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TESLA TOURERS PLAN GLOBAL EV TRAVEL GUIDE

World Tesla travellers **Ralf Schwesinger** and **Nicole Wanner** have thoroughly enjoyed their 45-day tour of New Zealand and are now spending three months journeying around Australia.

The couple, who call their global sojourn “Mr and Mrs T on Tour”, travelled 6310km in the country and also joined the New Zealand Tesla Supercharger Rally before leaving for Australia from Queenstown on May 3.

They used a Tesla Model X belonging to a Tesla Owners Club of New Zealand member during their stay.



The Tesla tourers love NZ

“Outside of Europe, where we used our own Model S, using a local car is the most sustainable option. We are very grateful for the support provided by other owners, allowing us to complete our mission,” Schwesinger says.

In fact, their story began in 2015 when the Swiss-based pair began looking for a new car.

Wanner wanted a car that was safe, clean and aesthetic while Schwesinger hankered for a fast and roomy sports car.

They found their dream car on a visit to the Geneva motor show in 2015 and ordered their Tesla.

“We did not know that this new car would change our lives entirely,” they say.

It led to them hearing Tesla chief designer **Franz von Holzhausen** speak at

a Model 3 preview in Tesla’s Fremont factory in California. They took his message to heart about venturing outside your comfort zone to experience something truly special and quit their jobs (he was in banking and she was in tourism/marketing) and home to travel the world in a Tesla for a good cause.

“The weekend getaway that never ends” started in April 2018 when they left their rented apartment to travel around Europe in their Model S.

Tesla heard about their drastic lifestyle change and offered support, sending a film crew to document their story and record their first three days on the road to share their message.

“They liked the story that we were dropping everything to support Tesla’s mission and a more sustainable lifestyle,” Schwesinger says.

Their beginnings were published under “customer stories” on all European Tesla websites and in a YouTube video.

“We are traveling in a Tesla, because we support their mission to accelerate the world’s transition to sustainable energy,” the couple says. They also have a very clear message: “Acting more sustainable does not end with owning an electric car, but it is surely a good start!”

“Our journey takes us from the heart of Switzerland around the globe, travelling Europe, New Zealand, Australia, North America and Asia – all along the Tesla Supercharger network. We want to discover and share the beauty of our planet and inspire more people to protect it.”

Schwesinger, 44, and Wanner 47, have fallen in love with New Zealand, describing the people as extremely friendly and open, supportive of EVs, and the scenery spectacular.

“Yes, based on the growing Supercharger network, Tesla makes

it easy for us to travel and there are also more and more hotels which provide charging infrastructure to their guests.

“In New Zealand we were also very positively surprised by the fantastic network provided by ChargeNet NZ. They do a great job offering open fast charging infrastructure to all EVs, because this is what it takes,” Schwesinger explains.

They’re funding their global Tesla tour from their savings, saying people have also been generous in providing support – particularly through Tesla Owner Clubs.

“With regards to the cars in Europe, in New Zealand and Australia we were also lucky as all cars still have free Supercharger use so we don’t need to pay for our energy consumption and travel for free,” Schwesinger says.

They have garaged their Model S in Switzerland and cut down on any fixed costs to make things work. Shipping their car to other continents was never an option as this would have been bad sustainability.

Other than that, shipping costs and other issues like different charging infrastructure, insurance and more contributed to their decision, so they try to use local cars instead with Tesla owners being very supportive.

There’s more to their journey than just having fun, meeting like-minded people and the thrill of Tesla travel. Their website rates hotels and other accommodation they use (generally Destination Charging Partners where possible), with the eventual plan to produce a world travel guide

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Ralf Schwesinger and Nicole Wanner

TESLA TOURERS PLAN GLOBAL EV TRAVEL GUIDE

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for all EV users.

“Our EV travel guide will be the first of its kind and we are close to signing a contract with a globally operating publisher,” Schwesinger says.

“We have to pay for the book to be published, but if you want to make the world a better place by inspiring others you can’t wait until someone else is taking the risk paying for it. We have to take the first step and time will show where that guides us,” says Schwesinger, who welcomes sponsorship and other support for it.

As soon as the contract is signed, people will be able to pre-order the guide through their website with publication planned in about November 2019. They also plan for a founders’ edition, offering a nice extra feature for early supporters who order via their website. To be informed once the book is available you can sign-up to their newsletter via <https://mrandmrstontour.com/newsletter/>

One of the reasons the couple wanted to travel was to check out EV-friendly accommodation world-wide themselves.

“We are looking for places where you can charge your car as well as your own batteries. We provide our honest opinion and if the accommodation doesn’t meet our expectations then it’s not mentioned,” Schwesinger says. He says that’s illustrated by the fact that of 145 hotels they’ve stayed at, about 90 feature on their website.

Their EV travel guide will include their favourite hotels and accommodation they endorse, plus will have general information of places they visited, day trips, restaurants and other aspects travellers want to know.

A third section has EV charging, including general information and simple ways to charge.

“Our main message is to tell and demonstrate to people that EVs are a good thing as they’re not completely understood by everybody,” Schwesinger says.

“We tell people about our own experiences. EVs are cool, fun, quiet to drive, easy to use and very practical – on top of all of that they are much better for our environment.”

They’ve travelled about 40,000km through 16 countries, planning to visit Canada and the US after Australia, used about 8745kWh of free power, taken over 39,000 pictures and videos and been supported by 22 Tesla Owners Clubs.

Both are aware of other EV travellers such as Italian Tesla traveller **Pierpaolo Zampini**, who they knew through the Tesla Owners Club Italy (he’s vice-president) and Dutchman **Wiebe Wakker**, both who’ve just completed journeys around Australia.

“Every effort, big or small, that’s being done to support the movement is great,” Schwesinger says.

While Zampini often returns to Milan after most of his trips, “Mr and Mrs T” are unsure when they’ll eventually get back



Charging up

to Switzerland. “It’s a journey with an open end and time will show where it will bring us,” Schwesinger says.

They’re enjoying being on the road and contributing by living a life they previously thought impossible.

Any advice for others? “If you’ve never tried an EV, try one now. You will be amazed,” Schwesinger says.

“We’re one EV community and we all share the same mission. The more who join the better for our planet. Everybody can do something and as I said, driving an electric car is surely a good start.”

Visit www.mrandmrstontour.com for more information and www.patreon.com/MrandMrsTonTour to support them. ■

EVTALK CHECKS OUT AT LOCAL

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needs to reach about 200 trips daily over the course of the year to receive 22% of its cost. On the busiest day, the service reached 163 rides, it reported in early April.

AT Local has a target of 1200 to 1400 passengers weekly, and its best week saw the numbers reach 759 rides, just over half of its target, Stuff says.

Takapuna-Devonport Local Board member **Mike Sheehy** told *Stuff* the trial is a failure as a result.

But 95% of customers have given the service a five-star rating, and patronage is increasing with more expected to use it in winter.

“Overall, AT is very pleased with AT Local’s progress to date as both customer numbers and ridership have continued to increase week-on-week,” Paton says.

Paton adds the trial has customer feedback saying they are no longer drive to or from the ferry terminals, having swapped their car journey for AT Local.

“Customers are no longer having to drive around the local neighbourhood looking for a car park; they can get dropped off at the ferry terminal in an environmentally friendly electric vehicle,” Paton says.

The trial zone is limited to the Devonport area, with no plans to extend beyond that.

Overall, *EVtalk* gives the service the thumbs up as it’s quick, convenient and helps more people to experience an EV. ■