

## 2. Tschiffely-Memorial ride July 5th-7th Savognin Graubünden Switzerland

### **Friday July 5th.** **2013**

*On Friday morning at 10:00 clock 51 riders in 30 trailers took their horses to the parking lot in Savognin. Savognin is a small skiresort in the Swiss alps in the Kanton Graubünden. It is the second Ride,*



*which takes place in Memory of Aimé Tschiffely. The man who wanted to prove that the Criollos of his time were the best horses around. At the beginning of the 1900 the Criollos were considered worthless and without him and his sponsor Don Emilio Solanet, there would probably be no more Criollos in our days. To prove how hard they were he decided to ride from Buenos Aires to New York with two Criollos Mancha and Gato in*

*1925 – 1929.*

*Long Riders from Lithuania, England and Germany had come to join us. All the way from Argentina came Oskar, the son of Don Emilio Solanet, with his wife Theresa. His father, had organized the two horses Gato and Mancha for Aimé, for his long journey of more than 16.000 km.*

30 trailers had to be parked in proper order. And it took a while till all these horses were saddled and the first group was ready to go with their guide and host for the next three days Alfons Cotti. [www.agrotour.ch](http://www.agrotour.ch)





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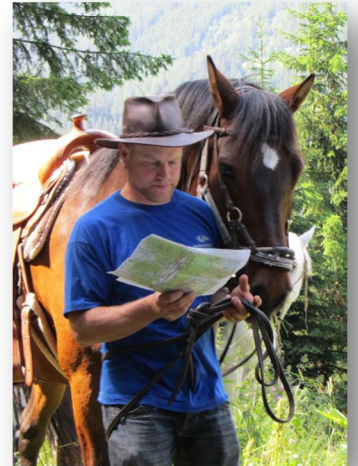
He had brought 8 Appaloosa and Freiburger horses down from his ranch so that all the Longriders would be supplied with their own horses for the ride.

Alexander Lühinger, co-organizer and Swiss Criollo-Breeder <http://criollo-schweiz.ch/> took the second group with his Criollos.

Phillip Wenk of Lusiranch had supplied other 7 riders with his Freiburger horses, so they staid together going into the mountains.

Peter van der Gugten, the man behind the idea, took the last group, a mixed bunch of horses and riders, all willing to takle the wild mountains.

[www.alpentrekking.ch](http://www.alpentrekking.ch)



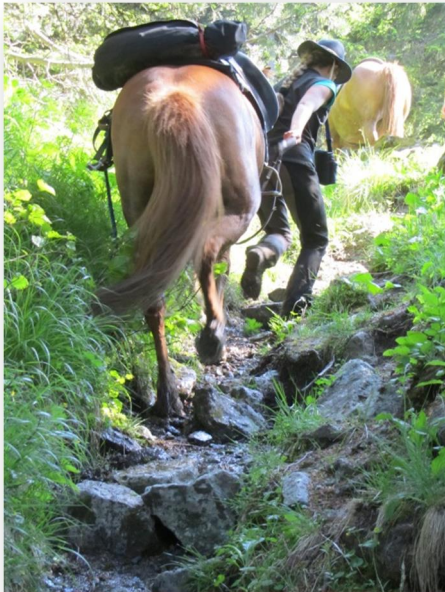
Pat Bohnert, the Author and picture Lady rode with Phillip.

We ride through the small Village of Savognin and ride across a field up into the hills, in the background the snow-capped mountains. The horses have sorted themselves soon and we can enjoy the beautiful ride. In a clearing we





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take a break, and let the horses chew on the tasty mountain grass. But soon enough Peter arrives with his group and we have to ride on. The road becomes a narrow path and the horses have to take their riders over roots and rocks up the first really steep hill. The first two groups are not in sight, where are they?

After about 2 hours we hit another obstacle. It is a small

wooden bridge over a stream.

Philip decides to go through the water, so as not to damage the bridge. We all have to lead our horses through the gushing water. We master that all without a scratch, just a few feet get wet.

Half an hour later we come to a very beautiful pasture and have a magnificent view of the surrounding snow capped mountains. Here the path divides and the advice of some mountain biker is, not to



take the difficult path. What to do?



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Peter arrives with his group and we decide to go the longer but easier way. The one hours detour is not a problem, we have wonderful weather

Two hours later we arrive at Fonsi`s Alp Flix, which is at 1960m in a natural reserve

There the horses are led into paddocks with hay



and water and the saddles are stored away.



The gear was brought up in a trailer and everybody sorted their belongings.

We can set up our beds in the five yurts. Some sleep with the horses and a few make themselves a bed in one of the spare horse boxes.



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We riders get a delicious chili con carne and all are completely happy and satisfied.

The evening program is an exciting highlight of the report of the Lithuanians long Ride from the Black see to Lithuania over 2000 km. Later on Lituanien Musik is being played.



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Saturday, July 6th

The morning fog keeps a blanket over the mountains, but soon the sun came out and we had another beautiful day ahead of us.



At 7:30 there was a great breakfast table prepared for the riders after the horses were taken care of.



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At 9:00 we guided our horses down into the valley for a day trip to Alp Faller.

One group takes the easy road to Sur and Malengs to get to Alp Faller on the other side of the river.



The



other 3 groups take the more demanding mountain paths to Alp Faller.

We cross two pastures. Here we are confronted with a couple of donkeys and some young cattle are wondering about the visit. In the valley we enjoy a brisk canter through a freshly cut field. Now the way draws uphill on a gravel road to Alp Faller.





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We come to a plateau where, on a long stretch all 51 horses are tethered, so the riders can enjoy the great swiss meal comfortably. We are spoiled with ham and



melon, followed by delicious Polenta and grilled meat. Finished off by some coffee and fruit salad. About 2 hours later we started our way back home again.





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The moskitos found out about us and are pestering the horses in great numbers. We cross a stream, where we joined together with



Alexander`s group. 2 hours later we came to the same meadow as the day before. Although the path was narrow and rocky, it was not dangerous. Philip decided to wait a little and our horses were enjoying the green lush mountain meadow grass. After we arrived at the mountain top, we still made a little extra trip to a lake

and the men and Sarah took a refreshing dip in the cool water.





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Alfons had prepared an assado for all of us and the smell of the slowly cooked meet was wonderful. We enjoyed a great meal with tons of salad and great company.



Manfred Schulze told of his world tour with his two horses in the evening.

Barbara Kohmanns shared about her Ride with Günther Wamser.

Oscar Solante presented a film about the Criollo in Argentina and handed a plaque to the swiss criollo assoc. represented by Alexander Lüchinger. The plaque was given to Oskar by the argentine criollo assoz of his home town to bring to Switzerland.

Alfons Cotti was officially welcomed by the Long Riders.



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### Sunday July 7th

The third day was unfortunately the last one and promised to be just as sunny as the last two. We got up early and fed the horses, enjoyed our breakfast and saddled our horses.





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Peter, Alexander and Fonsi said farewell and divided in three groups we road back again to Savognin.



This time all 50 riders took the easy dirt road down to the valley.



Theresa Solanet



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It was a pleasant ride in the warmth of the sun. After about 4 hours we arrived back at our trailers, little sweaty, but happy, safe and sound.

We have gained a lot of experiences and heard wonderful stories from the long riders.



This ride was beautiful, very well organized. A great experience in a magnificent landscape.

*A Big Hand to all the workers, who organized and helped with this great event.*

*Text und Bilder: Patricia Bohnert*

*Übersetzer: Benno Affolter, Günther Bergmann und Peter van der Gugten*

