

Holidays



As a passionate amateur guitarist, I used to play daily, without skipping a single day. Being at home that's not a problem, there is ample opportunity to pick up a guitar for a moment or two.

On holidays that's a different matter. Many say 'holiday is holiday', so they leave the daily routines behind with a smile, including the hobbies at home. Well I just could not miss my guitar, so I carried it along every holiday.

Of course, simply a guitar in a case is not sufficient, I had to take my foot stool, music stand, tuning fork and -not to be left out- a pile of scores to enjoy myself. Packing used to be a kind

of ritual, because I had to make a selection to prevent that I had to carry the ten kilograms of scores which made up my complete repertoire.

In this way, my guitar was my companion on many holidays. Travelling by train to Switzerland, travelling by car to places in Holland and Denmark, the guitar was there.

The boot of my car was just wide enough to hold the guitar crosswise, so I did not lose too much space for the remainder of the luggage. A bit risky position maybe, if someone crashes into the back. A friend of mine, a guitar builder, said I was crazy, carrying a Contreras this way while he was horrified by the thought of the sound of a shattering top.

It was a joy to play guitar outside in the sun, nevertheless, although the heat and draft caused the guitar to be out of tune in seconds. A good chair is a requirement, though, I used to be quite glad if a holiday home had a bit of a sturdy chair without armrest, or even a stool. I fixed scores with pegs to the stand (against getting blown away) and as soon as it started to rain, I rushed inside. In this way, I played the guitar like others read their holiday books.

I have never taken a guitar with me on flights. It's just a gamble if they allow the guitar case as hand-luggage, and if that's not allowed you generally require a more suitable case for safe transport than you have got. My guitar teacher Ed Westerik used to have a genuine guitar flight case, which was so heavy that you needed extra wings to carry it. Quite a burden if you have already two full suitcases to transfer.

So I spent my holidays on Malta without a guitar. Such a pity... Fortunately I carried my electronic notepad as a replacement toy.

Holidays are for recreation, so I found out that it was best to take easy and relaxing guitar literature with me. For instance, the pop song arrangements by Cees Hartog are fine for this purpose and even sometimes cause a happy recognition experience with bystanders. So, do not carry heavy stuff or stressing studies, holiday is holiday, isn't it?

DOS Amigos never enjoyed holiday together. Some time ago, however, we got a nice tip for a holiday home for guitarists, somewhere in Portugal. *Cafe Cantinho Dos Amigos* in São Teotónio, somewhere south of Lisbon.

There it is, a nice photograph of our holiday home to be, sent to us by Stella van Rijn.