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Photo: Michiel van Nigtevecht



## A BIT ON SURF IN NORWAY

Little is documented, as such, but according to well-informed sources (aka surfers of a certain age and stature we met in surf shops, car parks, or in the water) surfing in Norway started in the 1980s in Jæren, in the southwest, during the heyday of wind-surfing. Local Roar Berge and some American oil workers recognised the potential and started exploring the many beaches.

Others claim it started during the 1960s in the northerly Lofoten Islands. The story goes a few guys saw the surfboard photo on a Beach Boys album cover and built themselves a board, filled with insulation from a fridge. Others say considering the fact that they had no wetsuits and the sea reaches a max of 16°C in summer, that the probability of this story being true, although very romantic, is pretty low. But, at the Unstad Arctic Surf Camp in Lofoten, we saw the evidence: the surfboard and an accompanying photo of the album. Apparently Thor Frantzen, (whose daughter now runs Unstad Arctic Surf Camp), and his friend, Hans Egil Krane, worked on ships when they were young boys. While sailing the world, they had their first surf experience in Sydney, Australia. Back home, the board on the '62 Beach Boys album 'Surfin' Safari' inspired them to make their own.

The second wave of surfers came in the 1990s, as surfing became a big hit in northern European countries; contests kicked off, films, magazines, and a wider range of boards became available. These surfers, and their kids, are now part of a fast growing surf community, which even Norway's Crown Prince Haakon is a member of. Actually, it's quite a royal affair: his wife Mette-Marit and their 2 kids surf too. You can well imagine a 'Gone Surfing' sign on the door of the Royal Palace - highly cool huh! They all attended the Eurosurf 2017 contest, hosted by Norway for the first time in Borestranden, Jæren.





Photo: Tamar Ulfarvik

## TRAVEL INFO

Travelling by car? Roads are scenic, that's for sure. And it gets even more scenic further north. But sometimes narrow and you need to slow your pace, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. Make sure you have your camera at hand. Especially if you see those roof-goats munching. From Oslo or Trondheim it takes about 8 hours to the Stad peninsula, or a 6 hour drive from Bergen.

### BY AIR

There are flights from Oslo to Ålesund, Ørsta/Volda and Sandane, run by national flight company Widerøe. SAS, Norwegian, KLM and other international flight companies have flights to Ålesund.

w. wideroe.no

### BY BOAT

Ah yes, boats, ever so convenient in a country blessed with fjords and mountain ranges! The ferries are your shortcuts from one peninsula to the other, crossing fjords little and large. There's an express boat from Bergen to Selje, departing twice every day (5 hrs). The trip itself is a beautiful experience.

w. norled.no

The coastal steamers of Hurtigruten travel along the coast of Nordfjord.

w. hurtigruten.com

### BY BUS

There are buses to Maurstad, approx 30 km south of Selje, from Oslo. And several other places in Norway.

w. nettbuss.no

To Stryn and Loen: catch the UNESCO Fjord Bus Tour from the 10th of June to the 13th of August, between Geiranger/Sogndal and Stryn/Loen. Hop on and off, stay overnight along the route or choose a one-day round trip. You can start in any of the four cities.

