



*Driving from Honningsvåg to Flam provides some of the best scenic views you can imagine*



### *Autumnal colours between Alesund and Flam*

In this third article on my Scandinavia tour, I will begin with the extremely, extremely scenic drive from Alesund to Flam, two of the most prominent fjord towns of Norway. After taking the not so breathtaking Atlantic, actually a mini bridge over the arm of a fjord, we entered into a Paradise, with one fjord after another. We drove around one, going uphill and down, taking in memorable views of deep fjords with colourful water, backed by high sometimes snow covered mountains. I have forgotten the number of fjords we forded till we reached Flam, a spectacularly sited village at the end of what I would call the most beautiful fjord we drove past during our Travels.

### *The rural scenery we passed through during our drive*

But before that, we had two exciting activities, crossing a 24 km tunnel (nothing sooooo great since once we are inside, it's just a black hole we are driving through) and then climbing to Stegastein viewpoint (stunning).

Just after emerging from the tunnel, we took a narrow, winding road with a steep gradient, going right to the top of a mountain that in normal weather, provides a bird's eye view of the Flam fjord. However, the scene we got during our drive up, was even more dramatic.

We were climbing through a sea of clouds and when we reached the viewpoint the sun was just setting, casting a pinkish,





*One of the numerous lakes with islands we which drove past*

Glow on the sea of clouds now below us, covering the entire fjord, JUST AMAZING!!! We all jostled for the best vantage point to capture this phenomenal scene before making a retreat to the warmth of our hotel in Flam.

The next morning, I took a very early 8 km walk to the Flam church, a historic monument, but it was closed!! Anyway the walk provided superb views of the steep mountains with the sun just touching the peaks.

After breakfast, I had probably the most fascinating adventure during the entire tour..... I was booked to take a ferry cruise from Flam to Gudvangen and would you believe it, I WAS THE LONE PASSRNGER ON THE ENTIRE SHUP!!! The lady in charge told me I could wander anywhere and whenever I wanted, she would provide me with hot coffee, much needed as the temperature was around zero with a tremendous wind chill factor. However the scenery was so amazing that I just went down once to grab a much needed coffee.

Gudvangen also had a stunning location, with waterfalls pouring down hillside over a thousand high and the Viking village which I could only see from outside, was another attraction. The rest of our group reached in the late afternoon after which we all took a bus back to Flam, a memorable day indeed.

The next morning, we began our drive towards Norway's capital, Oslo, passing the same superb landscapes we had seen earlier. I had wanted a stop at Borgund to have a look at one of Norway's oldest stave churches, made of wood with a very unique style of construction, seen almost nowhere except Norway. All the members of the group were left amazed by its superb architecture and setting with a brook bubbling by and mountains all around.

Another landmark worth mentioning was the plateau which we crossed before reaching Oslo, with vegetation similar to the Arctic zone, small stunted trees dotting the area, with numerous Viking style settlements.

