

Post



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# Enjoying Provence - May 22, 2022

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We're finally settled in our new home (in Bonnieux, en Provence) with our additional travel companions (Bonnie and Doug). It's time for fun. We decide to split up. One car will take Scott and Karen grocery shopping and to lunch. And the other will take everyone else to some local cool towns (which also happen to be having markets today).

The grocery store for Scott and Karen is in Lourmarin, not too far away. The drive is beautiful. It's on a curvy, busy two lane road that follows a creek at the bottom of a steep ravine. It's Sunday and there are motorcycles and bicycles out, as well as tourists and locals in cars. It's beautiful but scary, not knowing what's coming around the next curve. The speed limit is 50 kilometers per hour, something we can't quite understand.

Eventually we make it into, and then through, Lourmarin to the huge Intermarché grocery store. Step one is to get a cart. All the carts are in one covered spot, all in nice rows. Why? Because you need a coin (0.5, 1 or 2 euros) to use the cart, and you get your coin back when you return the cart. Brilliant, why don't we do that!?

Another difference is that on US grocery carts the front wheels turn and the rear ones only go straight. In Europe all four wheels go independently in whatever direction they desire. This means you can easily spin the entire cart and I do. It's fun!

Inside the store we see what we're dealing with. If we wanted to buy a full size refrigerator or clothes washer, we could. Or a quart of milk. It's crazy. Karen and I do the store aisle by aisle and find everything on our list, and then some. We pay and put all the cold stuff in a cooler we brought from the US (we're going to be having lunch in town before the groceries get into our fridge at home). We relocate our car from the grocery store to the center of town. Based on parking, it's busy! A spot opens up and we snake the car into it. We're in Doug's car. It doesn't have parking warning tones (as you get too close to stuff around you) but it does have a whole array of calming nature sounds you can play while you're driving. OK. That's different.

We park and wander through the winding main street of the Lourmarin. It's essentially a walking street at this time of day. There are oodles of restaurants, bistros, and cafés on the street, as well as clothing and decorating stores. The place is jumping and it doesn't really seem to be tourists. It's locals and they know what they're doing (many with a cigarette hanging lazily from their hand).

Karen was smart enough to make a reservation at a popular spot. As we arrive the host is turning away potential patrons who don't have a reservation. We give our name and are ushered to our table as if we come every week. We have stayed in this town in the past. It was lovely then and still is. Lots of trees, old buildings, and winding streets.

Our lunch restaurant is Le Recreation. We, and most of the patrons, are outside.

Everyone's talking or laughing. We order and get our food. It's delicious. Next to us are two older ladies and their positively ancient mother. The mother was a pistol. She needed water so she picked up the heavy pitcher to start pouring. The daughters seemed sure she was going to break her arm, the pitcher or both. The mom shush'ed them and got the job done. What spunk!

Lunch, dessert, and our wine bottle finished, we pay and said our good-byes. We wish the neighboring tables who were still eating "bon continuation!" which they appreciate.

Back home we heard about the day of the rest of the group. They had gone to L'Isle-Sur-La-Sorgue and Fontaine-De-Vaucluse, places we've been to many times. The 'Fontaine', the source of the Vaucluse river, seems to have dried up, sadly. They did find some pretty roast chickens and they did have a good lunch, despite not knowing the language. To pay for lunch they tried to use a credit card, which apparently is not an option at that restaurant. First one of them, then another ran through the town trying to find an ATM, which they eventually did, but not easily.

Five of the six of us plunge up to our necks in the cool water of the plunge pool at our place. We drink, and talk and prepare dinner. We have cocktails of Kirs made with walnut liquor. We eat tapenade, crudités, cheese, crackers and baguette. For dinner we have the roast chickens, asparagus, broccoli and aligot potatoes (mashed potatoes with aligot cheese stirred in, only ever in a single direction, that is velvety, silky, yumminess). Lots of wine, dessert. Another successful day!

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