

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | THURSDAY, 30 MAY 2013

Alghero

For the first hour of our drive this morning we continued driving around the Gulf of di Orosei. The road was excellent. There were two upland sections where we had great views across to the water. The road then gradually descended to flatter country near the town of La Caletta.

We stopped and checked out the expanse of white sand which is supposed to send visitors into raptures but it was very tame compared to what we see at home on the Gold Coast. Nevertheless we had an early lunch on the wharf and watched as three males - we thought of them as grandfather, father and little grandson - mending their fishing nets.

Our original plan was to keep traveling north and eventually end up in Porto Cervo for the night, but on rereading our guide book over lunch we noted that Porto Cervo was really only an upmarket "Riviera for beautiful people." Evidently the whole coast was owned at one time by the Aga Khan.

Since Heather was looking decidedly shabby chic with her unruly hair we both made the decision not to visit the area but instead to cross over to the western coast to visit the ancient port of Alghero.

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Sardinia's undulating northern centre

Sardinia

We had been told, and had read, that Sardinia is very different to Sicily. It's true - Sicily is full steam ahead, chaotic and full of things to see and do. Sardinia, at least the bit we have seen, feels more expansive, more remote, fewer people, a slower pace.

The small villages that we have passed through actually have roads wide enough to pass. Having said that, the secondary roads were just as narrow. We were not game enough to tackle the "white" roads (as we call them) that promise the most remote locations.

What we have been amazed by is the large (read very large) numbers of motor cyclists on the roads. Apparently it is a known haunt for them. They like the wide sweeping curved roads that are not quite as busy as elsewhere in Europe.

We have also encountered large numbers of motorhomes. The majority are German. Maybe it's normal or maybe it's because of the very cold spring that mainland Europe is experiencing.

Can there be any Germans left at home!



SUN BLOCK The beach is filled with beach umbrellas and deck chairs reserved for "guests." There is almost no room for the plebs sun baking on the sand behind.



EVERYTHING "ERIA"

I noticed a spelling mistake on this sign. The word should have been CRAP AREA.

If Sicily is about culture, Sardinia is more about geography.

The road across the island was via a broad valley. We could see high mountains in the distance on both sides. It was a pleasant, if not exciting drive, through lightly wooded country.

We saw our first herds of sheep and more than a little agricultural activity - mainly grapes and paddocks of cut for hay. In fact the drive reminded us very much of Australia with its eucalyptus trees and broad acreage farming.

At one point we drove right through the middle of the Sardinia Stone quarry. This mine must have been here for centuries because the area it covered was immense. Huge big blocks of

sandstone were being cut out of the side of the mountain and also from deep craters in the ground. The place was covered in dust and the rock barriers on the side of the road were made from blocks of this sandstone.

We reached Alghero, our intended stop, fairly early. Our caravan park was only 2 kms from the town, so we rode in. Alghero is now a town of 40,000. It's sea walls are still very much intact and stood out as we approached the outskirts. It apparently was greatly affected by Spanish invaders in the 14th century when they tried to replace the local populace with Catalan colonists. This shows up in an obvious Spanish

atmosphere to the town. We have noticed this in other parts of the island also.

Despite the cold wind, the town had lots of people wandering the streets. We enjoyed the ride around the cobbled pathways and out on to the sea wall. We stopped to inspect two large replica siege weapons. Cafe's and restaurants were everywhere but the cold weather meant very few seats were filled. Once again the shops had the usual junk for tourists but also had quality clothes and accessory outlets. We have found this so in most of the Italian towns that we have visited.

Heather had a nice interlude with an old Italian lady. She obviously wanted to go into a church but was very unsteady on her feet. Inside the church, which was being renovated, it was very dark. Heather offered to help the old lady and walked with her down and then back up the stairs. They conversed in English and Italian, not understanding each other at all, but understanding everything - if you get my drift. We wondered why she was by herself - maybe she had escaped from her aged care facility and was having a gay old time!

We also met a nice young English couple who stopped us and asked about our bikes. We talked for ages.

We are sitting here now in our motorhome with a great view of the distant coastal cliffs and the old town across the water. It is dark and the lights of the city are twinkling on the horizon.

Tomorrow we will slowly go up the coast and if it is timely, we will cross from Sardinia to Corsica and set our feet upon French soil.

How come time flies yet the clock only runs?



Replica seige weapon in Alghero



La Caletta



PHOTOS



Alghero's sea wall



Alghero's port



One of Alghero's many public squares



Alghero's old church



View from our van