

Post



Scott Farnsworth

Jun 13, 2025 · 8 min read

Blood, sweat, but no tears - June 14, 2025

Updated: Jun 20, 2025

SUMMARY

Nice breakfast at home then headed in to beautiful Bonifacio for the day. Our exploration involved many, many stairs - ancient, worn and unevenly sized (my watch gave me credit for 30 flights). Long walk along the city wall with many, many pictures taken. Late in the morning Tom ran afoul of a cement ledge - few things as alarming as turning around and seeing your friend with blood running down his face! After he was cleaned up and temporarily patched we continued on with our wanderings until we made our way back into the Old Town. A visit to the pharmacist suggested and the doctor at an ambulance nearby confirmed the need

for a visit to the hospital for stitches (he got three)! Afterwards we had a little down/pool time before heading back into town for a drink the a wonderful 2 1/2 hour boat ride great views, sunset, wine, cheese and charcuterie. - Karen

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DETAIL

ACK! 10 days til we fly home! Time flies when you're having fun.

Up early to be out early. We want to check out the cliff-top city of Bonifacio before it gets too hot. We also have some kind of a sunset cruise later.

Having bought food yesterday, the ladies heat two different quiches and cut up lots of fruit for a salad. The Nespresso machine noisily spits out perfect cups of coffee. We wash the dishes (and I break a red wine glass 😞) and we eventually drive into town.

Parked, we climb lots of ancient stairs and end up at the tourist information center. We get informed on a good route and itinerary to explore Bonifacio. Heading out we stroll the streets, dodging other tourists and ducking into shops for a peek.

Towards the far end of town we take more ancient stairs down to the Chemin de Ronde, a walk along the tall rampart wall paralleling the channel from the marina to the Mediterranean. It's mostly too tall to see over but openings every few meters (originally for firing crossbows) allow us to see the beauty on the other side. The Chemin is long and we don't really know where we're going.

We have been told of a tunnel we must check out. Supposedly you go in one end and at the other end it's cool and there's an amazing view. Sounds like our kind of thing. Where the chemin and ramparts seem to end there are stone stairs leading upwards and, around a short corner, a big hole in a wall.

The path looks very worn but the opening smells strongly of urine. The hole is easy enough to comfortably climb into but it appears to have been sloppily cut open with a circular saw and there's trash inside. Surely this can't be the tunnel we were told of.

When Tom and Cindy catch up (they'd made some stops for photos) I mention my discovery. Tom, who oft times channels his inner Calvin (of Calvin and Hobbs fame), rushes off to investigate. Cindy follows and soon there's a commotion. There's blood and napkins are needed.

Calvin, er Tom, had indeed climbed into the tunnel and discovered that neither direction led very far before ending. On his way out to inform us, he didn't keep his head down quite far enough and scraped the top of his head quite badly. We retrieve what napkins we have and dab the blood. Pouring water on the open wound helps but stings. We press one big clean square of napkin into the wound, a cap goes on next, and we continue on shakily.

We see more amazing views and do find the tunnel down to the water. The tunnel, built in 1880, leads 168 stone steps down close to the water. There are rooms with WW I artifacts and at the end of stairs are short runs of railroad track for bringing out (and returning to safety) an enormous old light projector (unseen) used to communicate to friendly ships (and spotlight unfriendlies for targeting).

Back in town, at the pharmacy, the pharmacist examines Tom's wound. He declines to suggest bandages or antibiotic ointment, rather he suggests stitches may well be required, and explains about the hospital a couple of kilometers away. Wishing for a second opinion, we ask an EMT by a nearby ambulance if he'd be so kind as to look at our friend's head. Soon there's a swarm of activity. Multiple medical personnel are poking, prodding, questioning, and applying antibiotic ointment. Eventually the doctor comes over and after a cursory glance declares "Stiches... Hospital".

We pick up some sandwiches and cookies on the drive to the hospital. To get to the emergency room entrance we pass a patient and a medical professional smoking outside.

The doctor turns out to be the same one from the ambulance downtown. In a drawn out procedure that lasts well over an hour Tom eventually is the proud owner of three new stitches. The doctor asked Tom to say if it hurts as the stitches are being added. Tom indicates that it is, indeed, painful. "That's what I expected," says the doctor.

Tom's credit card easily handles the €82 cost of all the attention. We express our thanks and the receptionist gives Tom back his passport. They'd been holding on to it to ensure we didn't leave without paying.

Outside the hospital we say 'auf wiedersehen' to the German gentleman who, while sailing, had managed to get a bad compound fracture of one of his fingers. He was why the ambulance was nearby.

At home we swim and hang by the pool. It's lovely. At about five we head for town. We have some prescriptions to pick up and a sunset cruise to enjoy. Aboard there are a total of eight of us, we four and two other couples, both French, and younger but more towards middle age. The 500,000€ boat (I asked) is incredibly nice. The boat could easily hold twenty but with eight it was pure pleasure.

We only did pleasantries with the other guests but spoke to Stephan a lot. He did his tour narration in fast French. I missed almost all of it but Karen got and translated almost all of it. Stephan could have easily done it in English but it's easier in his native tongue. The subjects ran from history to lore to botany to geology to religion, so Karen understanding almost all was quite impressive. We're not sure we'll be able to get her back to the states (wink).

