

25 Years Dojo Balerna

<https://www.kinokenkyukai.fr/25-ans-du-dojo-de-balerne/>

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25 years friendship with Yvette

It's been 25 years since Yvette Voumard founded her dojo in the small Swiss town of Balerna, on the border with Italy. We've been there several times to attend seminars with Yoshigasaki and other shihan such as Gioconto, Maule, and Volpe.

Now led by Bernhard Boll, 8th Dan, this dojo has developed considerably. Thanks to the youth of its members, it will surely continue to grow.

More than 80 international participants

The Ronchamp Dojo was invited to Ticino, Switzerland, to celebrate its 25th anniversary. Numerous Belgians from Liège, Italians, Germans, Austrians from Vienna, Czechs from Prague, and even a strange little Argentinian girl were there.

We warmly congratulate Bernhard Boll and Maurizio Volpe on their live instructions in Italian, French, and English.

The reception was particularly well organized, with reservations at the Hotel Zen and a complimentary dinner on Friday evening. We ate very well and enjoyed the rich Ticino cuisine. There were also mineral water and Swiss chocolate for free in the dojo. At the end, we all received a lovely commemorative keychain.

Maurizio VOLPE, a charismatic Shihan

Maurizio Volpe, along with Gianni Gioconto and Bruno Maule, was one of the first to introduce Master Tohei's Ki Aikido to Europe and Italy.

He doesn't see himself as a master of his students, but rather as a humble link between the universe and humanity through the practice of Aikido. Feeling Ki is a way of perceiving the universe. Words allow us to express everything, but not explain it. This nonverbal aspect must be expressed through practice and meditation, in the calmness of mind.

Technically speaking, Maurizio Volpe expresses each movement in detail, and none of his movements appear brutal, but rather correspond to an exchange with Uke. He clearly distinguishes between street Aikido and the type that must be practiced in the dojo.



A well-filled dojo



Lunch at Friday



Ilaria shows a good appetite



Maurizio Volpe



A massage from Michal for Ilaria



Bernhard and Yvette in the Restaurant La Stazione



A nice little gift ...

Bernhard BOLL, a happy Shihan

He is one of our oldest companions and has been to Ronchamp many times. Always smiling and full of humor, he guided us through Tsusukiwaza 2 Ushiro Katatedori and 3 Ryotemochi in detail.

We were able to see the results of his work at a Ki exam and two Aikido black belt exams. The presentations were perfect, and it was a true joy to see young people at work.

A little trip to Belgium ?

We met about 20 people from Liège who had come (a nine-hour drive) under the guidance of their teacher, Fabrizio Tornabene, who is organizing a seminar on November 29 and 30. It's a bit tight to get there this year, but we'll certainly be keeping a close eye on their calendar for 2026, so we can visit them at Château Sclessin in Liège (about 450 km from Ronchamp). Of course, the opportunity to practice on a tatami mat with a beer bar at the side is not to be missed!

Some practical infos

Itinerary: 380 km from Ronchamp. Traffic jam on the way to Bellinzona South. Traffic jam on the way back to the Gotthard Pass, but we took the road over the Gotthard Pass because we were told we'd have to wait 70 minutes, compared to 60 minutes if we drove over the pass. We actually drove back to a gas station and were able to rejoin the traffic later with a receipt (I think for the gas?).

We had a snack and a coffee at that gas station, and then filled up (ouch, at the current exchange rate it was €2.70 per liter!). We drove over the pass, and in good weather, with sunshine and scenery, it's much more pleasant than driving 16 km through the tunnel. And in the end, we didn't waste any time. There's a panoramic restaurant at the top if anyone wants a beer.

We booked a room at the Hotel Zen, which is very nice and within walking distance of the dojo (€125/night without breakfast). You can have breakfast across from the dojo or behind the church for around €10. The menu without dessert and drinks costs €30.

In short: Switzerland has its price, but it is quite beautiful.

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