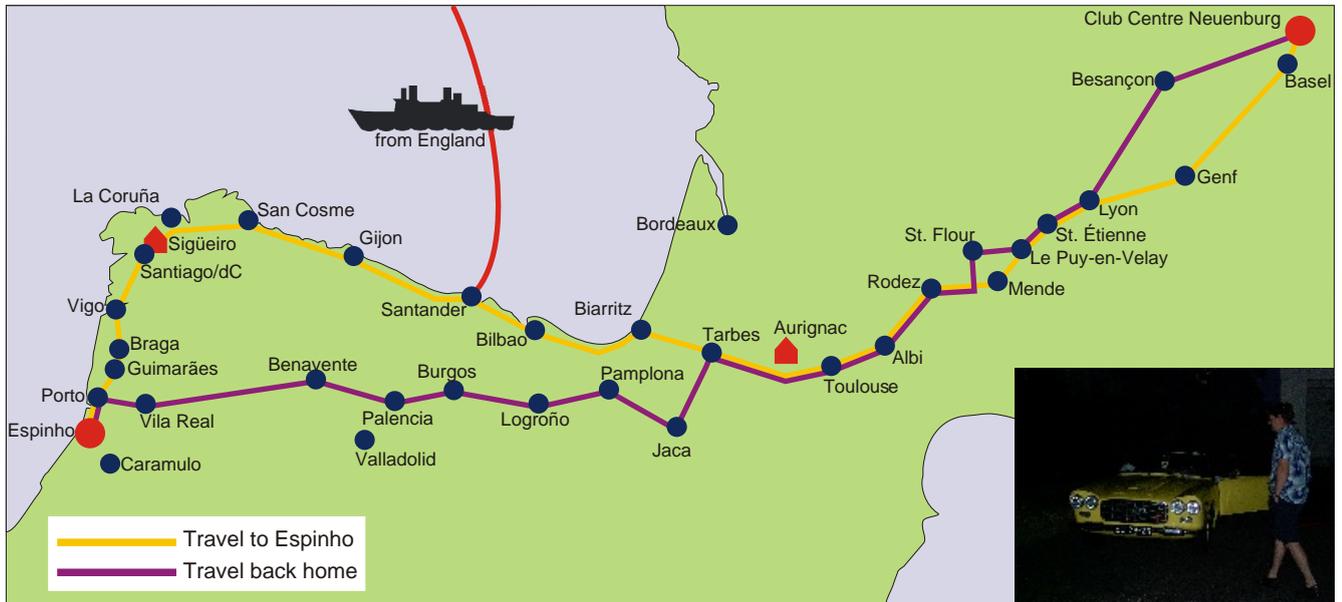
In Le Pertuis, situated between St. Étienne and Le Puy-en-Velay, you can find many houses with quarry stones.

Third Edition:

VINCENZO

ADVENTURE TOUR

A yellow Lancia Flaminia Touring Convertible has passed our test: No problems to make a 6000 km rally for a classic car in good condition! And all the other cars from Ireland, England, France, the Netherlands, Spain and Germany came home without making any trouble.



June 17, 2003, 4.00 a.m.
Departure in Neuenburg

Would it be possible to undertake a 6000 km tour with a 40 years old Cabriolet? We started a test. By the occasion of our annual Vincenzo Adventure Tour to Portugal some classic cars should prove their fitness for long travels.

June 16, 2003: Our Dutch club member Jacques arrives in the club center in Neuenburg, in the very south-west corner of Germany. 650 km on the motorway were no problem. After the dinner and a "Weissbier" it is time for sleeping because we want to start very early in the morning.

June 17, 2003: At 4.00 a.m. you can hear the deep sound of the Flaminia V6 engine. Escorted by a Thema 3.0 V6 and a Fulvia Coupé we finally can start. We try to avoid traffic jams and go on the motorway A5 to the Swiss border. In Basel we are taking petrol and some of us have to buy the Swiss motorway vignette. At 7.00 a.m. before the commuter traffic could cost our time we are already in Geneva. Once more taking cheap Swiss fuel (and a coffee). Then we enter France. At 9.00 a.m. we are passing Lyon and soon we are in St. Étienne. Now the huge factories are far away and beautiful countryside is waiting for us. In Le Pertuis near Le Puy-en-Velay we find a lot of these typical old farm houses made of quarry stones. A very good background for photos with classic Lancia cars. There is enough time for a picnic in midst of