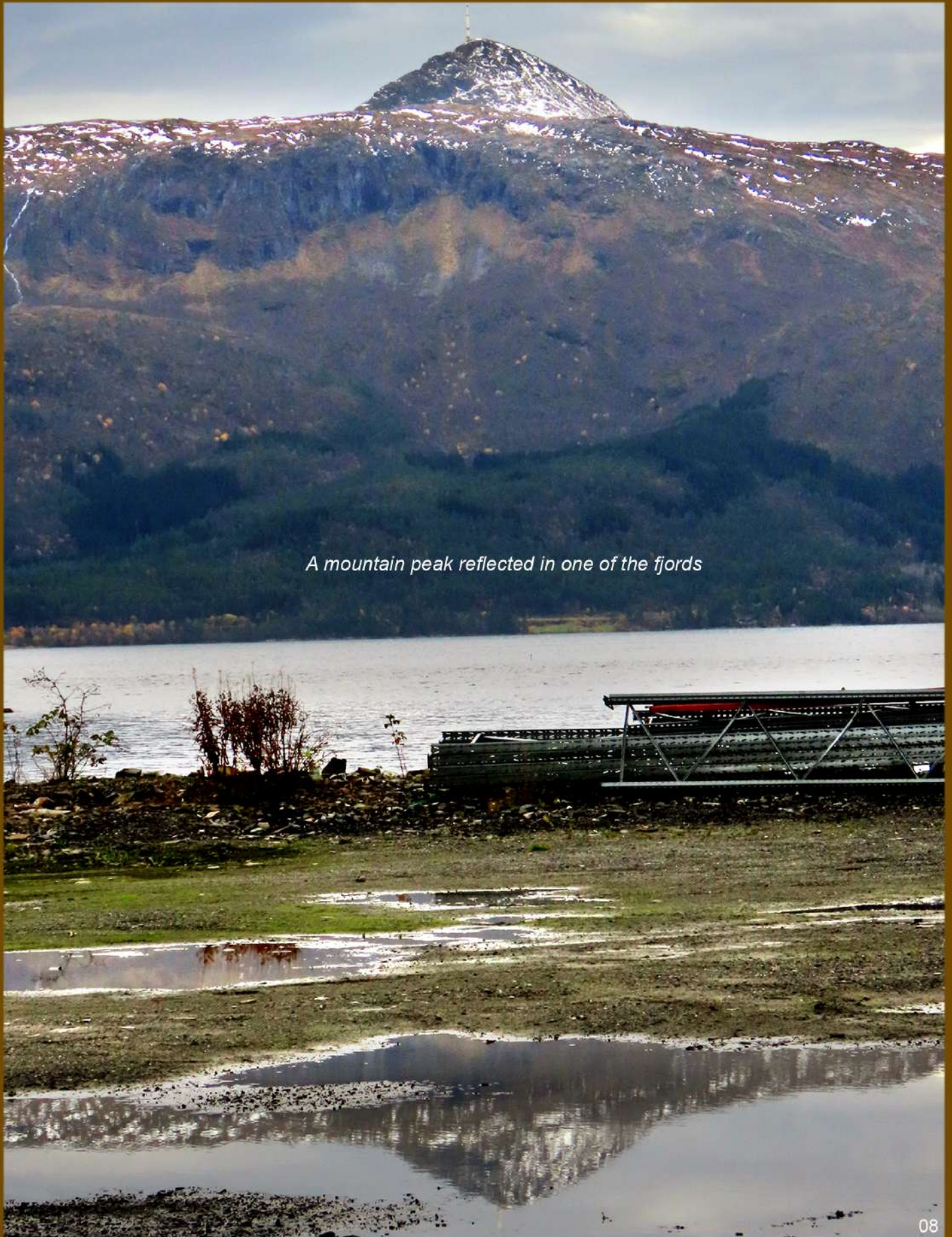


*A church in the midst of spectacular scenery*



*A ferry point (above) and a lake surrounded by fall colours (below)*

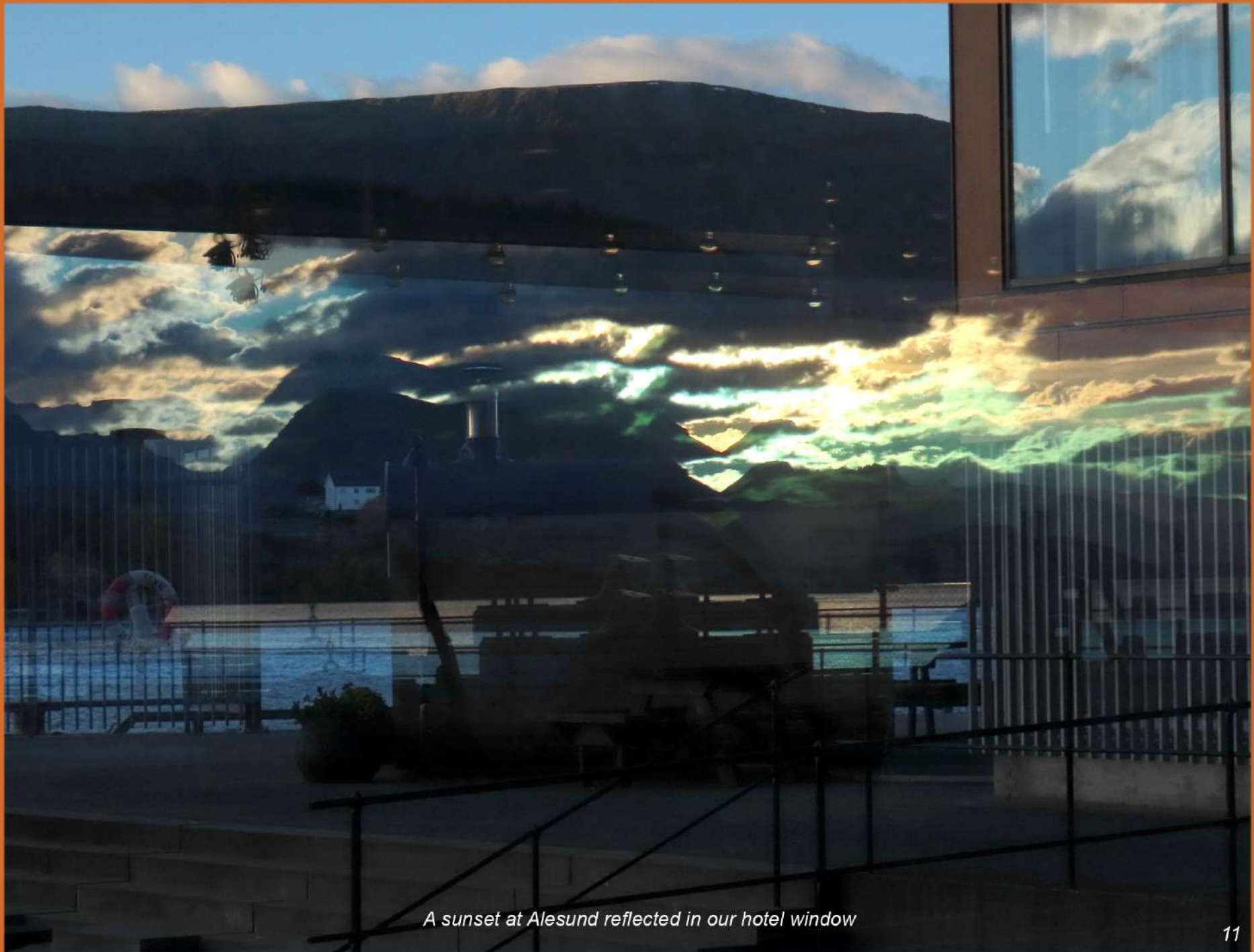




