

# AUSTRIA TURNS IT ON

## ANOTHER TOP EUROPEAN BIKE WEEK

WORDS/PHOTOS KURT STAUFFER

For six days, it was very noisy around the usually idyllic Faakersee in Carinthia, reports Kurt from Twincruiser Tours.

"Once again we were surprised how everyone, including the locals, gets involved with the event," he writes.

"According to initial figures there were not as many participants as in the record year of 2012. Some Italians saved themselves the trip all the way to Carinthia and instead attended the European HOG (Harley Owners Group) Rally and 110th Harley Davidson birthday celebration which took place in Rome in June.

"Police, emergency services, industry and local residents were generally satisfied with the outcome of the event. Apart from the theft of 23 Harleys, there was no theft or violence as in previous years.

Of the 23 machines that were stolen, seven were recovered thanks to the watchfulness of a passer-by. She was walking her dog at 6 clock in the morning and alerted police. The offender initially appeared cooperative with the officers, but fled suddenly

and left his prey in the rented truck.

"Thanks to the massive deployment of police with two helicopters and police dogs, the Dutch thief who was known to police was arrested after a few hours in Bad Hofgastein. He was on a train to Salzburg. A big cheer to the police and especially the passer-by!

The suspect is now in custody in Klagenfurt. It is likely that the man did not act alone. The police are following a hot lead to an international gang which cannibalizes the Harleys for replacement parts which it sells on the internet.

"Ten riders lost their licenses due to too much alcohol in their blood, and many fines were handed out for things such as riding without approved helmet (€35), to high speed and extremely loud motorcycles.

"Unfortunately, some accidents occurred too, with a number of serious injuries and two fatalities.

"25 to 30,000 Harleys took part in the parade on Saturday. The convoy stretched for about 25km, and everything went off without a hitch.

"The good news is that the meeting

will remain at the present site for at least another five years. The European Bike Week was able to extend its contract with Carinthia Advertising until 2018."

We've got to get there some time! Maybe next year... ●