green meadows. We are crossing Le Puy and Mende. From here we can use the motorway A75. They have planned a connection from Paris to Béziers which would reduce the traffic in the Rhône valley. Near Mende they have constructed the highest bridge of the world, you could put the Eiffel tower under this bridge! We leave the motorway after a few minutes and go westwards. We are crossing very old towns: Rodez, Carmaux and Albi. But our destination is Portugal and we really regret not having more time for these interesting towns with medieval architecture. In the evening we are reaching Toulouse which can be passed easily thanks to very large streets. 70 km behind Toulouse the motorway Tarbes - Pau - Biarritz begins. Now we are tired and we find a hotel in the small town Aurignac, situated about 10 km north of the motorway. We contact another group by mobile phone. They are coming via Paris, Bordeaux to Biarritz. We will meet them next day at the FARO DE CABO MAYOR, the striking lighthouse of Santander.

June 18, 2003: In the morning we are walking through Aurignac with its old walls and towers. At sunrise with a light fog it reminds a little bit at the region between Turin and Asti. After a good breakfast we are starting to our second stage. The motorway is empty and we are rolling with low speed and without stress. After 2 hours we are in Biarritz.

In this region there is much traffic because many Spanish and Portuguese trucks want to cross the frontier. But they will leave our route soon. From Irún via San Sebastián and Bilbao to Santander it is better to stay on the motorway. At 2.00 p.m. (in spite of the traffic) we are at the lighthouse of Santander. The second group from the Netherlands is already here. Peter, our English club member from Málaga has made a Spanish roundtrip and is also waiting here. The lighthouse is standing on the cliff (Cabo Mayor) and you have a wonderful view on the coast line. On the terrace of the lighthouse restaurant they offer calamares fritas and we spend some of the time which we have won on the motorways. Of course we have to take a lot of photos. But finally we must leave that wonderful place because we must reach our motel near Santiago de Compostela. We know a direct way from the Lighthouse to a small piece of motorway which ends in Torrelavego. Now on smaller roads but without much traffic we follow the Costa Verde, the green coast. In a small town we find a restaurant with terrace and stop a last time for a coffee. We are passing now Oviedo, Avilés, Lluvia, the bridge over the river Eo near Ribadeo and in the evening San Cosme. It is an important point of the tour. If you have enough time you can follow the coast to Ferrol and La Coruña. But we take the N 634 through the mountains in direction to the A9.



View over the roofs of Aurignac

San Cosme, important crossroads



Faro de Cabo Mayor, Santander

Motel Punta Cana, Sigüeiro



Terrace Restaurant at the Lighthouse

Short Check



We are crossing the Sierra de la Carba and take the A9 La Coruña - Vigo. In Sigüeiro, exit no. 12, we leave it and reach our Lancia Club Hotel, the Motel Punta Cana, about 2 km south of Sigüeiro. You can drive in the underfloor garage and into your box. You close the door from inside and you find upstairs your apartment for 1 - 4 persons. The price for the unit is EUR 40,00. After the check-in we are going to a restaurant in the town. We have a dinner for a very low price. It is remarkable that fuel and food is very cheap in such Spanish regions without much tourism. We ask the two Señoras to prepare a breakfast for the next morning. Because the last stage is a short one - only about 250 km - we are sitting in front of the restaurant until 11.00 a.m. Now it is time for departure. We regret that it is nearly impossible to find a good place in Santiago for taking photos of the huge complex of the Cathedral, University and other buildings. The best sight is from the motorway but no chance to stop there. Maybe next year there is more time and we can shoot our photos. After 30 minutes we are coming to Vigo. On the motorway you will reach the Portuguese frontier already in 5 minutes. We have enough time to go to Vigo Centre and have a look on this wonderful natural harbour. It is a large bay and with some rocky islands outside. From Vigo we go back on the motorway because it is the easiest way to pass the frontier. On the Portuguese side the motorways are in best condition

and there is not much traffic. We could reach Oporto within a short time. But we prefer to take the next exit and going via Braga and Guimarães, very old towns with interesting architecture. In the early afternoon we are in Oporto with its many bridges across the Douro river. From Oporto on the northside of the river we come to Vila Nova de Gaia on the southside with these many well-known Portwine producers.

