

Post



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# Don't go bacon my heart - June 5, 2025

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## ***SUMMARY***

Travel day. Said a sad goodbye to Ron and Nancy in Vila Real and headed to the Porto airport for our flight to Barcelona. Late dinner there and then off to bed. - Karen

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## ***DETAIL***

Today's a "depart the hotel, drive and fly" day. We have a fun, tasty, and healthy last breakfast and extend our thanks to the servers and food preparers (one and the same).

Ron and Nancy drive us the 45 minutes to the nearest Hertz office in Vila Real. They will be continuing on in this rental car, headed south to meet up with other friends, while we rent another car to get back to the airport in Porto.

Our drive is through the valleys of, and those leading off from, the Douro River. They're all fully planted with healthy grape vines, as they have been for centuries. Your port wine comes from here. There aren't many buildings but lots of scenic turnouts and well maintained walking paths. We dream about returning to try them out someday.

At the Hertz office there is no Hertz office. Apple Maps has failed us. Next we follow the directions to the address in the confirmation email from hertz and it looks like we're at somebody's house, right until the last second. This is the place.

Good-byes said and paperwork signed, our rep is doing last minute checks as I install myself into the driver's seat. He has one more question: You do know how to drive a manual car, yes?

The fifty minute drive to the airport goes smoothly until about ten minutes out when a car with flashing lights pulls in front of us and slows down. This can't be good. Arms out the car windows on both sides are flapping up and down slowly. Either they're trying to fly or they want all lanes on the freeway to slow. Maybe they're pirates and they're going to rob the lot of us. There are two such cars besides each other doing the same thing, so maybe it's official.

As the pace cars slow to a crawl, the backed up cars weave back and forth, switching lanes, jockeying for position. You'd think this was the start of the Indy 500. Eventually we see trucks up ahead closing the lanes leading off to another freeway. Past there we're released and get to Hertz without further issue.

Our greeting at Hertz isn't much better, though. They're not expecting us. "You're supposed to return the car here?" [yes] "Today?" [yes] I give the befuddled agent my paperwork and he's happy. No damage. Gas is good.

At the airport we give up our luggage (too big and/or heavy). Through security I check to see if there's a lounge here in Porto at which we're welcome. YES, and it's close! We have time so enjoy a beer (or two). Karen abandons her "alcohol-free" day in favor of a "make-it-yourself" gin and tonic. I grab one extra little can of tonic for Karen's purse. She toys with the idea of transferring some quantity of gin from the lounge's big bottle into Karen's empty water bottle, but cooler heads prevail.

In Barcelona it takes forever to get our checked bags which gives me time to figure out how to get to our hotel. Uber for €40 or one subway ride for 5€ each. Easy decision. How they keep these metro cars so spotless is beyond me. It turns out that our hotel is about 35 minute metro ride from the airport. We try to figure out who chose this hotel, oh yes, it was me. What was I thinking?

The hotel designers seem to have been trying too hard. The door to our room is hidden in the wall. You really have to look to see it, and then it doesn't do anything until you wave your key on a black square. We hear a click and push somewhere and the door opens. Strange. In our room it's all white. Like an operating room. What's not white is mirror or chrome, which reflects the white. There's an enormous mirror/sliding door that you slide one way to access the bathroom. But when you do that you can no longer access the front door. And vice versa. Very strange.

We have dinner just across the way, in a burger joint. Ill-advised, but we get salad and chicken fingers. Technically, based on the ingredients list, what we are eating is salad, but there's definitely no love in here. All of the lettuce is either frisée or big pieces of cabbage. Not enjoyable, but for the health benefits, we eat the whole thing. Good burger names, though. The most popular is the Kevin Bacon and they napkins all read "Don't go bacon my heart."

Off to bed. Tomorrow we have the second half of our flight to Sardinia.

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## Photos



Time to go, but first a few more pictures to remember this place before. We're sure we've taken these pictures once or twice already.



The kitchen. Where the magic happens. Lots of room and handsome saltio tile.



By the front door: cowboy boots. Well, cowboy boots if you live in the Netherlands in the 1,400s maybe. Wooden clogs with leather attached.



As we drive we see views we've not seen before. Similar blue sky and so much of the land is planted and well tended. I guess this is some valuable terroir.



Valley after pretty valley. Walking trails abound. Will have to come back.

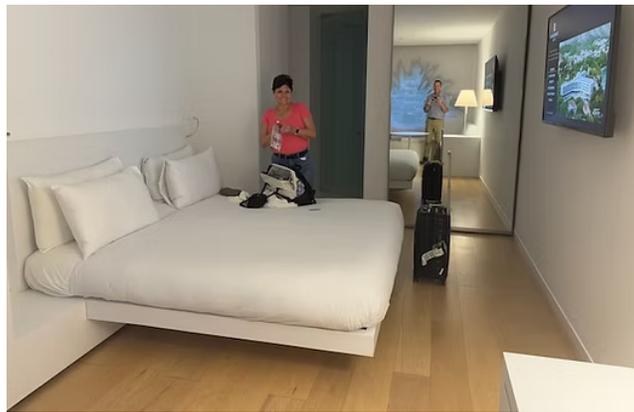


Like different patterns of fabric the fields make a kind of patchwork.



Whoops! What happened? We're in Barcelona, but just for the night. Our hotel. The rooms are on the left and right. In the middle it's open with stairs. The palm patterns on the big windows get

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In the room: white on white with white accents. Me in the mirror in front of our 'window'.



Cute con  staurant. The delivery (if you order a salad) leaves something to be desired.



Back at our hotel we opt for the elevator over the oh-so-open stairs. We have trouble telling the door from the walls.

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