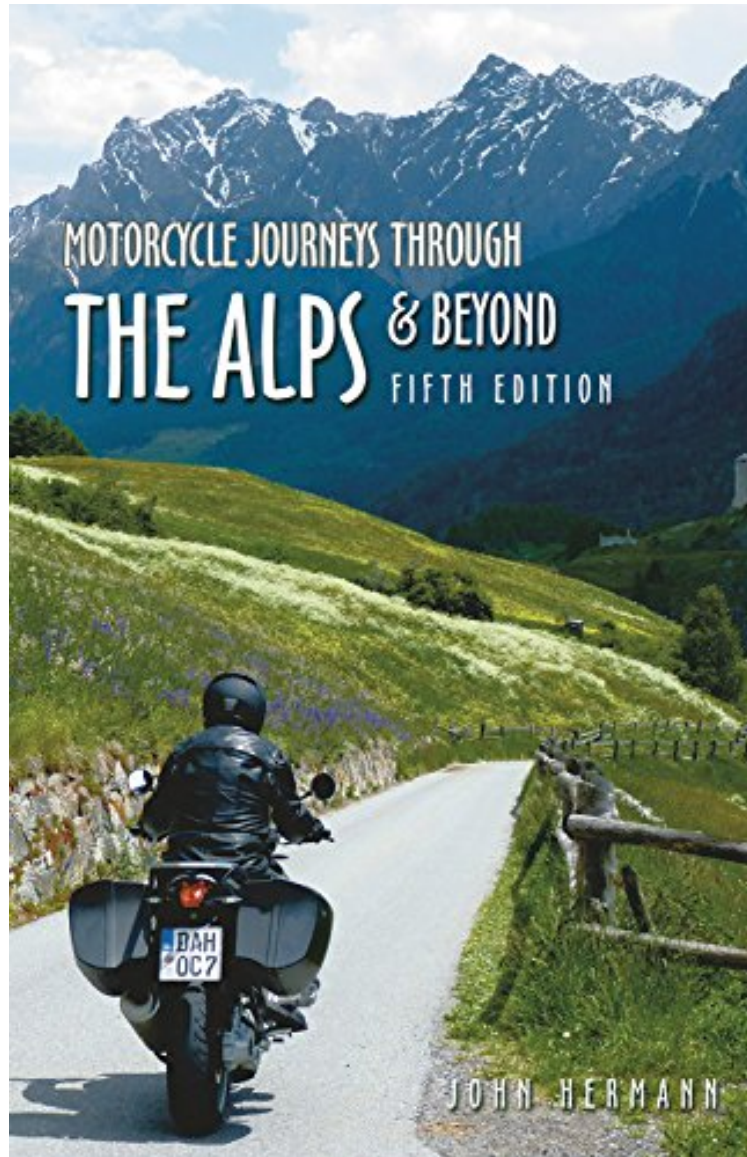


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Motorcycle Journeys Through the Alps and Beyond: 5th edition

John Hermann

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John Hermann : Motorcycle Journeys Through the Alps and Beyond: 5th edition before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Motorcycle Journeys Through the Alps and Beyond: 5th edition:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Better than nothing...By R. B. EmersonFor all of the buzz about this book and the "King of the Alps" claim, this book is disappointing on many levels.I have no idea about what's available in the UK. I'm not aware of any other US produced Alps guides, making this book the only one easily found in the US.

