

The Joy of the *Open Road*

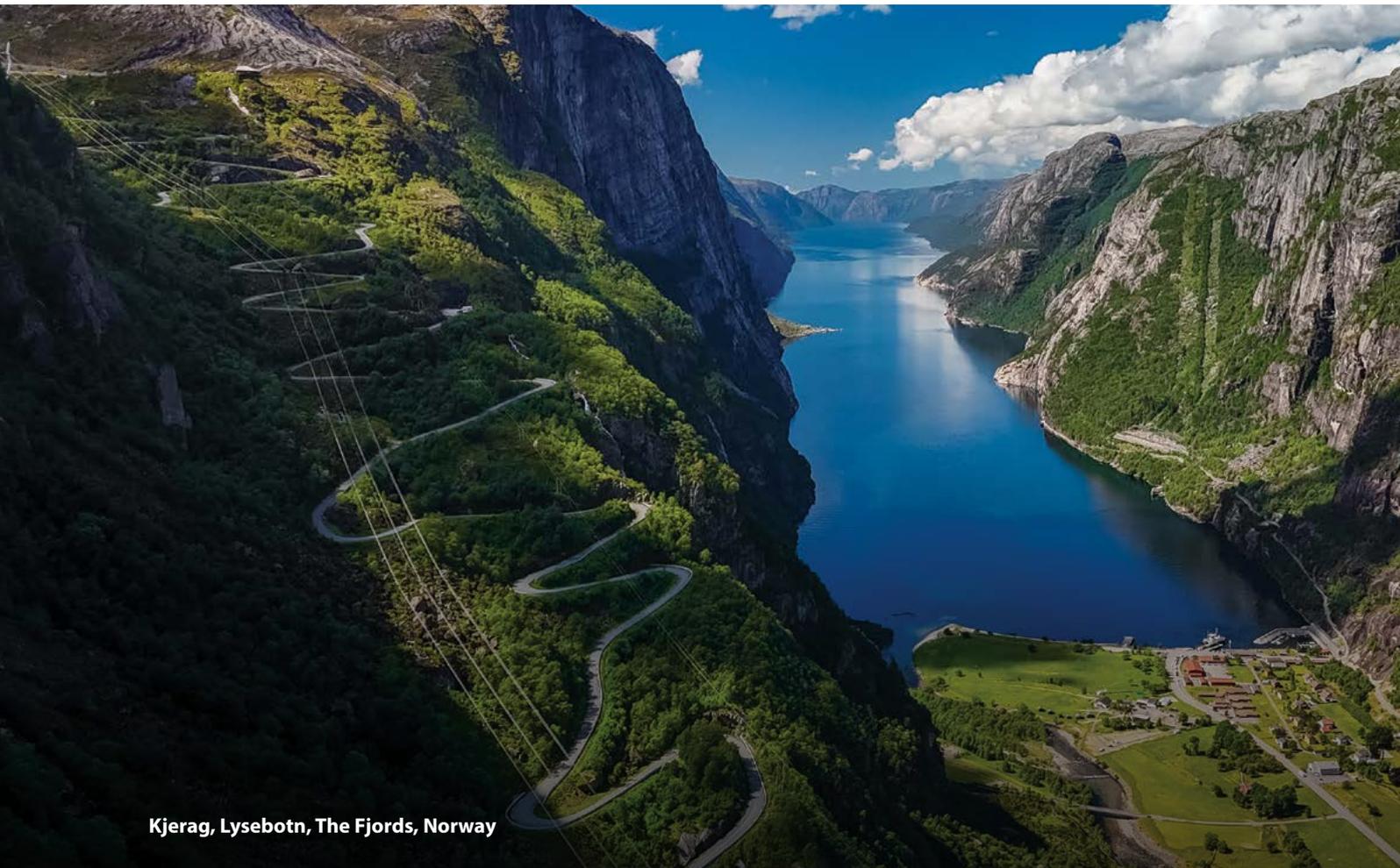
For me, the thrill of a fly-drive holiday begins long before the engine starts. Sitting down with a good guide book and map and plotting the route is half the fun.

A GPS will take you from A to B, but a map shows the hidden gems along the way - scenic roads that wind past forests and lakes, quiet villages with history at every corner and viewpoints that aren't on the main tourist trail. Planning the journey this way turns the road into a discovery in itself, an adventure where every turn can reveal something unexpected.

Once the journey begins, a day on the road becomes an exercise

in leisure. After a relaxed breakfast, dedicate the day to exploring, allowing time to stop and detour wherever you wish - planned or unplanned. Picnic at a roadside viewpoint with the horizon stretching before you, browse a farm shop, artisan bakery or local market, or take a walk through a forest or along a lakeside path. Visit attractions, museums or historic sites that are hard to reach by public transport - remote fortified villages in Portugal's Centro region or archaeological treasures such as Delphi in Greece - all become accessible when the road is yours.

Then there's the simple joy of the road itself. Long, empty stretches across the Alentejo plains, undulating cypress-lined hills in Tuscany or Norway's dramatic hairpin bends, each invite you to stop for a photograph or simply appreciate the view. Even road closures



Kjerag, Lysebotn, The Fjords, Norway



A regular sight, Reindeer on the road



By Rosanna

become part of the experience, encouraging detours and discovery - in an age where travel is planned, an element of forced spontaneity is a joy, often becoming a highlight of the trip and revealing an experience or attraction that no guide book or website has detailed. Driving through these landscapes, with no timetable to follow, transforms travel into a journey where the scenery and the experience are just as important as the destination.

Modern options also enhance the experience. In many destinations electric vehicles are available, making it possible to travel sustainably without compromise. In Europe there are no physical borders to hold you back, allowing you to combine multiple countries in a single trip - from Portugal to Spain, or across Norway, Sweden and Finland - while enjoying the freedom of the open road. In Norway car hire can also be combined with a sailing onboard Hurtigruten, seamlessly connecting land and sea without the need for one-way fees, giving travellers flexibility to explore

multiple regions in comfort and style.

Some roads are unforgettable in their own right. The Avenue of Volcanoes in Ecuador winds past high peaks and dramatic landscapes. The Carretera Austral in Chile weaves between the Pacific coast and the Andes, hopping on and off ferries between fjords. Spain's GI-682 connects Tossa de Mar and Sant Feliu de Guixols, hugging cliffs, hidden coves and hairpin turns. Portugal's N222 between Regua and Pinhao crosses vineyard-strewn hills and twisting curves, often hailed as one of the world's most beautiful drives. In Scandinavia, Norway's "rooftop" roads from Senja through Vesterålen to the Lofoten and the Bohuslän Coast in western Sweden reward drivers with dramatic fjords and coastlines. Greece offers its own treasures - the spectacular road from Kalamata to Mystras across the Tagetus mountains through high valleys, gorges, mountains and quaint villages - perfect for exploration at a leisurely pace.

Does this sound like your type of holiday? Travelling at your own pace, lingering where you wish and exploring off-the-beaten-track destinations... Let's open the map together and see where the road leads.