

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | THURSDAY, 6 JUNE 2013

Alps Haute de Provence

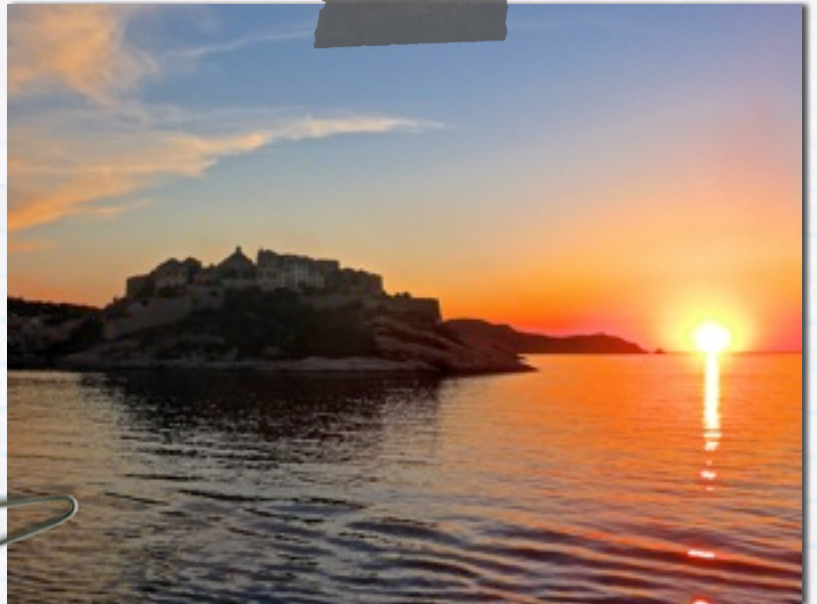
Our ferry journey from Corsica to Nice was the eighth and last of our trips across the sea. It was also the most enjoyable. The organization was perfect. All the facilities on the ship were open and available to us - the shop, the restaurants and the open deck. The sea was calm. The staff were friendly and the views from the outside deck on our departure were really fabulous. It was 9 pm when we left the dock and the sun was setting. The photos show what a magic scene it was.

We arrived in Nice on time at 7 am. Our plan was to hightail it out of there ASAP. Nice is a city of about 850,000 and we did not want to be caught up in it or the sea-side area to the west - the Cote d'Azur. So we headed inland.

We did not appreciate how close the Alps come to the coast. We quickly therefore, found ourselves rising once again up rocky slopes. The scenery though was quite beautiful. As we got higher the panoramas opened up for us. By chance, rather than good planning, we passed through numerous beautiful mountainside villages. We noticed a huge number of cyclists setting off from one for a ride down the slopes. We decided that the place was too good to pass by without an inspection



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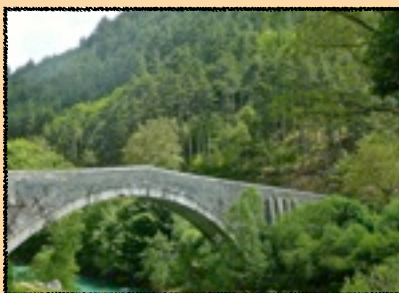
ACSI Camping

Before leaving the Netherlands, the owner of the van suggested that we buy a membership in a caravan and camping group called ACSI. I don't actually know what it stands for, but what it does is save you money.

All the sites in the book are supposed to charge between 12 and 16 Euro per night - depending on the time of the year. I say supposed to, because not all have. However most have, and this has resulted in a considerable saving for us. These camp sites are Europe wide.

Another option available in France is the "France Passion" group. The sites in this are essentially free (some charge a small amount if certain services such as electricity are provided). The people running them are farmers or small holders who hope to benefit from you buying their produce.

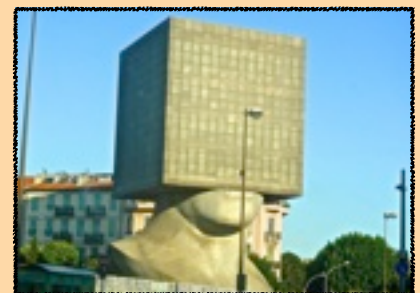
France also has AIRES. These are essentially just parking spots provided with some facilities such as water and maybe a toilet. Some require a small payment. We have seen this in other countries also.



BRIDGE TOO FAR We admired this bridge but realised it was unsafe - blocked at both sides. It's only for show and tourists love photographing it - particularly Aussie tourists.



PUBLIC ART Tucked away in a corner of the square away from public view was this very large metal representation of what we interpreted was a witch. Why, what, when and how?

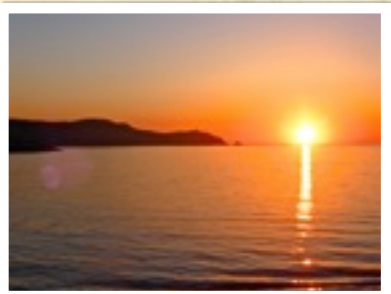


NOT SURE WHAT THIS WAS? Not sure if this was working building or simply public art. Whatever it was it certainly shouted out "look at me!" Big brother watching you?

