

Post



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Dordogne to Provence; Our group gets larger - May 21, 2022

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[Photos](#) | [Previous](#) | [Next](#) | [Index](#)

Big day today: relocation to Provence. We previously arranged for Pascal to be there at 8am (or before) and he's there at 7:50. His checkout of the place is cursory and anyway, he says, they'll be checking things out in more detail as they prep for the next visitor. We got up early and coffee'd. We finished last minute packing and cleaning before Pascal arrived. We say our good-byes and load up the car. Everything fits in the trunk, just barely. Which is to say, we're able to close the trunk such that we can see out the back, which is huge.

Previous drives took us mainly on two lane backroads. Today we're trying for all the autoroutes we can. It's a five hour drive and Ron and I have agreed to do 90 minutes each and then an hour each. That should get us there. At the first toll we drive in and stop at the gate. A recording of a female lecturing us about a bunch of stuff plays after which a ticket is dispensed. We don't know what she said, but we took the ticket and the gate opened.

We stop at an aire (rest stop) to stretch and relieve ourselves. Before long we're in the fabled city of Carcassonne. It's a walled city and is very well preserved. You think you've gone back in time when you're there. We park the car (sadly in just a 30 minute spot). Ron and the girls hike off to do a very quick tour of the city and to grab some sandwiches and chips. Twenty minutes later they return having done neither. It's much further away and they didn't find any open sandwich shops.

We pile back in the car and hit the gas. At the next aire we stop, they do have food. There's a MacDonald's and (thankfully) a sandwich stand. We get and eat sandwiches, chips, coffee, and dessert. We relieve ourselves at MacDonald's (it's good for something) and are back on the road.

We know when the TGV carrying Bonnie and Doug (from Napa) is scheduled to get to Avignon and we're watching the time. We pull into the Hertz lot 10 minutes after their scheduled arrival. They call a few minutes later and we find each other and meet and greet. Doug rents his car and adds me as a driver. I drive Doug's car and Ron drives "mine" and we cover the last 30 minutes to Bonnieux, our home for the next week.

We'd been in touch with our new hostess, Géraldine. She explained that the roads there are steep, narrow, and confusing. She asked us to park down "behind the church" and she'd meet us there. We do and she does. We walk up the house which takes ten or so minutes. Along the way Géraldine points out restaurants, bars, and the grocery store.

She lets us in and shows us around. It's pretty cool. It's five or so levels. After we're familiar with the place Géraldine drives her car back to where our cars are parked and we load six people's worth of luggage into her smallish car. She drives them, and Ron, up to our house. The bedrooms are on floors 1.5, 2, and 3. Someone's going to be doing a lot of stairs. We figure out who's going to be in which bedroom and unpack. A couple of us try to figure out the A/C with limited success. Others make trips to the grocery store for ingredients for dinner (and wine).

By the time dinner is ready Reinier, the homeowner (and designer/builder), has stopped by to say hello. He explains how the A/C actually works, most of which we'd already figured out. He covers many other eccentricities of this unique home, built on a many 100s of year-old shell. Eventually we settle in and enjoy our first dinner in our new home with our new, bigger family. As the sun sets in the distance we're dipping our toes in the pool and sipping more wine. We have dessert around the pool and agree life is good.

Photos







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[Previous](#) | [Next](#) | [Index](#)

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