

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | THURSDAY, 13 JUNE 2013


Magnifique

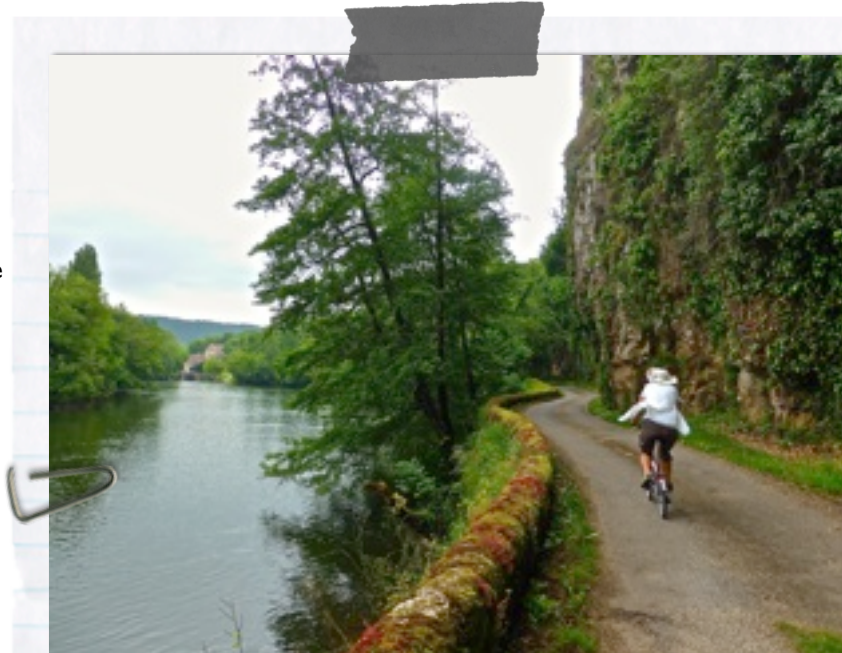
We have heard of many of the provinces of France. Who has not? Places like Bordeaux, Provence, Pyrenees, Champagne and so on, have figured highly in many TV programs and films we have viewed over the years. But the province of Lot is not one we are familiar with. The people who live in the Lot valley have certainly kept their little area of France a secret. Well today we want to let the cat out of the bag. Lot is absolutely beautiful and certainly worth a visit.

The biggest issue we have found with Lot is that it is like a magnet. Lot holds you very tightly and does not want to let you out of it's grip.

Again we are camped less than 50 kms from where we started out today. The going was slow because we literally dawdled through the picturesque countryside. Around every corner there was something to capture our attention. The weather certainly helped - glorious - even a little hot.

St Cirq-Lapople was our initial stop. Located only a few kilometers from where we camped, the town's main claim to fame is that it is perched on a sheer limestone cliff overlooking the Lot River. Like many cliff top towns, St Cirq-Lapople took our breath away as soon as we saw it from a distance. Evidently it figures as one of the most iconic photos of this area. We certainly know why.

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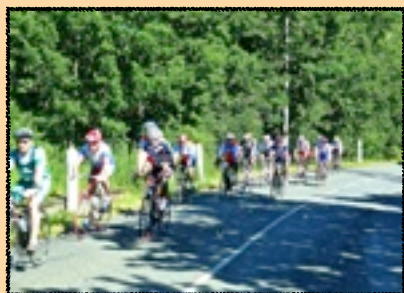
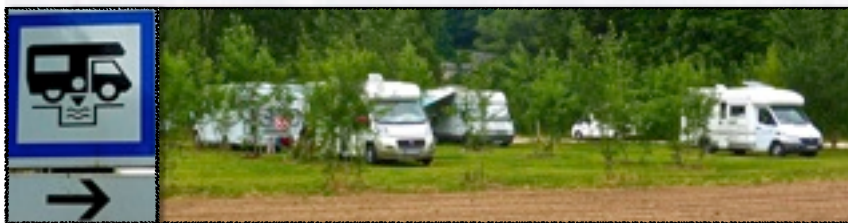
French AIRES

Tonight we are staying at an AIRE for the first time. These free parking places are well sign posted and are made especially for "camping cars". They can be found all over France. Some do have a small cost but most are free.

Mainly located on the outskirts of towns they are a great invitation for

travelers like us to park and visit the local attractions (and spend money). Most Aires have services that motorhomers look for - water and sewerage and grey water disposal. Some even have showers.