*A mountain peak reflected in one of the fjords*

*Another superlative view we got along the way*





*A sunset at Alesund reflected in our hotel window*

*Colourfull houses reflected in a fjord near Alesund*



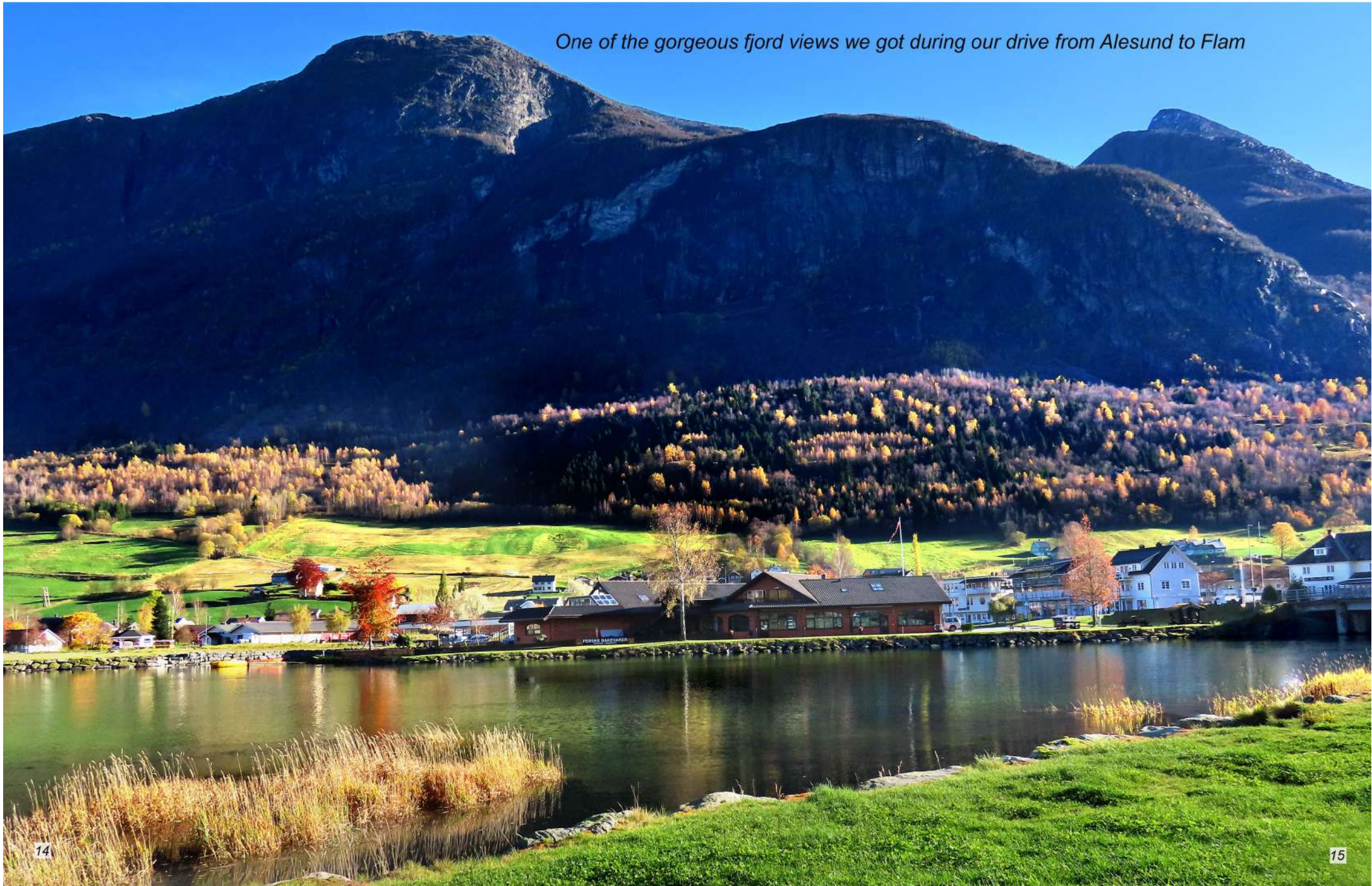
*A glourious sunrise at Alesund*



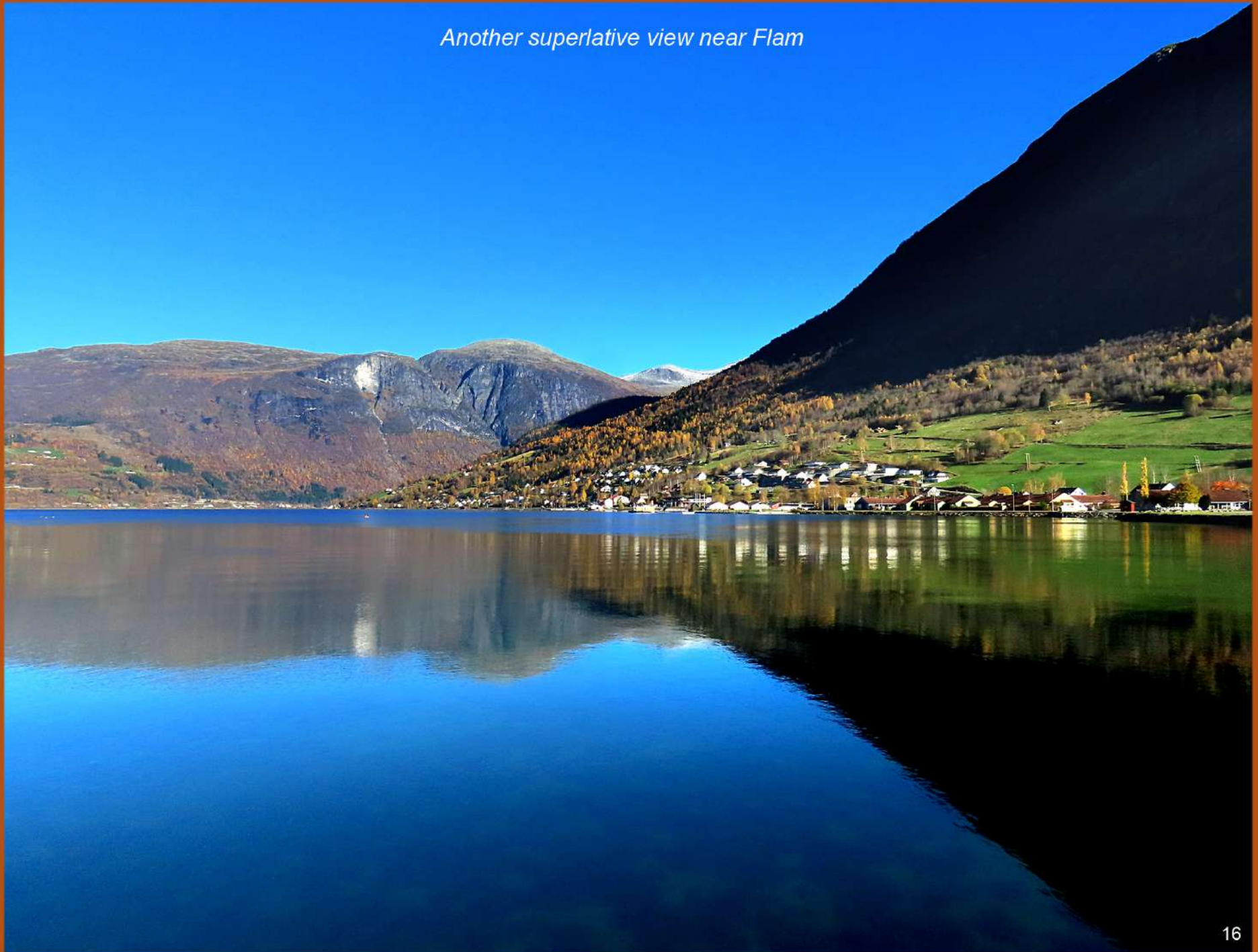
*A peculiarly shaped peak we encountered between Alesund and Flam*