SNAPS



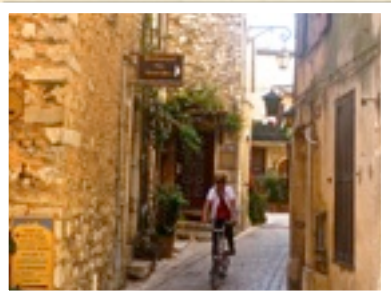
CALVI BAY



SUN SETTING ON CORSICA



TOURRETTES COURTYARD



A TOURRETTES NARROW LANE



TOURRETTES STREET SCAPE

A glorious evening was followed by a magnificent day. Savour the memories.

so we parked on the side of the road some way further up the mountain and then cycled back down. We spent about an hour here dawdling around the superbly kept small alleyways. We met an Australian couple (former poms) and talked to them for ages.

Our journey continued on through the twisting scenic route. We were trying to get to the Vaucluse area of Provence. It is the more gently undulating farming part of this famous area.

Trying to cross over the major roads, without going on them, was a task and a half. We wanted to travel from east to west but the major roads go in a north-southish direction.

Anyway, after some beautiful scenery and some unintended mountain driving (we thought we were in Corsica again), we did reach our intended location - Forcalquier.

Once again, without us knowing it, we landed in quite a tourist mecca. The place had the required citadel and chapel and is very famous for its markets. Heather said she would check them out in the morning.

We did have one hiccup towards the end of the day. The first caravan park we went to turned out to be a "Naturisten Camping" site. Heather found it in our camping book and assumed that its location was a nice "natural" place. Well no, it was not. Her understanding of Dutch (our guide book was acquired in the Netherlands) was a bit lacking. It actually means "natural" as in NUDIST!

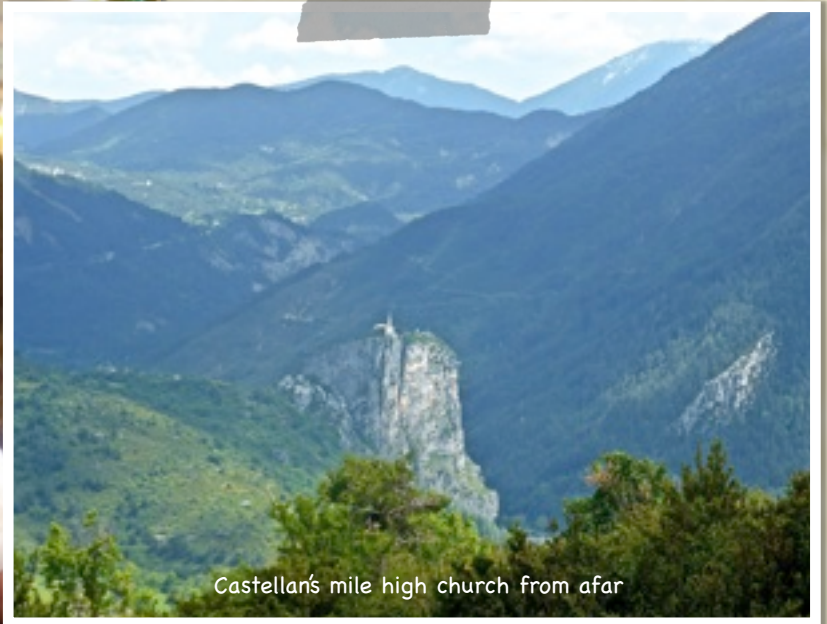
We had started to wonder about this as we drove out to the isolated location. We saw one motorhome coming back and did not see any signs along the road leading to the camp. We should have realised that this did not auger well. We did not take the hint though and kept on going. We rounded the corner and walaaaa.... there were motorhomes everywhere. Great, we thought, until we viewed a few very old leathery bodies. We burst out laughing and I quickly did a three point turn around and drove back to the next nearest camping site. Phew - this was definitely much better. Clean, and only 12 euros for the night. The place even has green grass and hot water. We might even stay 2 nights and wash some clothing (but not everything) and hang them out to dry!!



Castellan's foot bridge



PHOTOS



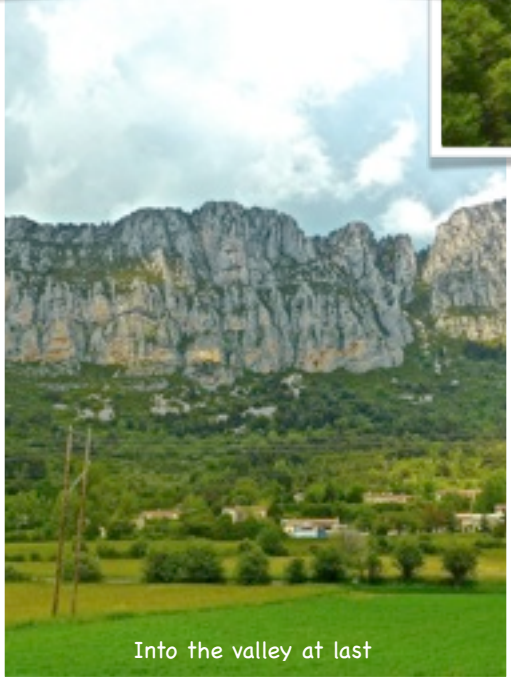
Castellan's mile high church from afar



Tourrettes mountain village



Castellan - an Aire on the river bank on the right



Into the valley at last



Lavender fields in progress