



## Prologue

It is October 2012. After ten years of restoration my "new" 2CV is reborn on its 50th birthday. The beauty captured my heart by storm. Meanwhile, Strawberrix, my winter 2CV, is widely disregarded, waiting in a dark corner of my garage. 10 years have passed since last raid Laponie. 14 winters left corrosive traces. After examining the extensive rust holes, my hope to pass inspection dwindle. Strawberrix has done his duty, he can go now. You don't need two 2CVs anyway.

February 2013. Jukka is scheduling a 2CV Raid to Lapland for February 2014. Discussions about possible routes, the programme and a name for the raid evolve. I am infected by the raid laponie virus again. I've wanted to restore Strawberrix all the time. I cannot scrap such a loyal 2CV.

The 300,000 km service is done quickly. I just add some parts: The body, the chassis, shock absorbers, brakes and roof, Auspuff, Kupplung, Kö, sytytystulppa, trassilipussi, pakata takapenkki, me and my beautiful duck, quack quack!

I study Jukkas checklist "How to prepare a 2CV for -30 ° C". A 2CV which is good for +43 Centigrade in the summer of Spain will fail in the Arctic winter. I spend every free minute in the garage, insulating, changing oils, improving the heating system, renewing more worn parts, and upgrading the electrical system.

A divider behind the front seats from transparent acryl very effectively keeps the heat in the passenger compartment. The trunk is loaded with five studded tires, two pairs of skis, spare parts, and of course all warm clothes we have. Not to mention three boxes of fine wine and an ample beer supply. The good stuff is stored in the temperate zone of the car behind the seats to avoid freezing. The value of the booze remarkably increases with the distance driven north. "At -20°C, beer cans can explode in a funny way", as Jukka mentioned once.



## Arrival in Finland

Finally: The day of departure! After work, we head off for Mülheim where we meet Mark from Scotland and his second hand driver Heiko. It is raining cats and dogs. Inside our well prepared car, it is way too warm. After a few kilometers I turn off the heating. Two 2CVs from Belgium and Austria join our international Rally to the port of Travemünde the next day.

In the ferry harbour, we meet an international team from Austria. When checking in, Arne noticed that his passport expired three days ago. Without valid ID, Finnlines deny transportation. German customs in Lübeck are the saviours of the day: At 9 pm, they issue a provisional German ID to the former Austrian Raider. Maybe it hurts to be German from now on, but it saves the trip.

To reduce stress, everyone helps to put on studded tyres on Mark's and my cars. Driving with studs is illegal in Germany but highly recommended in Finland.

Alain who is not changing tyres traditionally supplies the trolley-jack and a pump for the tyres.

Suddenly two motorcyclists steal the show. Nicely packed in neoprene suits, they line up their combinations behind us. Destination: Nurmest in Finland (home of the 10th 2CV World Meeting 1993). Their studded tires would be nice on a 2CV as well. So far, we thought we were crazy.

On board we learn about the hardships of a raider. Although the ferry is significantly larger than the freighter ten years ago, she still may be called "Hunger Ferry". We get only three buffets during 28 hours of the passage. The food situation worsens during the raid. In the last night, five of us share one slice of pizza.

Such a raid is quite hard.



## Finally: Winter!

With a creaking sound, MS *Finnlady* cuts through the thin layer of ice in the harbor. Slowly our little convoy chugs along between lorries and sea containers in the snowed port area. Compared to Mark's and Arne's colorful 2CVs, our car almost serious. The customs officer waves us through with a barely visible movement of his eyebrow. Arne, afraid of his unclear passport status, shyly waves with his Austrian passport and - is waved through. We're in! Right next to the customs booth, Arne is dancing the waltz in the snow - with his 2CV. We ask ourselves: Will he succeed to leave Finland with his faked German ID card?

Helsinki welcomes us with light frost and piles of snow in front of the cathedral.

Hard working Fins on boom lifts sweep snow from the roofs of five-storeyed apartment buildings. The 100- or so year old residential areas of

Helsinki somehow remind us of Vienna.