*One of the gorgeous fjord views we got during our drive from Alesund to Flam*



*Another superlative view near Flam*



*Spellbinding!!*

*Fall colours and snowpeaks cobmine to make a breath taking vista in the fjord country*

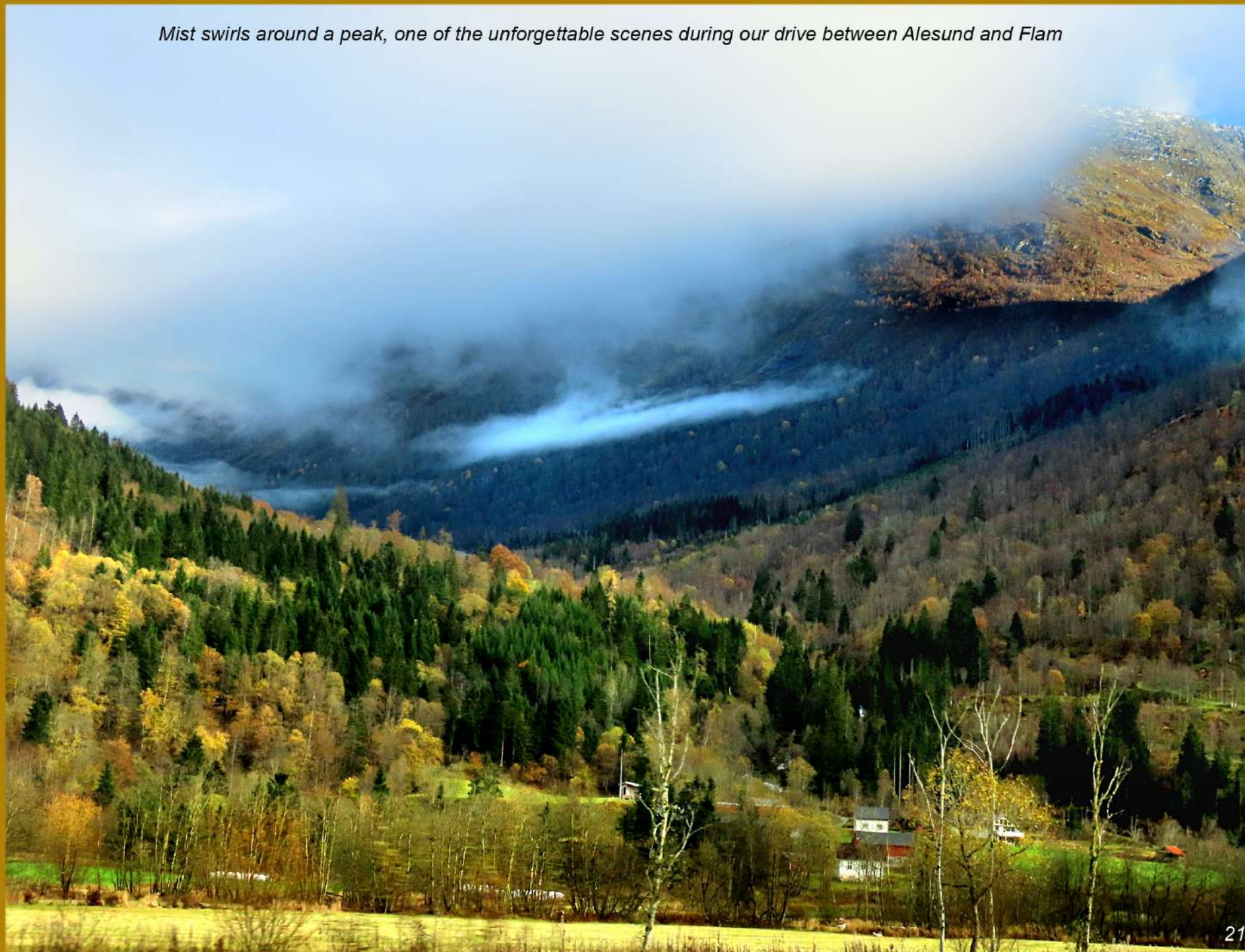


*A look-alike of the English countryside near Flam*



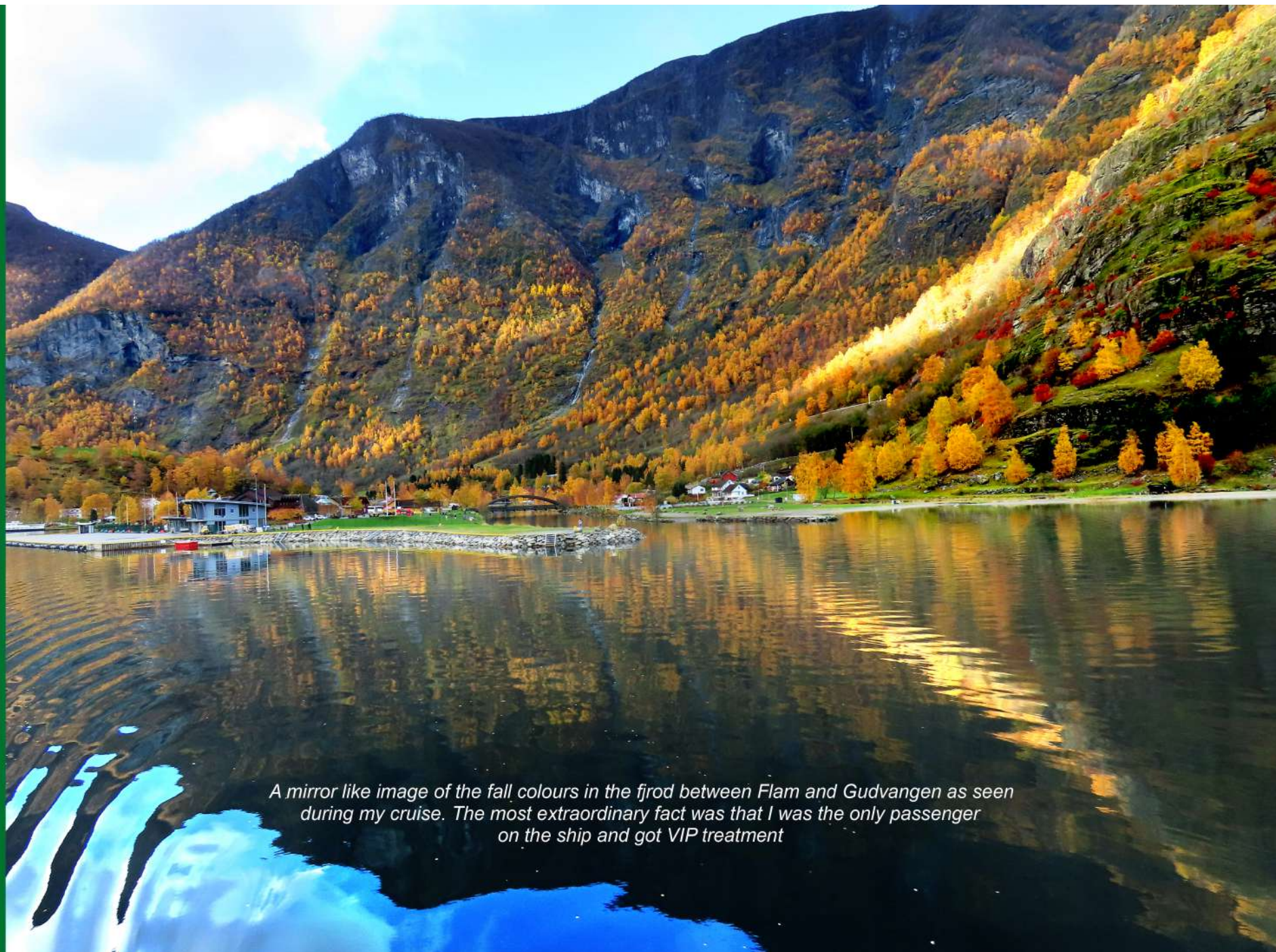
*We passed this horse cart taking tourists through one of the small towns*

*Mist swirls around a peak, one of the unforgettable scenes during our drive between Alesund and Flam*



