

Ultimate Bucket list - Part 2 the Nordschleife

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With a two-day break to let the adrenalin settle from Spa, it was time for Nordschleife, located at Nurburg (not Nueremburg). When we arrived at Nurburg on the Thursday afternoon there was a practice session on the GP part of the track as well as a Porsche day on the Nordschleife. The place was buzzing and a mecca for car enthusiasts. We stayed at the Lindner Congress Hotel which is adjacent to the Grand Prix track at Nurburg which in turn is an adjunct to the Nordschleife track.



Our package for Nordschleife was for the Private closed track day – no buses, motorcycles, campervans or s-box cars with trailers. The beauty of the closed track days apart from those listed above is less traffic, generally other drivers with experience and/or ability, full use of the track, lap after lap with the main straight, Döttinger Höhe, fully open. You can complete as many full laps as the wallet, fuel tank and adrenalin reserves permit. No Bridge to Gantry timing often quoted on YouTube. Tourist days have the Döttinger Hohe closed midway and then it is neces-



sary to re-enter the pits and restart the lap having waved your lap 'debit card' to a boom gate. The day we were there, the only thing missing, was the Grand Prix section of the track, which is not considered part of the Nordschleife or North Circuit anyway. (Although there are some days when they do have this as something doable)

And some of the cars were completely unrecognisable, with this one seen in one of the car parks diagonally opposite our Hotel. I never did find out what it was.

RSR's headquarters is at Nürburg (Antoniusweg 1a), just a few hundred metres from the track entrance adjacent to Döttinger Höhe (main straight of Nordschleife) and it is at the HQ where driver registration, safety briefing and collection of your rented vehicle occurs.

The day was booked to have the RSR prepped BMW M2 (same car as we had at Spa) and a Renault Megane Trophy (RHD and Manual). We had 20 laps in the M2 and for the Megane, 10 Laps. Steve Judges took the Megane and figured this was an easier introduction to the Nordschleife track, given it was his first time to the track and being aware of its reputation. Jarrad and I shared the M2, both having done around 50 laps each from a few previous visits – yes, it is addictive.



perience some of what we did – it is the scariest roller coaster you will ever have control of, if you have a “red hot go”.

If you have never driven this track in the real world or the world of Sony PlayStation or X-Box then I would recommend doing it on at least one of the mediums and get to watch any of the YouTube videos on Nordschleife. Watch Kevin Estre's hot lap in the GT3RS, which is a cracker and then a lap in the new F90 BMW M5. You would be forgiven in thinking that the M5 is in slow motion!

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1Lrlqz3z_0 and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZ6T5WsBf>)

It is difficult to put words to explain the driver experience except to say things just seem to happen so quickly in such a confined space and this seems to create its own sense of

Open-faced helmets are provided (you can use your own but it can be inconvenient lugging these around when travelling internationally) they do suggest wearing long sleeved tops, long trousers and suitable driving shoes, although it was rather relaxed that particular day and given it was relatively warm, shorts and T shirts seemed to be ‘the go’.



One of the entrances (Einfaahrt) to the Nordschleife is directly beside the main straight, and there is a viewing deck on the Devil's Diner café/food outlet (I hesitate to call it a restaurant) where one can spectate and see cars zip past on Döttinger Höhe at circa 250+ km/hr

Additionally, it is around here you will see the myriad of race prepared cars in the car park, from supercars like McLaren's, Porsche GT3RS, GT4, Carrera's, Renault Gordini (classic), Mustangs, plenty of BMW M (and non M) Cars plus the ‘full on’ race cars some of which would have been testing for the 24 hour race later in the year. And of course, the BMW ‘Ring Taxi is booked and leaves from here.

Passenger laps are permitted with RSR for a small fee to cover administration, liabilities and helmets etc. Steve and I were fortunate where our wives were brave enough to expe-





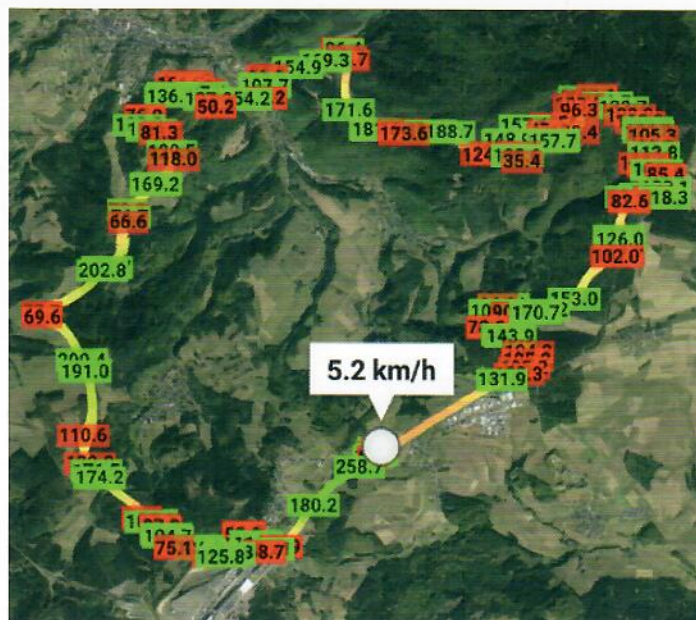
urgency. No gaming medium can demonstrate the elevation changes or the reality of the lack of run-off, the diabolical raised ripple strips which must be avoided at risk of tripping your car and losing control, and the proximity of the Armco barriers, many of which have skirting below the corrugated Armco to prevent Motorcycle riders from extruding themselves after an 'off'.

Over the 20 kilometres for the lap, there is a total of 307 metres of elevation change, the most notable of which is down through Fuchsröhre (Fox pipe or Fox Hole) which happens after the right hander called Aremberg where it winds its way down through a series of subtle esses to a compression at the bottom of the hill where in an M car is typically doing 200+km/hr at which point your adrenalin is pumping 10/10



– always with the trust in the car and brakes that you can negotiate the next set of blind turns at Adenauer Forst.

In 2010 when I first did a track day at Nordschleife one piece of advice given by the driving tutor we had was: “track speed comes with track knowledge, track knowledge comes with doing laps and most cars that crash either do not have any form of traction control or have it turned off”. All of this is true and after more than 60 laps completed, this is not the place to be complacent.



Some of the corners often featured on YouTube exhibit plenty of evidence of the shattered egos, drained wallets and damaged cars that occur at Hatzenbach, Metzgesfeld, Wipperman and Brunnchen (see the map), even more so when there is a slightly wet track.

For a successful experience I recommend that you enlist the assistance of a reputable car and track-hire company well ahead of time when organising track days such these. Usually it only requires a few emails and a credit card. Plan to fly to Dusseldorf (for Spa) and/or Frankfurt for Nordschleife and arrange accommodation in advance.

We all have our bucket lists. And by all means trudge that Camino Trail, swim with those dolphins but if you are as much of a car tragic as you must be to have read all the way through this somewhat nerdy and detailed article, you owe it to yourself, and your inner Daniel Ricciardo, to place this heart thumping, exhilarating experience at the top of your list.