w. fjordtours.com

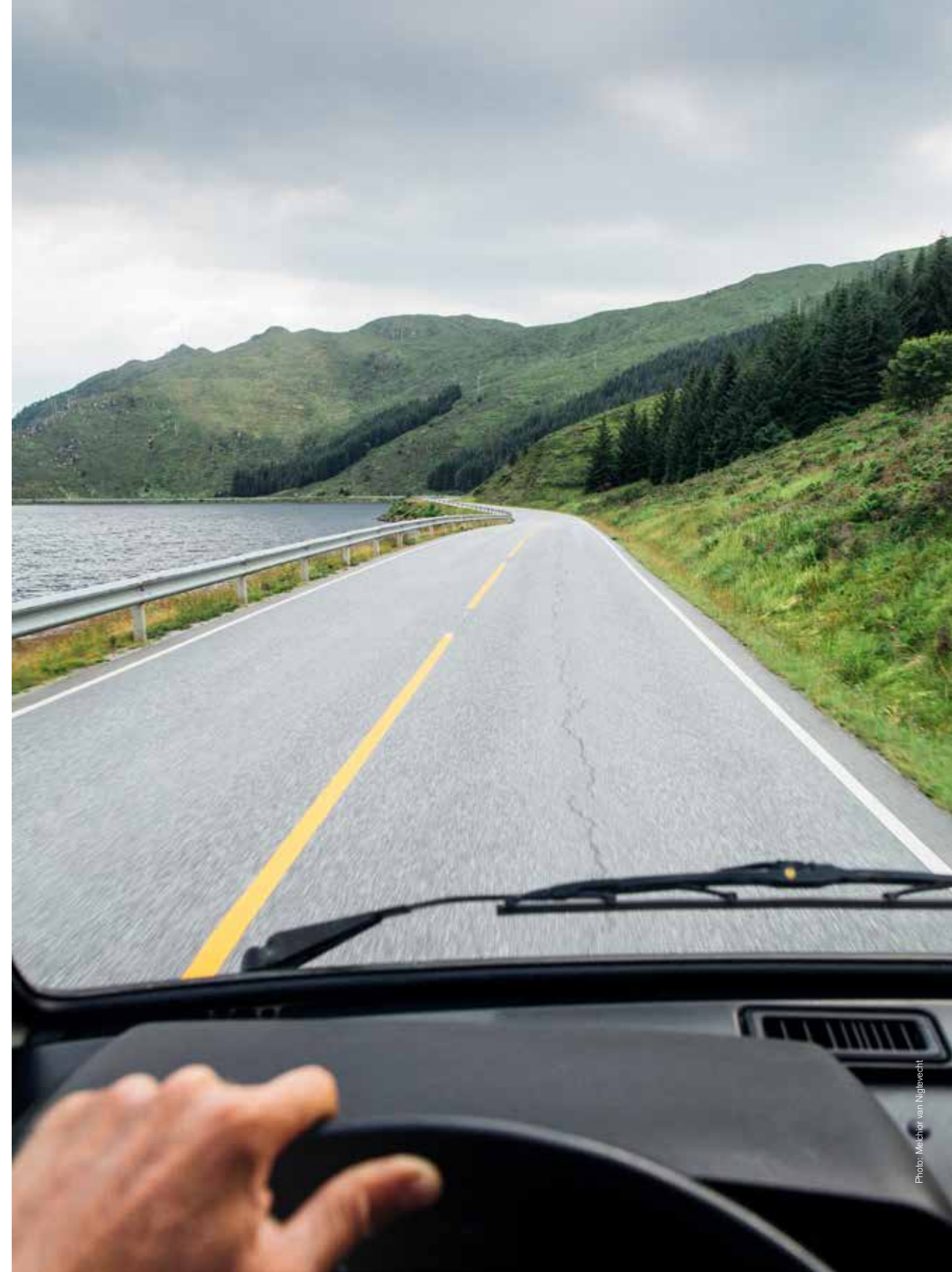


Photo: Méchor van Nigtevecht





## SURFER-TRAVELLER TYPE GERMANY

You love Dinkelbrot, or like to find out what it is and what it tastes like, and you're not afraid of big, big bottles of beer. You like things well organised, and on time. You like getting straight to the point, and don't feel offended if there's not much small talk going on. You like to meet a German surfer on their homeground for a change, and feel obliged to learn some German words, since your English is not always easily understood. You don't believe that all Germans eat sauerkraut and listen to Rammstein. They don't.



## WORDS AND CONCEPTS THAT MIGHT COME IN HANDY

*Ja!* - Yes!

*Nein!* - No!

*Moin Moin* - North Germany's informal way to say hi, hey, bye, hello.

*Guten tag* and *Hallo* - Hello, formal and informal.

*Tschuß* - Bye, although 'ciao' will do fine as well.

*Bitte* - Please. As in "*Zwei bier, bitte.*"

*Schnapsidee* - an idea you got while drunk which seemed brilliant at the time but turns out to be, well, a *schnapsidee*.