*A waterfall cascades down the mountainside surrounded by fall colours*

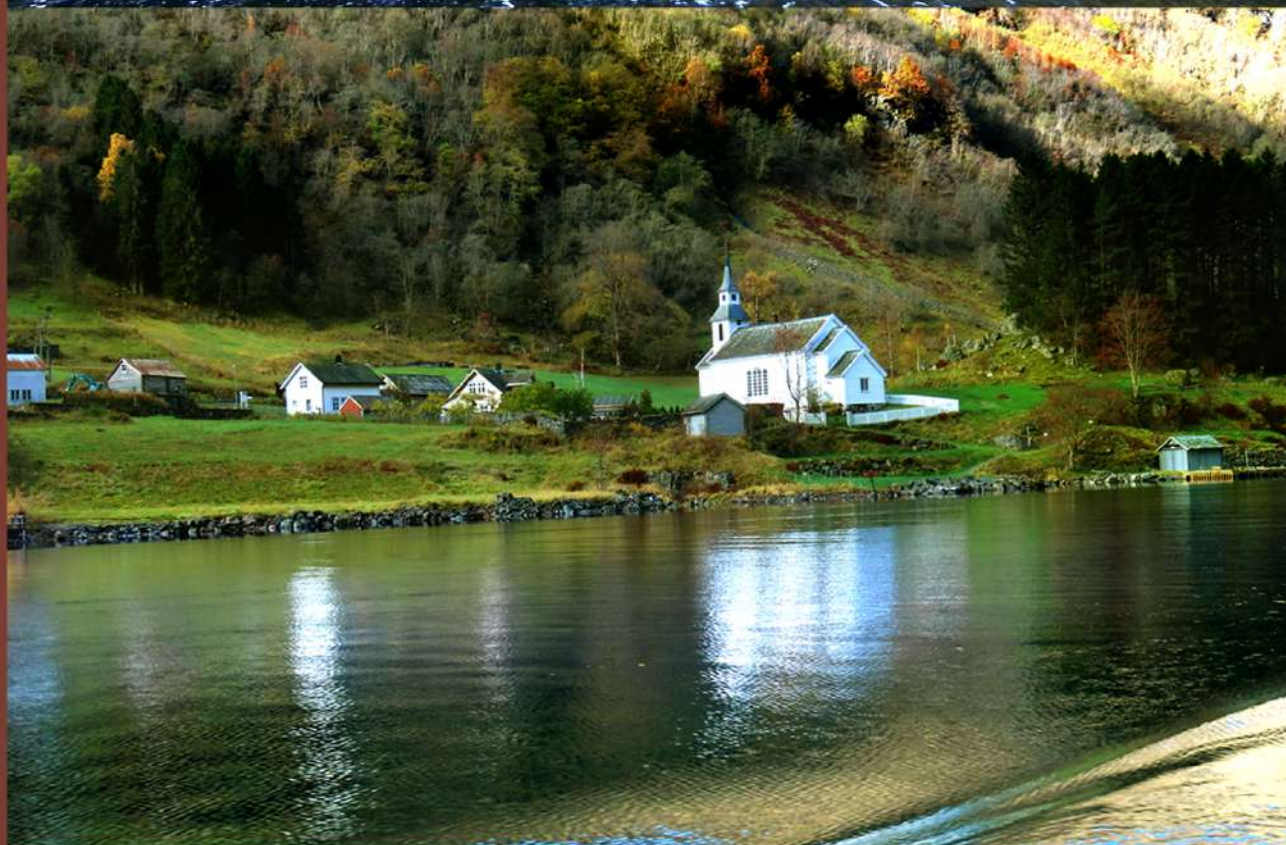
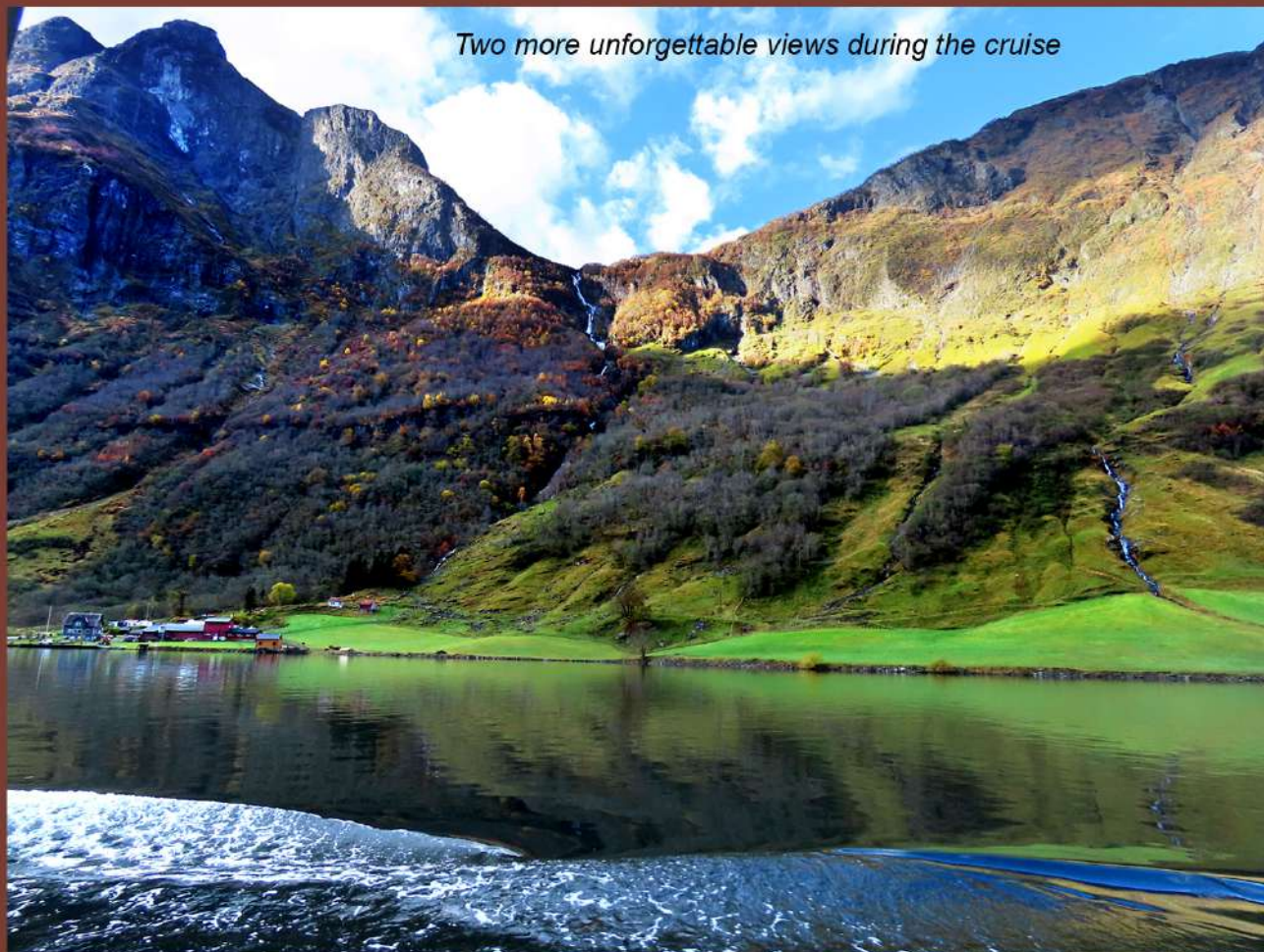




*A mirror like image of the fall colours in the fjord between Flam and Gudvangen as seen during my cruise. The most extraordinary fact was that I was the only passenger on the ship and got VIP treatment*



*Two more unforgettable views during the cruise*



*Mountains with white limestone looking like snow rise up from the fjord between Flam and Gudvangen*



