

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | SUNDAY, 2 JUNE 2013

South Corsica

One traveller we spoke with recently referred to Corsica as “the last frontier in Europe”. It has a reputation for being “wild” and “hard to access”.

After being so impressed by Bonifacio yesterday, we were keen to see what the rest of island had in store for us. We decided to travel up the western coast and had steeled ourselves to tackle the narrow roads that we needed to traverse but had both agreed that we would not allow Emily to dictate which roads she would take us on. In truth Corsica does not appear to have any major highway system and whatever main roads there are appear to be as winding as any of the secondary roads on Sardinia.

The drive to Sartena was through really rugged mountainous terrain but the road, although winding in parts, was excellent. Surprise, surprise! The area reminded us of Wilson’s Promontory in southern Victoria. The distant vistas were of rocky outcrops and steep sided valleys. Occasionally a beautiful crescent shaped bay with white sand and aqua water came into view. We assumed that these were accessible by the dreaded D roads. Not for us.

Our first stop was Sartena. It is located, not surprisingly on the side of a mountain. Like other villages along the way, the buildings and cobbled streets are made almost entirely from local grey stone - a nice change from the concrete of Italy. The red clay terracotta roof tiles livened up the street scape. We parked our van and walked along the busy main street and into the town square. The place was surprisingly busy. It was Sunday and the church was full. We peeked inside briefly and then continued on our way around the back streets. Many bikies occupied the cafe seats whilst their motor bikes filled up the parking spots.



Zoom lens comes in handy (see Sunseekers)

Our next destination - Porto Pollo, required us to tackle a D road. It was slightly narrower than the main road we had been on, but apart from that, it was quite good. The town was a lovely quiet place with marina and white sandy beach resplendent with nubile topless babes.

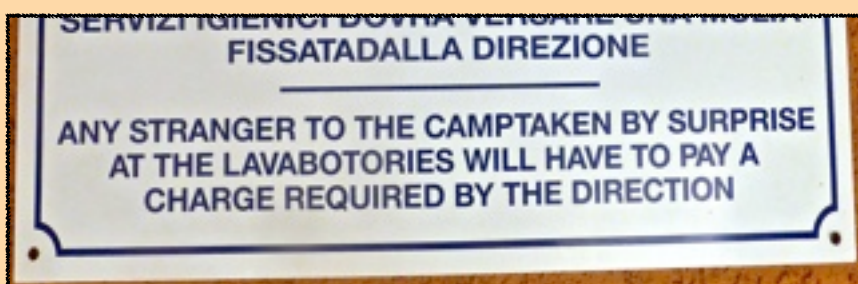
I wanted to sit and enjoy the view for a while but Heather was keen to move on.

We headed for Ajaccio - it was the birth place of Napoleon and is described as “a chic seaside town”. The road was very wide, the scenery varied from mountainous lush green to flat and boring. We could have been driving anywhere in Australia.

When the outskirts of the city finally came into view, with its many huge roundabouts, we were not expecting what we experienced. A huge port, very busy traffic, very wide roads and lots and lots of people.

We parked on the outskirts of town and rode our bikes in to see the museum. It is purported to have the largest collection of classic paintings eg: Titian, Botticelli, outside of Italy. Unfortunately for us it was closed. We substituted with a quick spin around the town and its harbour.

Ajaccio is a town of about 65,000. It was just too large and busy for our taste. We quickly moved on.



SACRÉ BLEU!! Found this sign in large lettering on the camp toilet door. So many things to admire in this translation. Stranger? Taken by surprise in a toilet? Lavabotories? Will pay a charge be more for a poo than for a wee? Who or what in hell is The Direction and would you want to meet whatever this is in the dark?



Sartena



Sartena



Typical stone house around Sartena



Lighthouse Point - Ajaccio



Ajaccio harbour



Ajaccio harbour

MINI CARS

THE BEST WAY TO COPE WITH THE NARROW ROADS (AND THE LIMITED PARKING) IS TO DRIVE AROUND IN A SMALL CAR. THE MAJORITY OF VEHICLES WE MEET ARE VERY NIMBLE AND FITTED INTO THE TINNIEST OF SPACE YET MOST

STILL HAVE SCRATCHES AND DINTS. OCCASIONALLY WE COME ACROSS A GROOVY OPEN TOPPED RUNABOUT. THEY ARE REGISTERED AND CAN LEGALLY ZIP AROUND ON THE ROADS. SOME EVEN HAVE BUMPER BARS. I WANT ONE. DRIVING ON RIDICULOUSLY NARROW D ROADS WITH SWITCHBACK CORNERS WOULD BE SO MUCH MORE FUN THAN IN A MOTORHOME.



BIKE ROAD TRIP

A MOTOR BIKE ROAD TRIP SEEMS TO BE A VERY POPULAR PAST TIME IN SARDINIA AND CORSICA. WE HAVE FOUND MOTORBIKES EVERYWHERE. THEY DRIVE AROUND IN SMALL GROUPS - SOMETIMES 2 PEOPLE PER BIKE. THEY ALL SEEM TO HAVE A WOW OF A TIME. THE GROUP WE SAW IN SARTENE TODAY INCLUDED A NUMBER OF VERY OLD CLASSIC BIKES. THEY LOOKED GREAT. IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO GO ON A TRIP LIKE THIS - THAT IS, UNTIL IT RAINS OR THE BIKE BREAKS DOWN AND THEN IT WOULD NOT BE VERY PLEASANT.



SUNSEEKERS

THEY SAY THAT CORSICA IS A MAGNET FOR EUROPE'S SUN SEEKERS. WE FIND EVIDENCE OF THIS IN THE CARAVAN PARKS - PEOPLE SITTING ON DECK CHAIRS WITH HARDLY ANYTHING ON WORSHIPPING THE SUN (WHILE WE ARE INSIDE THE VAN PROTECTING OURSELVES FROM SUNBURN). THE WHITE BEACHES AND THE WARM WEATHER BRING THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE OUT IN THEIR DROVES. LOVELY TO SEE. BRING IT ON I SAY.

(HEATHER WAS WONDERING WHY I TOOK SO LONG TO FOCUS MY CAMERA ON HER AND THE BEACH. I TOLD HER THE BACKGROUND KEPT GETTING IN THE WAY OF A GREAT SNAP).