*Alles hat ein ende, nür die würst hat zwei* - This profound expression literally translates to 'Everything has an end, only a sausage has two.' Meaning as much as everything must come to an end. Try it at the end of a party, after a perfect dinner, a perfect wave or perfect day.



Photo: Myles Tian

## FOOD FACTS

### KARTOFFELN



Potatoes; anything potatoes. Baked, boiled, crispy, mashed, oiled, peppered and herbed. Germans are extremely creative when it comes to potatoes. One of the tastiest variations we had was the Kartoffelpuffer, which are small shallow-fried pancakes. Usually they're made out of a mixture of potato, flour, and egg, seasoned with onion, salt and pepper. But there's a sweet version as well, with sugar and cinnamon.

### BREZEL



The pretzel! Known, sold and eaten all over the world but German bakeries beat them all when it comes to taste and texture. Pretzels are made from flour, water and yeast, simple as that, but apparently the trick is how much or little of what, and when, you add. Of course the finishing touch is the sprinkled sea salt. Try as many pretzels as you like at any bakery, preferably while they're still warm. They all taste slightly different, yet never disappointing.





Photo: Melchior van Nighwecht



## A BIT ON SURF IN DENMARK

Say surf Denmark and every other person will reply “Klitmøller”. The town’s commonly known as Cold Hawaii, or as Klitten to some... but foremost as a world class windsurf spot, hosting the world cup windsurfing for many years. But the term Cold Hawaii isn’t exclusively reserved to this surf-loving seaside village, it’s actually the whole west-facing area, from Hanstholm to Agger; blessed with several breaks, piers, jetties, sandbanks, and the beautiful backdrop of Thy National Park.

It’s this area where surfing in Denmark started, relatively recently, back in the eighties. Windsurfers making use of their boards on windless days, and travelling surfers coming back home and seeing the potential, sharing the stoke, albeit carefully, since surfers weren’t well received by the Danish fishing communities.

Not unlike other northern seaside nations, like Sweden, Germany and Holland, a great number of Danish salt water fans make use of wind AND waves; not just taking up windsurfing or kite or waves, but combining all three, or at least two. It just means more days spent at the beach, in the ocean, using whichever board suits the elements best.

The windsurf scene is still pretty big, but wave surfers are outnumbering them by now. Surfing’s becoming more popular in general; boards are available for every level, and wetsuits are getting better, which is a big plus for the northern nations.

So when and where’s your best bet for consistent surf in Denmark? Windswell from S to NE winds and, less common, groundswell from SW to NW, produce surfable waves in every season; from the few breaks in the Kattegat up north, and the many North Sea spots on the west coast, to the island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea, which receives waves from NE-E winds. Most consistent and powerful, however, would be the coast at Thy National Park in Jutland, the aforementioned Cold Hawaii. And it’s called that for good reason: you’ll have your fair share of waves in summer, for sure, when wearing a 3/2 suit suits just fine. But it’s wintertime the North Sea delivers. Spring and fall can be promising too, and not so icy cold. The crowds won’t have arrived yet, or have gone, parking spaces ample, shops and restaurants open and accommodation cheaper. Bring your whole winter neoprene collection, though.





## IN AND AROUND GREBBESTAD

There's a good chance the oysters, prawns or lobster you'll find on menus throughout Sweden were landed in the pretty fishing village of Grebbestad. The vast number of daytrippers, vacationers, seafood lovers and island-hoppers increases the Grebbestad community of some 1500 folks by a zillion-fold in summer, and still its surroundings manage to appear tranquil like a Zen temple. But everyone we spoke to agreed every season offers something special to the place. Marcus Holgersson, owner of outdoor company Skärgårdsidyllen, lives with his family on a sloping sea-side hill, with a view over the archipelago. He almost convinced us to stay to witness the magical winter landscape and its silence, paddling a kayak along the many rocky islands. It's just the winter days are oh, so short Marcus... And there's still much to do, still much to see!

**Tourist office** at Nedre Långgatan 48, 457 72 Grebbestad.



### TO DO

Keep an eye out for 'A Taste of Sweden' certificates in restaurants, eateries and farm shops. It ensures you that your chosen place offers sustainable, west Swedish products based on seasonal local produce.