Our Lancia Club Hotel SOLVERDE is situated outside of Espinho. It is a Five-stars-hotel at the Atlantic - with own beach. Some more participants are coming from the Airport. It is another possibility to attend this meeting if you have not the time for such a long travel. Our friend Adriano, who is leading our Portuguese club section, has organized a wonderful 4-days-programme for us. About 8.00 p.m. (Portuguese time) the last group of some English and French participants arrives. Their ferry came at noon to Santander and the Aurelias had to make a real power trip, 700 km in 8 hours. Now all participants are here and we can go to a typical Portuguese fish restaurant to have an excellent welcome dinner. The promenade of Espinho is not yet influenced by the tourism industries as in Spain or Italy. You can find very good restaurants in simple old houses instead of disco and striptease bars. The fish specialties are superb and even people who do not eat fish (at home) were very impressed.

In the northern regions of Portugal it could be rather cold - even in summer. Obviously the weather is influenced by the ocean current. In July 2002 we had not more than 14 degrees Celsius. But at the same time in Germany about 35 degrees. This year we meet already the heralds of the century summer and we can sit outside in a strand bar until 2.00 a.m. For travels to Northern Portugal I recommend to be prepared for cold and hot weather.

The dinner is the start of the 3rd Portuguese Lancia Meeting. In spite of the 5-stars-hotel the price is very reasonable. This is very important because it can equalize a little bit the costs for the long travel.

June 20, 2003: A bus is waiting in front of the hotel entrance. From Espinho we are going about 50 km to the south and then into the Serra do Caramulo. We are passing huge forests with eucalyptus trees. To the regret of the environmentalists these Australian trees replace the old cork oaks and pine trees. The eucalyptus is growing very fast but the wood is only interesting for the cellulose factories. Every year in the south of Portugal there are many forest fires by arson. In the north it is not so dangerous because here is more rain, also in summer. In the village of Caramulo we have an opulent lunch. Then we visit the famous museum of Caramulo with a lot of paintings and sculptures, but also many classic cars.



The 5-stars-hotel SOLVERDE

Oporto

Alpendurada,
high above the Douro valley



It is a very precious collection with Ferrari, Lamborghini, Cadillac etc. On the way back to the hotel we are coming via Aveiro which reminds a little bit to the Netherlands with that canal system. The ships can go into the centre. In the evening we are again in "our" strand bar.

The local Lancia dealer (and Fiat, Alfa of course) has reserved a big area at the beach promenade of Espinho. During the meeting days there is an exposition of the actual Lancia model range and enough parking space for our cars. A 24 hours guard service takes care for the safety of the cars. As usual many inhabitants of Espinho are walking along the beach. You can see even children at midnight. The rhythm of life is different to the northern countries. For us it is a very welcome thing to have our parkings reserved.

June 21, 2003: Saturday morning we are coming to this parking and meet the Portuguese club members. At 10.00 a.m. we are starting to our excursion. At first we follow small roads at the coast to Vila Nova de Gaia. Along the south shore of the Douro we have a good view to Oporto. Some kilometres up the valley we use one of these many bridges to go on the Oporto side. Near Entre-os-Rios, which became "famous" by the flood disaster in January 2001 when the old wooden bridge was destroyed by the high water, we are going up to the mountains to Alpendurada.

It is a monastery high above the Douro valley. At 35 degrees in the shadow it is very agreeable to undertake a walk through the cool catacombs. The Portuguese monasteries are famous for their excellent cuisine. In a pavilion with air-conditioning and a wonderful sight on the valley we have a magnificent lunch and a lot of cold Vinho Verde. In the early afternoon we have a (touristic) rally through the mountains. All teams have a roadbook and we are going through the mountains and forests to Arouca. We know it well from our 2001 tour. This year we do not visit the monastery again but some friends of the club who have a farm house high above the valley. In the shadow of old trees they have a wonderful garden, even with swimming pool. It is a very hot day and the cool drinks and some snacks are very welcome. We stay longer than planned but at last we have to leave the paradise. The gala dinner in the tennis club restaurant is waiting! In the meantime we are real fans of the Portuguese cuisine. Especially the fish which was swimming in the sea some hours before is wonderful fresh. It is a taste of ocean. And of course we love the Vinho Verde and drink many litres of water. In hot countries it is very important to drink 3 or 4 litres of water every day even if you are not thirsty. The rest of the evening we are in the strand bar again.