*The Viking village is a tourist attraction at Gudvangen*



*A river of clouds seen from the Stegastien view point, a breath taking sight*



*The toy train that takes visitors from Flam ferry point to Flam village*



*The Scenic plateau between Flam and Oslo*



*A Vaking house we passed during our drive accros the plateau*



*Rolling farmlands near Oslo*



*Farmlands and mountains create a superb scene near Oslo*

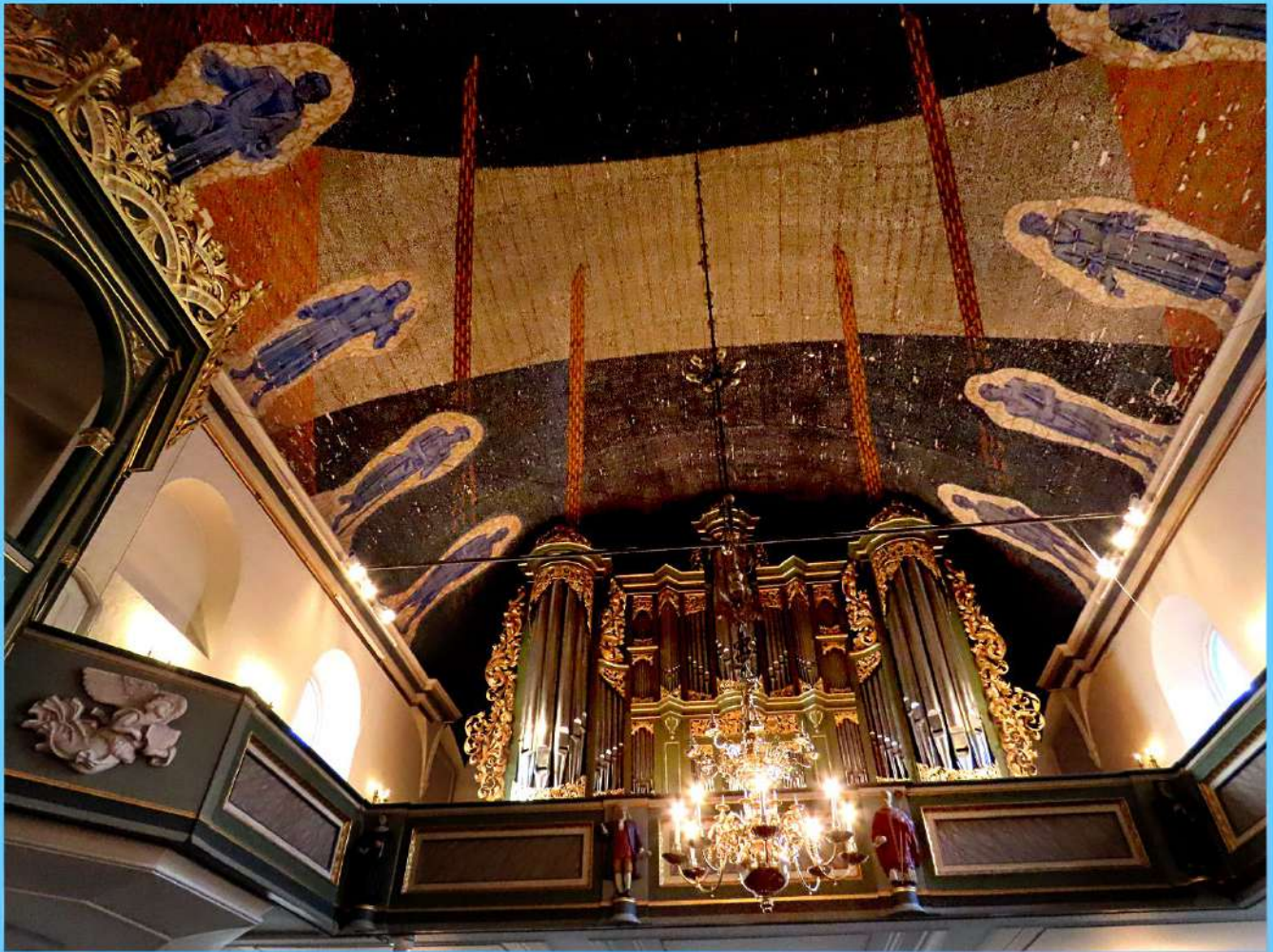


*The beautiful National Theater in Oslo*





*Two views of the Viegland park in  
Olso where numerous statues by the  
famous sculptor can be found*



*The exquisite interior of the Oslo town hall (above)  
and the "White Iceberg" Opera House building*





*Two views of the impregnable Akershus fortress that has stood guard over Oslo for centuries*



*The attractive Parliament Building stands proudly in the centre of Oslo*



We had a tour of Oslo the next day with visits to the unorthodox Vigeland park with numerous nude statues depicting the joys and sorrows of life, the grand City Council and the Iceberg building, housing the Opera, built in white, right next to the sea.

In the afternoon, I took a stroll to see the Akershus fortress, an almost impregnable structure surrounded by the sea, with high battlements and a battery of cannons as an additional protection.

Oslo over, we left for Copenhagen (Kobenhaven) as locals call it, through a series of manicured fields and forested areas.