Familiarise yourself with eating seaweed, not only tasty but extremely healthy and wholesome. The Grebbestad archipelago is known for being rich with seaweed. Just north of Grebbestad, Linnea and Jonas of **Catxalot (1)** offer workshops and activities related to seaweed. Go on a seaweed safari, learn when and how to harvest it sustainably, and of course, how to cook and prepare the

wild-growing sea delicacies. In their shop they have a choice of seaweed for sale. For Linnea and Jonas it's all about 'sea, weed and love', we like! Open all year, in winter one day a week, usually Saturday. No set hours though: "If we're out foraging somewhere then we're closed until we come back."

**a.** Sjövägen 60, 457 73 Havstendssund  
**t.** +46 709 147 299  
**w.** catxalot.se



The super friendly, and energetic Ingela and Marcus from **Skärgårdsidyllen (2)** (meaning idyllic archipelago) offer kayak and SUP rental, and courses. You can either hire a kayak and go on a mini-holiday, hopping from island to island for a few days and camping out on one of them, or book a guided

archipelago tour along empty islands, exploring the coastline. All equipment, including a tent, can be rented. The guided tours can be combined with oyster tastings, or maybe you prefer paddling at sunset. Whether you're a first-time paddler or advanced kayaker wanting to take it to the next level, Ingela and Marcus offer courses, such as safety courses, being able to rescue, or work on your roll and paddling technique. Then there's the 'Kayoga': combining kayak and yoga. You paddle out to one of the deserted islands, where you enjoy an open-air yoga class, nice! Ingela and Marcus do offer so much more, like accommodation. They are a great source of information on the area, and work with a lot of other local people offering outdoor activities, like walks. Open all year, just mail or call in advance to make an appointment and all can be arranged.

**a.** Grönemadsvägen 73,  
457 95 Grebbestad  
**t.** +46 702 667 080  
**w.** skargardsidyllen.se



## EAT/DRINK/HANG OUT



There are so many good fish restaurants and small brasseries with such a tasty variety of recipes on the menu that it's best to just pick whichever restaurant looks appealing to you (or has the nicest terrace). A very small selection:

On the boulevard of Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer you'll find several restaurants with terraces right by the water. **Le Charleston (29)** is just a bit more special than the rest, thanks to its crazy interior. The place is nicely decorated with a number of French retro objects. ♦♦♦♦

- a. 4 Digue Favreau, Rue Gambetta, 14750 Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer
- t. +33 231 97 26 66
- fb. Le Charleston

**La Barak'a (30)** is a simple restaurant offering good food at a sensible price. It's a stone's throw away from the beach and you can easily park your car there. ♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦

- a. 3 Route du Debarquement, 14960 Saint-Come-de-Fresne
- t. +33 231 211 570
- fb. La Barak'a



## SHOP



Salon de thé and boutique **La Compagnie Ordinaire de la Mer (31)** is somewhat a pop-up shop, run by the same couple who own Les Filles du Bord de Mer (see Sleep). Seeing as that means they don't have the time to be in the shop every day, they opted for a pop-up concept. We hope you'll happen to be around when the shop is open because it really is a beautiful one: decorative interior design items, often made by designers from the region, books, and toys. In the courtyard, they serve tea, coffee, and brunch, and sometimes they organise unexpected events, such as a restaurant night with a special chef, or they open the shop on a bank holiday or for an extra business day and invite artists and musicians. Open on Sundays, during holidays, and sometimes upon request.

- a. 6 Rue de Bayeux, 14520 Port en Bessin
- t. +33 777 222 470
- w. compagnie-mer.com

## SLEEP

Lodgings in this region are charming but pricey, which is why camping is a great alternative. **Camping Les Bas Carreaux (32)** is a small-scale, affordable campsite with all necessary facilities. A baker comes by every morning delivering warm baguettes and croissants. Open from May to September. ♦♦♦

- a. 20 Rue du Général Ezanno, 14117 Arromanches les Bains
- t. +33 688 332 496
- w. campinglesbascarreaux.com



**Campervans (33)** can park for free (even overnight) in Longues-sur-Mer. You'll have a phenomenal view from the rocks, and it's a quiet spot (with a battalion of cannons behind it). There are no facilities.