Sunday morning we are sleeping until 10.00 a.m. Then a promenade

along the beach to Espinho. In the afternoon all participants are coming to the farewell dinner in the hotel restaurant. A folkloristic dancing group offers us entertainment. Those who know that game take their video camera and pretend to be very busy. The others have to come on the stage and show their talents for old Portuguese dances. It is more funny for the spectators!!! In the evening we are for the last time at the beach. A wonderful meeting will end soon. But it is a promise: all participants will come again in 2004 if possible.

On monday morning we check out and start alone or in small groups back home. Some try to reach the ferry in Santander, others are crossing Spain to Tarragona. We, the photographer and the author of this report, are going to Oporto, then via Vila Real to Braganza. Only a few kilometres and we are leaving the very hospitable Portugal. We follow the straight direction from Benavente and Palencia to Burgos. Beside of the road we discover very strange loam buildings, half destroyed and inhabited by swallows. We guess these buildings were granaries. A picturesque sight and we take the time for shooting some photos. In Burgos we decide to change our route. We are going to Logroño and Pamplona. Unfortunately it is already too dark to see more of the landscape. In Jaca is a Fiesta (on monday!!!) and we cannot find a hotel room.



There are a lot of Bridges

Adriano, Clube Automóvel de Espinho



Alpendurada, a Monastery

1951 Aurelia B 50 - 1994 Thema V6



Our Beach Bar

Deteriorated Granary near Benavente



Well, no rooms means keep on driving. We take the tunnel to Pau which is toll free. It is 2.00 a.m. and on a parking in Oloron-St.Marie we try to sleep a little bit. At 6.00 a.m. we are in the centre of Tarbes and find a baker's shop. Some croissants and coffee - we are ready for the "small" rest. Toulouse, Albi, Rodez - near Mende we are on the motorway again. But now we are going north to St. Flour. On our map a direct connection is leading to Le Puy. But there is no road. Very strange! We decide to go east with the help of the sun. It is a wild landscape and these very small roads are going zigzag through the Monts de la Margeride. Finally we meet a main street and signs "Le Puy". Now it is routine: Back on the French motorways we are going home as fast as possible via St. Etienne, Lyon, Besançon, Mulhouse to Neuenburg. Started in Espinho on June, 23 about 11.00 a.m., we are back home on June 24 at 10.00 p.m. A little bit tired, of course. Next day we receive an e-mail from Jacques. His Flaminia has made the way back to Holland without any problems.

The most of the participants have promised to come again in 2004. It is the year of the European Football Championship in Portugal and we have to make it in autumn. Departure is on Sept. 27. With one stage more we will win the time to make some extra excursions through the wild canyons in France. And Portugal in autumn will be another experience. Our friends

are waiting for us. All those who own a Lancia may join the tour. They should contact the Lancia Club Vincenzo as soon as possible.

Résumé: Our Vincenzo Adventure Tour is a good offer for people who are looking for holidays with their classic cars. It is not a rally with special tests but a touristic discovery tour. We are interested in wild landscape, medieval architecture and southern cuisine. We have planned the single stages that we can make it without stress. Thanks to the organisation, sponsors and special prices for groups the costs for such an enterprise are really low enough. We accept all Lancia cars without any age limit. If your car or your intervertebral discs are not fit for 6000 km or in case of a time problem it is also possible to fly to the Oporto Airport. The hotel is about 17 km south of the Airport and taxi cabs are very cheap in Portugal. We can offer some space in our cars.

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Lancia Flaminia 2.5 3c Convertibile
The Flaminia range started in 1957 with the Berlina (Saloon). They offered 2.5- and 2.8-Litres V6 engines, with a maximum power of 152 HP (Zagato Supersport). Different Coupé and Cabrio versions were designed by Pininfarina, Zagato and Touring and officially sold by Lancia. The Touring models were constructed as Superleggera - a Touring patent (steel skeleton with aluminium skin). This is a real challenge for restorers! The synchronization of the 3c versions (3 Weber carbs) needs a specialist. Our 1963 yellow Convertibile has the smaller engine with 2458 ccm and 140 HP. With the sportive 4 speed gearbox it offers enough power for excellent acceleration, elasticity and a V/max of 190 km/h. Except the very first series saloon all Flaminias have disc brakes at all 4 wheels. The very good suspensions allow high curve speed. In the fifties and sixties the Lancia Flaminia was one of the upper class cars, very expensive, but with a technical superiority compared with other sportscars. Even today you will not have the feeling to drive a 40 years old cabriolet. It is pure fun!