***(To be continued)***

*A walk to the village of Flam is a very rewarding experience*



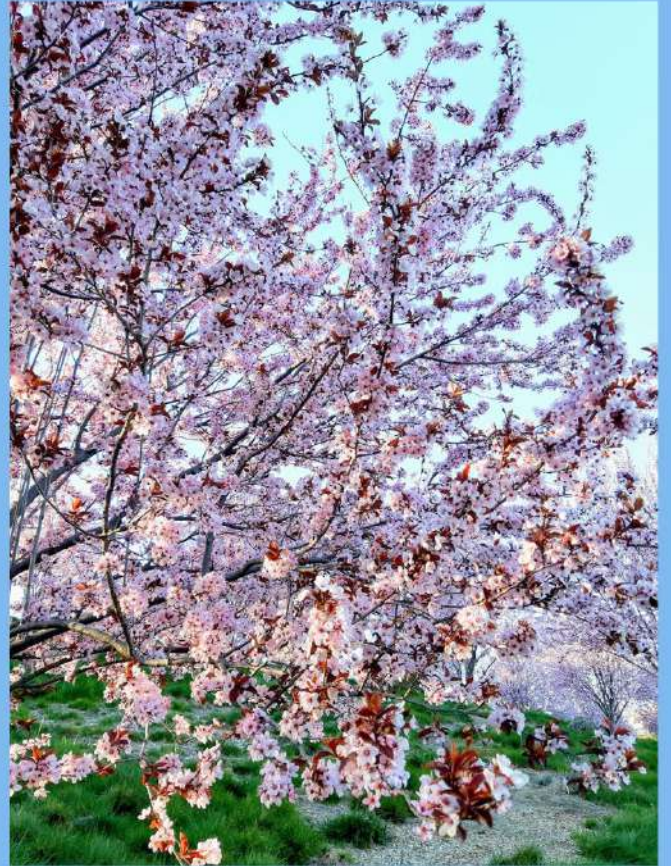
# FLOWERING CHERRY TREES, SAN RAMON CALIFORNIA



Pics by  
Divakar Murthi

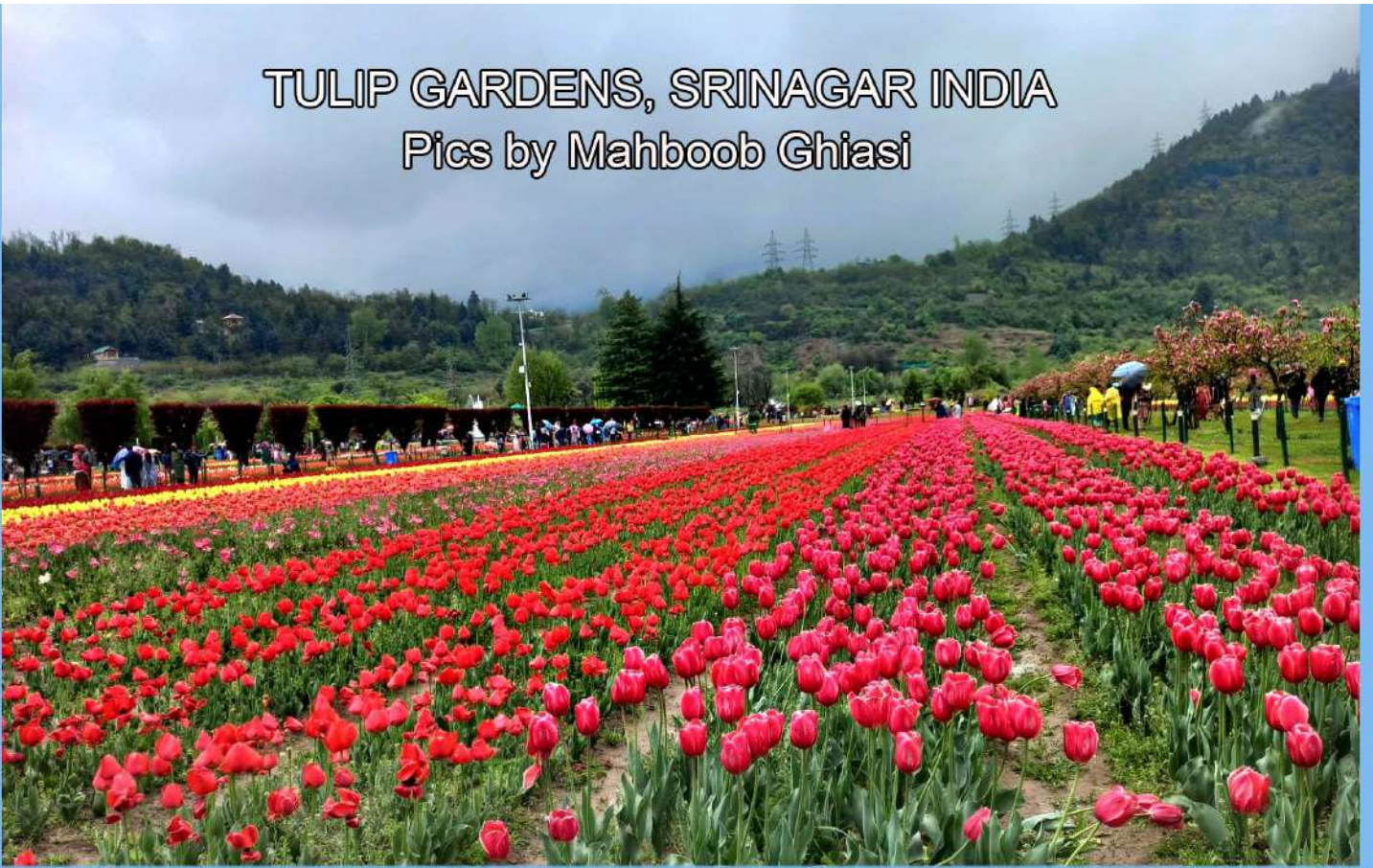
Season:  
March- April





# TULIP GARDENS, SRINAGAR INDIA

Pics by Mahboob Ghiasi



Season: April





***Flowering trees and plants have attracted visitors and nature lovers down the ages. On these and preceding pages we feature such flowering plants in two different locations, San Ramon, California, US, and Srinagar , Kashmir, India. While the photos of cherry trees in San Ramon have been beautifully captured by Mr Divakar Murthi, the tulip gardens in Srinagar have been clicked by Mr Mahboob Ghiasi. See these pics and feel as you are viewing them in personal***

***Mr Mahboob Ghiasi and his friends at Dal lake, Srinagar***

# ABOUT THE EDITOR

Abbas A. Tyabji is a Hyderabad, India, based photo journalist, who left Tata Motors, one of the largest auto makers in India after heading the Publications Division of the Company over a career spanning nearly 3 decades.

During his tenure he travelled all over India and to neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Mauritius and the Middle East on photo journalistic assignments. His articles, pictures and photo features appeared not only in the Company publications but in national and international magazines.

He was invited by the then People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (S Yemen) to photograph the natural and man made wonders of that ancient land and prepare publicity material for their govt. The effort was appreciated by Govt officials and even India's Ambassador to S Yemen wrote an appreciation letter to Tatas on his efforts.

He is the recipient of over 50 national and international awards including:

The President of India's Award for Excellence in Designing and Printing on TWO OCCASIONS

Best Feature Writer Award from the Association of Business Communicators of India 4 times

Best Photo Feature Award from the Association of Business Communicators of India 5 times

The internationally circulated magazine "Bus Ride" from the US found his pictures so exceptional that they selected 2 for the First Place Award in their 1989 Worldwide photo competition, the only time in their history that two pictures were given this honour.

Almost half a dozen of his pictures appeared in Japanese calendars and dozens have graced Indian calendars.

He has also published a book on Hyderabad, for which the text, photography and design was done by him.

For his photo journalistic achievements he has found mention in "Who's Who of India", and "Reference Asia".

He also operates guided, customised tours from Hyderabad and is listed in LONELY PLANET as a Tour Guide.

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Abbas Tyabji receiving the President of India Award for Excellence in Designing and Printing from then President of India Dr. N. Sanjeeva Reddy