- a. Rue de la Mer, 14400 Longues sur Mer



The owners of pop-up shop La Compagnie Ordinaire de la Mer bring you eight tastefully designed lodgings, **Les Filles du Bord de Mer (34)**, right by the sea in the fishing village of Port-en-Bessin. A fantastic place to stay, even if just to get inspiration for a redo of your interior. The design follows a seaside theme and is rustic, yet light and bright. Four of the homes are right by the sea, the other four flats are in the village with a view of the harbour. Suitable for families or couples. Open year round except for January. ♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦



- a. Port-en-Bessin Huppain
- t. +33 777 222 470
- w. lesfillesduborddemer.com



Photo: Les Filles du Bord de Mer



Glamping **La Ferme de la Folivraie (35)** offers fully equipped tents. The ferme is a small organic farm with animals such as goats, sheep, donkeys, rabbits, and turkeys that potter around the tents and love to be petted. There are also calves you're allowed to feed. The tents are within walking distance of the beach. Open from April to November. ♦♦♦♦

- a. Ferme de La Folivraie, 14710 Louvières
- t. +33 141 310 800
- w. unlitapre.fr/destination/ferme-de-la-folivraie



If you want to camp on a real farm, **Ferme de Rouge Fosse (36)** is your spot. A relaxing and quiet campsite with a view of the fields and all the facilities you need. Open year round. ♦♦♦♦



Museum-hotel **Spirit of 1944 (37)** is a bit of a crazy place, but definitely a special one. Want to sleeping in a museum full of World War II paraphernalia? Surrounded by newspapers, posters, and with music by Glenn Miller in the background, you'll find the hotel has no intention of romanticising the war, but to mimic the atmosphere of the 1940s. Open year round. ♦♦♦♦

- a. Le Lieu Besnard, 14230 La Cambe
- t. +33 231 510 752
- w. spiritof1944.fr





Photo: Danny Bastiaens

## SURF

Both locals and Belgian-locals surf the breaks of Zeeland, and regularly returning Germans, as well as holiday-ers from all over. The most consistent spot here's Domburg, where you can expect crowds at times. But 'crowded' is relative in Zeeland, and besides, the vibe's easy-going and free from aggro. The level, however, may surprise you; as this small community of avid surfers find stoke in the sloppiest choppiest waves, on good days they shine like diamonds, shaped by dedicated surfing in all conditions.



The exposed NW-facing beach at **Ouddorp (I)** works best at lower tides with a small to large SW-W-NW-N (wind) swell. Ouddorp's known as a popular kite and windsurf spot. ♦ *All levels/sand/easy parking/restaurants/camping/surf school.* ♦

**Burgh Haamstede (II)** is a W-facing beach that works at all tides with a small to large SW-W-NW-N (wind) swell. A bit of an isolated spot with some jetties, beware of currents. ♦ *All levels/sand/easy parking/restaurants.* ♦



**Domburg (III)** works at all tides with all sizes SW-W-NW-N swell. Beware of currents and the (photogenic) pole jetties. And of course, being kind and respectful never hurt anybody, especially not visiting surfers at a break popular with the locals. ♦ *All levels/sand/paid parking/restaurants/campsites/surf school.* ♦

**Dishoek (IV)** works only at higher tides, with a large NW-W swell. Sheltered from strong N winds. As with Domburg; beware of currents, and watch out for those shifty pole jetties.



Photo: Danny Bastiaens

## SCHOOL RENTAL REPAIR



♦ *Advanced levels/sand/easy parking/restaurants/campsites.* ♦

You're as good as in Belgium when you get as far as **Cadzand (V)**. The NNW-facing beach has some jetties and works at all tides with a small to large SW-W-NW-N (wind) swell. Small harbour walls protect from NE and SW-W winds. You'll find predominantly kite and windsurfers here. ♦ *All levels/sand/easy parking/restaurants/campsites/surf school.* ♦

Surf shop and school **Natural High (33)** offers surf and kite lessons, and



rental of all gear. Situated at Landel Strand Resort, the brand new shop (the second of Natural High) has all essentials, clothing and accessories. Open all year.