"Always heading north!" Drawn by this motto we head off to Lapland. In Vaasa, we meet the other teams for Ajajakokous at Jukka's house. He gives us last minute instructions for the first adventure: We can drive our 2CVs on the frozen Baltic Sea!

The advice is not to fasten our seat belts on the ice. So you can escape the car faster in case the ice breaks. We feel like on the kart track. Arne again dances the waltz with his 2CV "Odyssey". For the first and only time during the raid, my wife Jutta asks for the wheel. Being normally very law-abiding in traffic, she gets out of control and forces Strawberrix into challenging angles. The excellent suspension, the Front wheel drive and the studded tires easily replace ESP, ABS and all the other modern stuff.



## Enchanted Ice Forest

In Syöte two rounded mountains raise several hundred meters above the hilly countryside. Our cozy log cabins at the foot of the mountains are imbedded in a lovely snowed scenery. We decide to drive onto the icy summit of Iso Syöte. On the steep, slippery road requires to floor the pedal all the way up, even in the hairpin bends. What a difference! Freezing humidity from wet Baltic Sea air wraps everything in layers of ice crystals. Trees, lanterns, even houses are covered with thick ice furs.

Back on earth, we visit Santa Claus who is living at the Arctic Circle. He gives a group audience which is broadcasted live in the www.. Santa of course is fluent in all living languages. His wish for Christmas: He wants to escape his job and join us in the 2CVs. Maybe next Christmas.

The traditional usually and somewhat painful polar circle baptism ceremony this time is quite moderate: We get yellow snow with reindeer droppings. But alas, Surströmming lives! This time it comes from Belgium and is made from milk. Jean and Chantal carry large amounts of extremely tasty Herve soft cheese. Due to olfactory reasons, it is not suitable for consumption in confined spaces.

In Lapland, we choose less travelled secondary roads to travel further north. The driving fun on packed snow is hard to beat.

Oncoming traffic is limited to one or two cars per hour. Everybody is waving to us. Perhaps they have heard the radio interview Jukka gave in Vaasa prior to departure.

For tradition's sake, Hetta is our northernmost destination. Here we take a day off. At the Ice Castle we learn that during the Christmas season many visitors fly to Enontekiö International Airport to make their children happy. We play with our cars, with Skis or snowmobiles and are as happy as can be. In the church of Hetta, we spontaneously sing a Finnish - Sami - German - English version of "From Heaven above to earth I come" by Martin Luther, accompanied by the local pastor on the German organ of the church.



## Cool Prototypes

In Lapland, the European car manufacturers test drive their new models' winter performance. Crossing the Pallastunturi mountain range, we run into a camouflaged Van of a well known German luxury car manufacturer.

Blocking the wonderful icy road with 50 kph, he takes all the driving pleasure. At the summit, we find three more prototypes with oversized heaters pointed to the engine. Apparently, these hyper-modern cars have problems at minus two Centigrade and snow covered roads. With our 30-year old 2CVs, we drive a few circles around them and take off. I wonder what the puzzled test drivers told their bosses in the evening.



## Superfinn Party

The "Superfinn Party" has been the highlight of every 2CV winter trip to Lapland so far. In the last evening, Markku cooks a great meal for everyone, and Henkka and Jukka mix the infamous "Enough Drink" from the most terrible but drinkable ingredients the participants brought from all over Europe. The last competitions of the raid Olympics are held. At the award ceremony, the glorious Olympians are honoured. Enrico receives a special prize for the longest journey: Searching Porotokka, he drove 7,234 kms from Italy via the Baltic States to Lapland and back (Si si si). He joined us on the way back to Lübeck, where we had a great final night together. By the way, Arne succeeded in returning to Germany without questions.

Because of the mild temperatures, during the entire raid the 2CVs had no serious starting problems at all. We had to fully turn off the heaters and sometimes drove with the windows open. Back in Germany, 300 kms away from home, a elderly Mercedes driver asks me on a parking area: "How is it possible to travel so far in this ... um ... car?" I spared him any detailed stories about us coming straight from the polar circle.

*Karsten , Happy Ents Saarbrücken*

