

Post



Scott Farnsworth

Aug 14, 2025 · 5 min read

Houston, we have a fire - August 14, 2025

Updated: Aug 22, 2025

SUMMARY

After a lazy morning we headed out to explore town again. Having thoroughly pickled ourselves yesterday we decided not to visit additional wineries this day. We had a nice lunch outside at Café du Vin then later, an excellent dinner at Orangerie at Le Lude Winery. - Karen

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

DETAIL

Oh my, after yesterday's day-long wine-fest, it's good to be having a quiet day of relaxation. Nothing's on the schedule (other than a dinner reservation). We wake and it's cold. Maybe in the upper 50s or low 60s... inside. The place has lots of ways to cool down, for in the summer, when it's oh-so-hot. But not as many people come in the winter, and it's not normally this cold. We have coffee and chill (literally) and Karen does laundry.

Around noon we realize we need food. We grab our coats and head into town (about 100 yards away). The breakfast menu at the Café du Vin looks good so we plop ourselves down. I have a beer to start, Karen orders a croissant with bacon, egg, and cheese. I order the shaksuka, which is good and very spicy. It's relatives in the food world include piperade and ratatouille, both also culinary rock stars.

We do more walking around. Karen did laundry this morning and has some clothes she no longer wants, so we drop them at the local hospice thrift store. We continue to marvel at the mountains all around.

At the old post office we stop to see the wares the locals have for sale. In the summer there are lots of potential clients, but at this time of year, it's pretty much just us. The vendors are more excited than they should be when we show up. They try all their tricks... they can ship, we can touch whatever we want, etc. but nothing works, much to their dismay. We don't buy anything.

I do know that my grandparents also came to Africa but I don't recall if they brought home any souvenirs. On their fireplace mantle, forever, was a big band of blown up dried frogs, each with a trumpet or banjo or other musical instrument, theoretically making frog music. But were they from Africa? I don't know. In any case, I'm pretty sure Karen would prefer not to have such a thing on display in our house (and probably not anywhere in Austin).

Getting back from our walk we unlock the house and restart our power relaxing. A short while later we hear a knock and see a big policeman-looking guy at the door. This is when I remember the whining I'd been hearing in the distance. I also remember that I hadn't turned off the alarm when we came home. I mime that I have to find the key, which I do. I unlock the first door and the second door. "I'd forgotten to turn off the alarm" I explain, and the "Armed Response" person shows me how to turn off the alarm and then lets himself out.

Resuming our power relaxing, there's soon another knock at the door. It's a smaller, frail-looking older woman who resembles Jane Goodall. I again unlock the two doors and say hi. She apparently is one of the owners of the house we're in (and all the others in their stable of nice rentals). She wanted to say Hello and ensure all is going well.

We say "Great, we're loving the city and house, but it's cold inside". Have we used the fireplace yet? Not yet. I always think that a fireplace is a good way to pull the warm air from inside and move it up the chimney to the outside. And then that air has to be replaced, by cold air, from outside. A lose-lose situation. Karen (and our host) finally wear me down and I vow to start a fire in the fireplace.

I read the 24 items on the "things to know when starting a fire and what to do if things go wrong" list. They're not that bad. I stack the kindling as directed and put a fire starter block in, light it and close the door. It flames nicely but soon dies down and we're seeing mostly smoke. SEE, I told you!

A minute later it's recovers and we have good flame. Apparently there's a direct "air in" to the fireplace from the outside, as well as the chimney's "air out". You have to get enough warm air moving up the chimney to get the "chimney effect" going (so you can get the fresh air pulled in to feed the flames). To make a short story long... we have an awesome fire and it soon warms us and after a while even warms the huge house up about 10°F. We're both happy and Karen curls up in front of the fire and resumes reading her book. There's lots of firewood.

Once bitten, twice shy, when it comes to getting to dinner. We arrange an Uber from the get-go, even though it's just a bit over a mile away. It's cold (and dark) out. We're headed to L'Orangerie, like the one at Versailles. Well, it has that name and it's similarly decorated (very tastefully) to give that feel. It works and we're enchanted. The wine is (of course) delicious and the food (French) is maybe the best of the trip. We're happy and after not enough time we're back in an Uber (same driver) headed back to our rental. Tomorrow? We start our trek back home.

Photos



Once outside our first stop is breakfast. The Café du Vin, which we've passed a few times in this small one-street town.



Breakfast (when it finally arrives) is delicious. A bacon, gruyere cheese, and egg croissant, and "shaksuka". It means mixed or mixture in Arabic and is a spicy tomato based stew served with poached egg and avocado. Very spicy and good.



The spot set aside to let locals sell African trinkets and art. They're excited to see us show up to browse but sad that we don't buy anything.



Speaking of African art, this big metal rhino was out in front of the hospice thrift store. We were impressed by the artist's attention to detail, anatomically speaking. Talk about balls of steel!



No matter where we look we see beautiful, seeming pristine mountains in the distance.



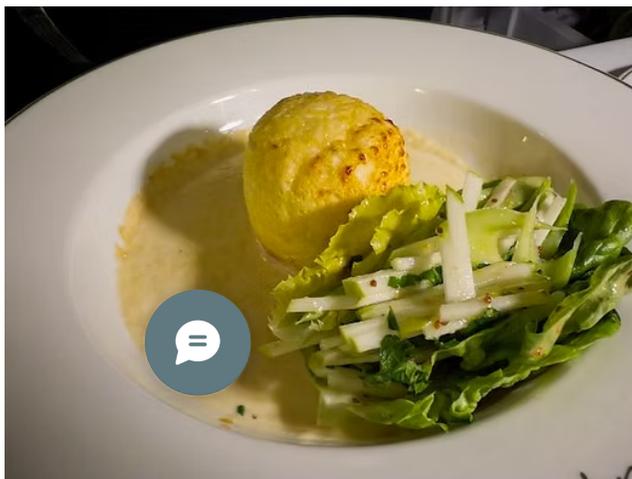
The mountains seems to accent anything we're looking at, like this parking lot.



FARNSNIENTE



At home I'm finally worn down and start a fire. I wish I'd started this a couple of days ago. The high tech fireplace only adds heat to the room and doesn't draw air in from the outside. Win-win. Within an hour or two the place was probably 10°F warmer.



At dinner we go for French, this being a town inhabited by French Huguenots for so long. This is Karen's yummy grèyere cheese soufflé. They were able to make it in it's little ceramic dish and then plate it without the dish. Impressive!



My filet of sole was perfectly tender. Thankfully it was "fall off the bone" tender. I ended up with a complete fish skeleton when done.

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

Subscribe Form

Email Address

Submit



©2023 by FarnsNiente. Proudly created with Wix.com