**a.** Westerweg 26, 3253 LX Ouddorp  
**t.** +31 187 723 927  
**w.** natural-high.nl



**Surf Karavaan Ouddorp (34)** offers surf lessons and rental, SUP lessons, beach yoga and longboarding (skate). Open from Easter to October.

**a.** Beach Het Flaauwe Werk 1, next to beach club C-side, 3253 LB Ouddorp  
**t.** +31 683 085 020  
**w.** surfkaravaan.nl

Surf shop and school **Sportshop Domburg (35)** has surf, skimboard and SUP lessons on offer, as well as rental and testing of gear. Open all year.

**a.** Strand Domburg 32 (Strand Noordduine), 4357 XZ Domburg  
**t.** +31 118 584 795  
**w.** sportshopdomburg.nl

**Moio (36)** at Cadzand's got surf, SUP, skimboard, kayak, powerkiting and blokating on offer. After your session you can chill and unwind at their beach club. Open from May to October.

**a.** Vlamingpolderweg 3A, 4506 HZ Cadzand  
**t.** +31 117 392 180  
**w.** moio.nl







## SEASIDE LOCALS: MARIJKE VAN BIERVLIET EN GIJS VANHEE

Although they met in Belgium's quaint historic town Mechelen, landlocked and working steady jobs, Marijke and Gijs' shared passion for travelling and the ocean - among many other things - took them on the road shortly after their first kiss.

*"Travelling slowly gives us the opportunity to accept the road as a destination on its own."*

They're still travelling, and living, in a beautiful 1987 Mercedes 508. Their garden stretching as far as the van can take them, usually alongside the ocean. "Bit by bit we enhanced our tiny rolling home and hit the road for good in December 2015." Since then they've travelled Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Wales, Scotland, France, Spain, Portugal, Sardinia, Morocco, and all roads in between, taking them there. Artist and illustrator Gijs grew up in Mechelen. His urge to draw developed from a young age. His work is shown at several expositions and he makes huge wall paintings on commission. He's one of those creative souls, making constructions and finding solutions for whatever surfaces, no matter what the material; which comes in handy, living in a van. The only thing distracting him from his creativity, he says, is the ocean and being in the water with his longboard. It humbles him: "The way water and waves move, never the same, the power of nature and the knowledge that a wave you've ridden comes from a swell born miles away gives a feeling of huge respect." Photographer Marijke was born in South Africa but her family moved back to Belgium a few years after she was born. Both cultures added to her curious and adventurous nature. As a teenager she happily explored forests and cities with her camera. It's her medium, enabling her to look at life in a different way. For Gijs, she makes the perfect travel companion: "Her camera's stuck to her hands. Besides that Marijke finds joy in many other things. From paragliding to trail running, singing, playing the guitar, studying or working as a massage therapist."

Travelling and living in a van made them confront the habit of being in control. "We used to take life way too seriously, on the scale of succeeding and career-wise, worrying about long-term plans. Major problems of full-time living in a van can be stupid things like finding a toilet, or a quiet place to sleep. For us, it made the big ambition stuff a bit overrated. So many unexpected things happen while travelling, and things never turn out the way you imagined. Our van moves slow. We're forced to travel at a maximum cruise speed of 85 km/h. Travelling slow gives us the opportunity to be in places where we'd never have been, and to accept the road as a destination on its own."

Marijke and Gijs travel with a vague plan and according to their mood or sudden events. There's always a small chance to meet them on the road. Meanwhile, you can check them out at:

[w. gijsvanhee.be](http://w.gijsvanhee.be) / [w. marijkevanbiervliet.com](http://w.marijkevanbiervliet.com) / [ig. Gijs Vanhee and Changement Decor](http://ig.Gijs Vanhee and Changement Decor)



Photo: Marijke van Biervliet



Read more about Gijs and Marijke at:  
[w. ilovetheseaside.com/stories](http://w.ilovetheseaside.com/stories)

