

SIMON WESTGARTH AARE RIVER | SWITZERLAND





There is something that has become so special about our kayaking pilgrimage to Norway each summer.

As the rest of Europe hits peak holiday season and the highways become jammed with frustrated tourists, there is a certain sense of excitement as you leave behind the chaos and overcrowded streets and head north to Norway.

Knowing the next weeks are going to be spent in a land of open spaces and wild, free-flowing rivers gives one a special sense of freedom. Nothing to worry about apart from which river to paddle the following day, which wave to surf, or what's for dinner that night. Beautiful.

DEB PINNIGER 2003





Calculating

Measuring the angles

You see the window and sprint

Three strokes and you're on!

Bouncing down the wave

Flying through the air

Landing on the hard water rushing below

Surfing

Exploding, random chaos

Catching an edge

Slamming your face

Knocking the air out

Holding your breath

Listening, white noise

Rolling

Inhaling

Laughing

Repeating

KATIE JOHNSON 2002





See

The gigantic waterfall, so hard to measure, leaves his dimensions to your own judgement. Every surge, every exploding wave and every glistening spray sends out a signal that plays with clear summer light.

Hear

For some it is a roar, for some it is a song. From the bass drum of a deep rock dome to the gurgle of the water running from a fountain, the sound of the river can be innocent and threatening at the same time.

Smell

Spring is in the air when a clear mountain stream pours its water over splendid green meadows. The spray is a mix of cool water and fresh green grass with the smell of thyme and rosemary. The water cleans the air and you might smell something new.

You never know if the river is your friend or enemy. The river does not answer questions. It speaks its own language that you have to learn, but still you can't question it, so you have to sense for answers.

Feel

In a kayak you have the privilege of feeling the river. It could be the slight splash of a small wave - cold water in your face and running down your chest, waking you up to its power and grace - or the hard hit of a big hole akin to the impact of landing a waterfall. The water is refreshing or freezing cold. It is a soft cushion for you to plunge into or a challenge to the strength of the human body.

Taste

If you can see, hear, smell and feel the river, you might well get a taste for the river and its language.