

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | SATURDAY, 8 JUNE 2013

Three Villages

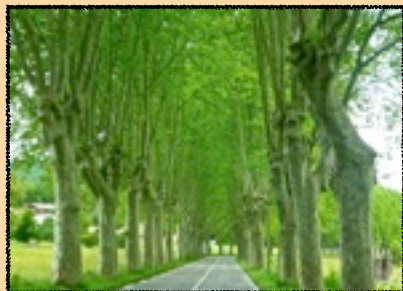
Today we were in a real quandary about where to head, and where to finish up for that matter! We ended up experiencing three very different villages and are now camped on the banks of the Rhone, a stone's throw from an old papal palace.

The drama was that there are so many stone villages dotting this agricultural landscape. It is so difficult to choose which ones to visit. A random pin in the map did the trick and we headed for Apt. The country was green and lush and planted with crops of many sorts. The lavender fields were not yet in bloom - we are a bit early for that. This area is well known for it's local produce - fruit and vegetables, lavender, wines and cheeses. Local markets are consequently a big deal here. We saw one such market in Apt and dearly wanted to stop to have a close look - read Heather wanted to stop and browse. The dreaded parking issue reared it's ugly head again and we had to continue on. Heather was most upset.

However, we then continued on to Rousillon and all feelings of disappointment disappeared. What an interesting place. The town is built on, and from, red ochre deposits. Apparently the Romans used the red ochreous earth for pottery over 2000 years ago.



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INWARD LEANING TREES Narrow treed roads look terrific but things get stressful when a large truck or bus approaches from the other direction. Squeeze in a little further to me Heather.



JUNIOR HELLS ANGELS? Came across a huge cavalcade of motor scooters. Made a change from the black leather-clad bikie groups we found in Corsica. Wondered what motor scooter convention they were going to?



BIKE ROAD Paradise for bike riders who don't want to mix it with cars. This very long bike path is one of many dedicated bike tracks in the local area. This one runs for over 60 kms along an old disused railway line.

SNAPS



RED OCHRE CEMETERY



RED OCHRE HOUSES



BORIE



LAVENDER FIELDS?



A GORDES BACK STREET

Don't wear white in Rousillon.

Rousillon is located on a outcrop of the richly coloured red rock and really draws attention to itself from the quiet roads below. Once again we had to park a few kilometres away and ride up to the town. Most of the buildings are shades of pink and terracotta. What a lovely site they made. Flowers festoon the buildings and nocks and crannies were there to be investigated. There were also great views of the ochre cliffs.

THE RIDES WERE AS MEMORABLE AS THE VILLAGES WE VISITED

The next village on our list was Gordes. It is described in the guide books as "a tiered village that sits spectacularly on the white face of the Vaucluse Plateau".

Once again we had to park some distance from the village and in doing so noticed that we were very close to another site we had read about - the Village des Bories.

We set off on our bikes for the 4 km ride to this historic village before heading to Gordes. The ride, on a narrow, stone-wall lined road, led us to

a small village (no longer inhabited) of beehive-shaped bories (stone huts). Apparently, they were inhabited by shepherds until 1839 and then abandoned until their restoration in the early 1970s.

On our ride back we found a short cut to Gordes. It was still uphill of course and it had started to rain. Upon reaching the top we got a great view of the perched village. We joined the throngs of other tourists trying to get a peek without getting soaked.

Despite the rain we decided to ride to the castle at its heart. Every self respecting town has a castle it seems! We quickly rode around the steep streets and admired the great views out over the landscape. It was time to make an exit for the dry interior of our van.

The ride down was great fun - quick and a little slippery. In fact the rides we had today were just as enjoyable as the sights we saw.

Tonight we are parked in the heart of Avignon. We have already had a quick bike ride to the centre of the old town.

Tomorrow we will have a good look.



Rousillon's famous red ochre cliffs



PHOTOS



Borie houses are quite large



Picturesque Gordes



Rousillon's favourite colour is ?



Gordes embattlements



Rousillon town hall



Gordes picture perfect post card image



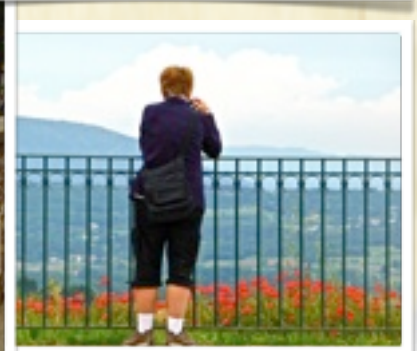
Borie house and barn



Rousillon's striking bell tower



Rousillon central square



Rousillon perched on red cliffs