Despite the comments that follow, the book is about the only choice for planning a trip in any part of the Alps. ("The Alps" is a huge area from the Spanish/French border and into Slovenia - it's not "only" France, Switzerland, and Austria/Northern Italy) Place names... I'll work with the German speaking parts of Switzerland, Austria, and the Italian South Tirol. The Southern Tirol is in Italy but 60% of the population speaks German. Place names exist in German and Italian. This complicated for many people. For example, Jaufenpass in German is Passo di Monte Giovo in Italian. Some passes, like Jaufenpass are usually known by their German name while others, such as Passo dello Stelvio, are known by their Italian name. The same thing happens with place names. Reschensee in German is Lago di Resia in Italian. Hermann uses the Italian names and sometimes mentions the German names. Some maps use both, some use one or the other. This leaves the reader to sort out which place is which, depending on the language used. While the book lists a huge list of passes, the number of passes described in any measure is far less. And those descriptions often lack any real detail. Passo dello Stelvio / Stilfserjoch is a good example of this. There is one road up and over the pass, as usual. The distinction is the east road (coming from Prato Allo Stelvio / Prad am Stilfserjoch) was built originally by the Austrians (when South Tirol was part of Austria). It's still in good repair. However, what really matters is this road has 48 hairpins on the way up. For riders new to hairpins, this is not the place to start learning. The west road, towards Bormio, has fewer hairpins, a few tunnels, and the road usually is under repair or should be (Hermann does mention this). He says something about the "Austrian" road is often closed. Perhaps in early spring or late fall (definitely closed during the winter), but otherwise, rain, sun, fog... it's open. He says there are a couple of hotels on the pass, and lists two; there are four immediately on the pass' saddle and two or three more while coming up from Prato/Prad. He's correct that the top of the pass seems like a circus, with lots of motorcycles, bicycles, cars, campers, and more. But it's part of the fun of climbing "Stelvio". And he misses on one of the institutions: Bruno's wurst stand. Bruno stands under the yellow awning over his grill, turning out great wursts, with all kinds of toppings including Louisiana hot sauce, all while delivering a non-stop monologue in at least four languages. Not every pass is worthy of or needs this sort of detail. But the "big name" passes are often shortchanged, and so is the reader. The maps, accompanying a chapter about a collection of passes, are little more than a rough idea of where the passes are. There's no detail (route numbers, if available) about the roads with passes. Converting the pass locations to GPS-friendly locations is a challenge. And some pass names don't make it to a map, but are mentioned only as "go over passes A, B, and C to get to Some Big Pass". Finding international borders is another challenge - they're small and faint. Crossing from Austria to Italy or Germany is almost unnoticed. In some places crossing into Switzerland is, too, but in some places, it's very much "passport please". It's worth knowing which border is being crossed. His descriptions favor biker (that is, rider) hotels, bike cafes, and biker meeting points. That's fine for people who want to join a mob of riders, but some people want to settle down somewhere for a little less chaos and maybe talk with only a couple of riders. Those places get far less mention. In general, hotels tend towards the expensive. They offer spas, massages, a pool, workout rooms, and more, on top of the restaurant / dining room. If all that's needed is a place to get cleaned up and get some rest, there are far less expensive, but still quite good, alternatives. Those details are limited. There is some other "how the local folks do it" material that is... well, maybe that's how it looks to a foreigner, but it's not correct. And then there's the language issue. I don't speak Italian, or French, but I do speak German. Hermann simply has, in very specific ways, little respect for the language. German contains four letters not used in English. These letters, "a", "o", and "u" (I hope gets this right - ä ö ü) all have two dots over them, the "umlaut". They are as important as "a", "o", and "u" are in English. But Hermann dismisses them as somehow quaint and not needed. That is simply not true. For anyone who can't write or type the letters, the accepted form is to add an "e" after the umlauted letter to make "ae", "oe", and "ue". However he spells Flüelapass (or Flueelapass) as Fuelapass. Most search engines will quickly tell anyone using them that "Fluelapass" is misspelled. (The four letter looks like this:ß or like an unusual "B". It represents two S' together. The most common example is to see it used for the S' in "strasse" - street. This letter is used less and less, and can be safely ignored. But if it shows up somewhere, it's useful to know about it.) The final point is about the index. It's confusing. Going back to Passo dello Stelvio/Stilfserjoch, the index lists it (as Stelvio pass) on pages 164-166, 169, 171, 175, 178. Pages 164-166 have the written description, but photos continue to 167. Page 169 has the map including Stelvio. If pages 171, 175, 178 have the word Stelvio on them, I can't find it. Stilfserjoch gets one entry, 164, even though 164-167 are about the same place. The book is usable, but I don't recommend regarding it as the final word on the Alps. Use touring and adventure web sites to find people who've been there. Consider looking for British guides, often available on the web in the usual selling sites. As the countries' tourist information offices for information - as always, web search engines are very helpful. For those who speak even a little German and know about on-line language translators, there's an excellent series of German guides available on . Follow my reviews for more information about them. However, in the end, Motorcycle Journeys Through the Alps is flawed, but better than nothing... 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must buy if you are going to ride the Alps. By E Scott These books are amazingly detailed and full of information. I am just jealous because the multi-talented author has had the opportunity to ride so many roads and visit so many towns and villages throughout the Alps. Highly recommend it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. But some great information and plan on using it on my trip ... By Customer Written with almost too much minutia, with all of the routes around, over and through. But

some great information and plan on using it on my trip this summer.

This fifth edition of John Hermann's classic alpine motorcycle touring guide is the complete, best loved resource for any traveler to the high and twisty roads of Europe. Covering more area than any previous edition, Hermann's fun-to-read text has been thoroughly updated and expanded, this time with more new roads in Switzerland and France. The maps have mountain relief backgrounds to highlight the topography, and many spectacular new pictures have been added. Every region of the Alps is covered: Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, France, and even special alpine lookalike places such as Corsica, Slovenia, and the Pyrenees and Picos de Europa mountain ranges of Spain. All of the important roads and passes are described and critiqued. Each recommended trip has a detailed route description, easy-to-follow maps, advice on places to stay and things to do, and plenty of photographs. Local customs, history, and amusing travel anecdotes dot every page to enrich the journey. There is no other book like this one. It is the guide of choice for every motorcyclist who wants the trip of a lifetime to motorcycling's nirvana.

John Hermann, a.k.a. The King of the Alps, has ridden every motorcycle-worthy pass in the Alps, and is positively addicted to the practice. I will boast that I have been riding the Alps longer than he has, since I began in 1957 on my NSU 250, when the 6,800-foot Monte Giovo Pass (Jaufenpass in German) was still dirt. And I have been back many, many times, but Hermann has dedicated himself to riding every road and has been over passes that are still on my to-do agenda. On his pass-bagging list he has over 300 passes, and maybe I've been on 200 of them. This Alpine chain of mountains curves for some 700 miles from the French Riviera through Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Italy all the way over to Slovenia on the Adriatic Sea, and Hermann covers 75 different routes in these mountains, which are grouped into 20 sections. A section would be a part of the Alps where you might want to stay a few days. Each route is well-described, and if there is a Gasthaus on top of the pass where you can get a cup of hot cocoa, that is detailed. Some passes have a day of the week on which motorcyclists congregate, and he tells you that. In each section he mentions hotels he has enjoyed. Reading this book will have you counting the days until you leave. - Clement Salvadori, RiderMagazine.com