

Post



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# Gordes, Rousillion, and Menerbes - May 24, 2022

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We have what we need for today's trip to Gordes, except for the bread for sandwiches. I head out at 6:30 a.m. to get baguettes. In the bakery the greeting (in French) is unexpected and thus incomprehensible. I ask them to repeat it a couple of times. What are they asking me? Ah! They're telling me they do not open for another 1/2 hour, get out. Whoops!

Sandwiches made, we pile into our two cars and head for Gordes. We've really made sure, this time, we're going to the correct/same place. It's market day there and we're excited to check it out.

Scott's driving Bonnie and Doug and our GPS sends us the back way to Gordes. When we're a couple of blocks away the road is completely blocked off. Duh! It's market day. The market is in the street, no driving! We backtrack and go around the city to approach from the other side.

Parking is already pretty tight but we find a spot. It's paid parking and they have a lot of it. Since it's market day, however, it won't be nearly enough. The passengers from both cars are reunited so we head into town. The market is as big as we've ever seen it. The city is doing well and the weather is beautiful.

We all wander through the market at our own pace and in whatever direction suits our fancy. They have the usual meats, cheese, fish, fruits and vegetables, but they also have a ton of arts, crafts and clothing for the tourists. It's another market less for locals and more for tourists.

A vendor gives us all samples of his olives, including one marinated with big chunks of actual truffle mushrooms. They are really good so we ask to buy some. "Buy three and get the fourth free" we're told, so we point at four different mounds of olives and the vendor takes a big scoop of each. In the end we are buying much more than planned and the bill is 65 euros. Whoops. Suckers!

Karen and Ron buy more cheese, tomatoes, strawberries and cherries. Nancy buys some watercolors as gifts for someone back home. Doug sweet talks the local pharmacist into selling him some Aleve, which is over the counter in the US but prescription only here in France.

Shopped out, we head to the cars to stow our purchases. Drivers salivate at the prospect of taking over our spots, but we're not done yet and wave them off in casual, Gaelic-style.

Cars locked back up we head for the Belvedere, a natural rock outcropping by the side of the road with the perfect view of the picturesque town of Gordes. Karen and I have taken many pictures here, and Bonnie and Doug have one from 1996 they're trying to recreate. We take lots of pictures of us with the city behind us. There are many other people there but they're happy to wait.

Bikers are walking their bikes up the hill by the Belvedere, a tad exhausted from getting up there. There's not a lot of room between the walkers and the cars. The bikes have to wait their turn. One short, older biker, in proper jersey, shorts and shoes, stops by us in the welcome shade of a tree. I later ask if I might know his age. He beams with pride as he tells me he's 79. I congratulate him on his excellent form.

Next stop is the Abbaye de Senanque where they grow lavender, among their other duties. It's too early for the lavender to be out but apparently someone has been busy cleaning the abbey. The walls, and even the stone roof, are now bright white. It is more resplendent than ever. We take pictures and before long we're back in our cars. Next stop: lunch in Roussillon, a town where they used to mine ochre for making paint.

On our way there we stop at a field thick with red poppies and take pictures. At Roussillon the two cars hunt for parking spaces but are totally unsuccessful. We drop Nancy to tell the other car we've gone further afield to find parking and almost leave her there. Whoops!

Neither car can find parking and between our six smartphones we're unable to communicate. Scott (the driver in car 1) is able to 'see' the location of Karen (a passenger in car 2), and so is able to drive there to plan our next move.

We abandon Rousillon and head instead for Menerbes, another of the 'Plus Beau Villages (most beautiful villages) de France'. Parking there is plentiful. We find a picnic spot at a table in a verdant park. A dutch couple, out for a bike ride, were just leaving and offers our large group their table.

Lunch is delicious, of course. The sandwiches and crudités were prepared earlier but the bags of chips and bottles of wine are opened real time. After lunch, we walk around town which really is beautiful. It's location makes it easily defensible, from a 14th century standpoint, which makes it a bit less attractive to 21st century tourists. We're OK with that. Being on a hill we have spectacular views and a lovely, cooling breeze.

On the drive back home we stopped at the winery "La Canorgue". If you saw the movie "A Good Year" with Russell Crowe and Marion Cotillard, you've seen it. We buy wine, drive home, and have another delicious, wine-filled dinner. We take turns playing our favorite obscure songs for each other on the only sound system we can get working: our smartphones.

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## Photos















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