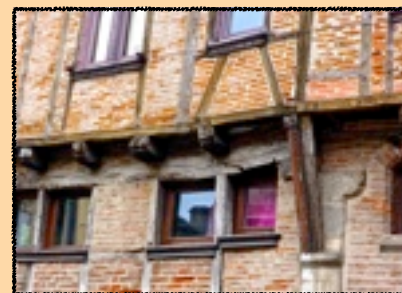
They are like a caravan park without the cost.



HOLDING UP THE ROAD It might be bike riders heaven but travel on the narrow roads here is slow because sometimes it can take many kilometers before it is safe to overtake them. They do not like to ride in single file.



DUCK YOUR HEAD Our van is 3.12m high and it was only after I stopped to take this photo that I realised the sign showing the limitation ahead. We kept going and got through ok but later on we did have to detour because the height restriction was 2.8m. No go.



STRUCTURAL ISSUES Had to smile at this old building. The large ancient timber beam had cracked and split very badly but the new window frame was simply moulded to fit around it.



LOCK KEEPER'S HOUSE



TYPICAL COUNTRY SCENE



CAHOURS BACKSTREET

The town was teetering on the edge of a sheer limestone outcrop with the Lot River meandering below.

We found a quiet parking place next to the river and rode our bikes up and down both sides of the water. This was great fun. It was also the best vantage point from which to view the town. We decided not to heave ourselves up the slope to the town itself. Instead we thoroughly enjoyed the amble along the waters edge and looked up. We passed isolated farm buildings and a lock house. Farmers were out cutting hay and walkers and cyclists shared our path. Bonjour.

After our ride we had a leisurely lunch and enjoyed the tranquility. The sun filtered through the trees and the river flowed silently by our van.

It was eventually time to move on.

We planned to follow the road along the valley with its overhanging rock. Eventually we were confronted with warnings that the overhangs were too low for our van. We turned inland.

This was even more remote and narrow but had no rock overhang. Heather's CityMaps2Go iPad program worked a treat on the little back roads. We saw another van backing up and turning around not knowing where to go.

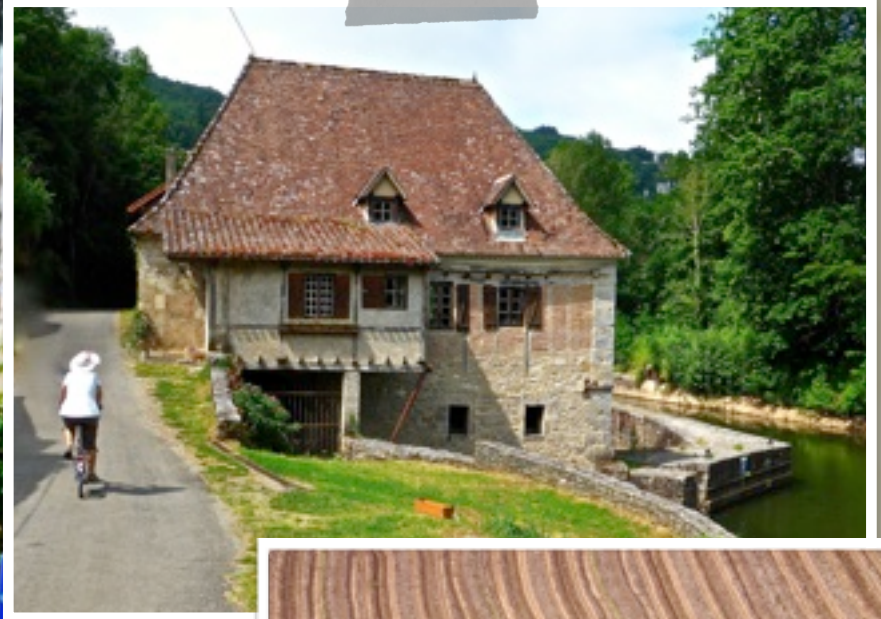
Eventually we arrived in Cahors and again jumped on our bikes just as it was starting to spit with rain. Cahors has a famous bridge - Pont Valentre - which we wanted to see. It was built in the 14th century but it was not really very interesting. I suppose it was hard to compete with what we had just experienced. A great day!



Lot Valley with St Cirq-Lapopole village above



PHOTOS



St Cirq-Lapopole