We did stop to swim in a secluded cove. With Tom's shiny new stitches and accompanying prescriptions, he stayed dry. Karen was thinking we'd be swimming with dozens from a booze cruise in choppy open water, so she left her swimsuit at home, much to her dismay. The water temperature was barely south of perfect. The water was crystal clear.

We saw a mama seagull with two ugly, mottled young ones, colored to blend with the rocks.

As the sun was setting we had just passed an ancient Genovese tower far in the distance. Karen jokingly requested of Stephan that he give her a bougie (a candle in French). WE all laugh, but ten minutes later that's exactly what he did. We all clap and say Bravo! Sebastián is very pleased with himself.

We motor past (well under, really) the ancient clifftop town that is Bonifacio. At night it's impressive. We see the amazing straight staircase, carved by Cistercian monks directly into the rocks, many hundreds of years ago. The wine in us encourages declarations of intent to climb it (twice, necessarily, down and up). We'll see.

Gliding back into the marina we pass so many 5, 10, and 20+ million dollar yachts, moored for the night. On many of them their we see the owners, relaxing in the outdoor living room, enjoying their expensive toys.

We retrieve our shoes, thank and tip Stephan, and trudge the long way back to our car. It's an uneventful, short drive home, quickly followed by sleep. We figure we'd had enough excitement for one day.

Photos



Breakfast at our "house". Coffee, fresh fruit, and quiches. Very tasty!



Today we're exploring Bonafacio. One thing to see is the Chemin de [something]. It's a long wall/rampart. It goes on for quite a ways, with 'shooting holes' every so often, now used to see the water beyond.



The wall is short enough that we guys can see over, for much of it, but the girls can just see through the holes. Rook!



In exploring a hole in the wall (and tunnels extending therefrom all of which we shouldn't have been in) Tom scrapes his head rather badly. Blood coming down in front and back. He's shaken up, but we pour water on it and press a clean paper napkin into it. We make a mental note to follow up on this later.



At the entrance to the city channel we take pictures.



We finally find the tunnel we were supposed to be in, Le Gouvernail de la Course. 100s of stairs down (and then back up) with tunnels leading off in various directions to rooms. Used in various wartimes.



In different rooms were different WW I artifacts. Cindy calls "ACTION!" and I get into character. Tom's still considering his motivation.



Nearby is the impressive Cimetère Marin de Bonifacio. It goes on forever.



By now we're headed for a city pharmacy. The pharmacists here are trained in doing first aid and applying bandages. On route we see more of the labryntian roads of the clifftop town.



The pharmacist, alarmed by what he saw on Tom's head, said we needed to go to the hospital, to ensure stitches weren't needed. On the way to our car we passed an ambulance that was there for another emergency. The EMTs were more than happy to help (once they saw the top of Tom's head). The doctor, in white, only had two words for us: Stitches. Hospital. (He turned out to also be the doctor at the hospital who put in all three stitches.)



THAT excitement out of the way, we head back to town for our sunset cruise. We're NOT going on this boat, though we'd be happy to. There are so many huge, and enormous, (and smaller) boats here. So impressive. Lots of money in this world and much goes to fancy yachts.



On our sunset cruise, with a total of eight passengers, we pass the city lighthouse, the Madonette. Not a pop singer but the small statue of the Madonna just below the light, on one side.



During our cruise we stop for wine and cheese and other happy hour foods. This guy wasn't happy that we weren't sharing.

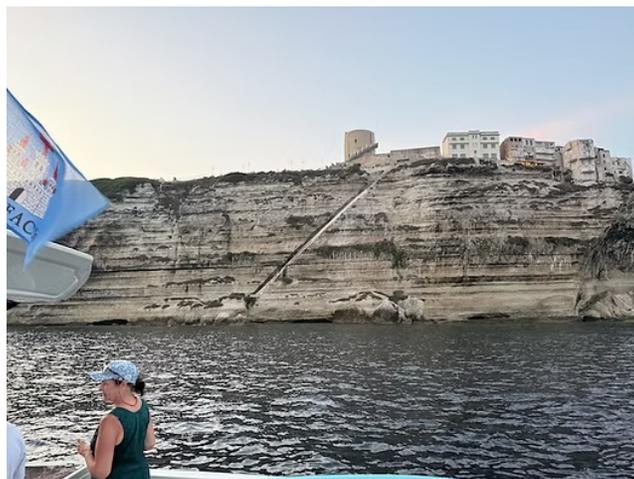


Cindy and Scott were happy to be in the water. We are in a cove and as such the shallow water is the perfect temperature, and perfectly clear. Karen thought we'd be swimming in the chopping water off shore, so didn't bring her suit. And Tom wasn't permitted to join us (Doctor's orders).



FARNSNIENTE 

laughter kept us from getting back up for a long minute.



From our vantage point on the water we should see the houses of Bonifacio, on the tops of the limestone cliffs, and also the stairs of the king of aragon, supposed to be cut into the rock by cistercian monks in one day. Hm, not sure I'm buying that one.



We could also see "The Rudder of Corsica" (bottom left of the rocks). Not a real rudder, though it does look like it. The cut out, just above it, is where the long flight of stairs we took earlier in the day come out.



As we bobbed around in the water, awaiting the sunset, Karen saw the sun and the tower and asked our captain (Stephan) for a "bougie" (a candle). The good captain delivered, without fanfare, though he did look quite pleased with himself.



Half of our sunset tour group for tonight with captain Stephan on his big, nice boat The Sebastian. He was good fun.

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