

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | FRIDAY, 14 JUNE 2013

The Dordogne

We woke late and ended up even later after we realized that we had flattened the car battery overnight. We were surprised how much power our computer, iPad, iPhone and general lighting consumes in a night. It's even more surprising given that the battery did not give out when we camped without power for 3 nights in Istanbul. Anyway, it allowed us to get to know the French couple in the motorhome next to us - the only ones still in the park. We gesticulated enough so that they understood that we were asking them to speak to the mechanic on the phone. Within 10 minutes the mechanic had arrived and promptly jump started our vehicle. If it had to happen, at least we were in the right place - right in the middle of a town.

We headed north towards the next river valley. We made a short stop in Salviac, recommended by fellow travelers Steve and Miki. It was during "sleepy time" which meant the main street was devoid of people and most of the shops were closed. We did however spend a quiet moment or two in the town's unique medieval garden.

The guide book says it all about the area of the Dordogne - "few regions sum up the attractions of France better than the Dordogne with its rich food, heady history, chateau-studded countryside and



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Salviac's medieval garden



View across Dordogne River from Domme's embattlements



DAN BROWN ENTHUSIASTS Eat your hearts out Da Vinci code lovers. We finally found the place where the Knights Templars have their feasts. Trouble was it was closed so we could not go inside to check it out.



FRENCH MACCASS No red to be seen anywhere in France (or in some other parts of Europe). Not sure why? Yellow on green just does not cut it for me.



ICONIC CAR Its amazing how many of these old Peugeot rattlers are still on the road. Bodies rusted through but the reliable 90cc engine seems to go on forever. Clackety clack.

BEYNAC



View from our caravan park on Dordogne River to Beynac-et-Cazenac

picturesque villages". It is a wider valley than the Lot and seemed to be far busier also. Trying to decide which parts of this valley to sample close up was perplexing. It is all so beautiful.

The first place we stopped at was Domme.

It was well into the afternoon when we finally arrived on the road below this perched village. We parked next to the river and went for a 10 kms cycle only to realise that the road did not follow the river bank and actually took us away from the town. It did nevertheless go through lovely countryside.

We had a quick bite to eat in the van and drove up to a "camping cars" parking place beside the walls of the town. We walked around admiring the town. A substantial part of the embattlements are still intact. The view from the gardens overlooked a wide bend in the river. Absolutely magnificent. We could see for some distance along the Dordogne, including the towns where we hoped to visit later in the afternoon.

And so on to Rogue Gageac. This place was overrun with tourists. We propped in the car park admiring the town that perched precariously high on the rocky outcrop. We considered having a closer look but were put off by the throngs of people. The best

view of these sorts of places is usually from a distance or, if you wish to visit, it is better to leave it till later in the day after the masses have left.

It was too early to stop so we reluctantly moved on.

Just a short distance further on was Beynac-et-Cazenac. The town came into dramatic view as we rounded a bend in the road. Unbelievable, but again, as we got closer, so were the crowds. The place was crawling with cars and people.

The car parks were brim full so all we could do was to drive past very slowly and take what views we could from the van windows. It was some kilometers further on that we decided we should not miss this opportunity to get up close and personal with this beautiful town. We turned around and drove back.

The many caravan parks available to us, is some measure of how popular this area is. We finally camped at a lovely green site next to the Dordogne with the wonderful sight of Beynac-et-Cazenac as a backdrop.

We then waited for the crowds to dissipate and at 6.30 pm took a closer look at this gem of a place.

Did we make the right decision to stop?

You be the judge.



PHOTOS



Beynac-et-Cazenac



Domme's embattlements



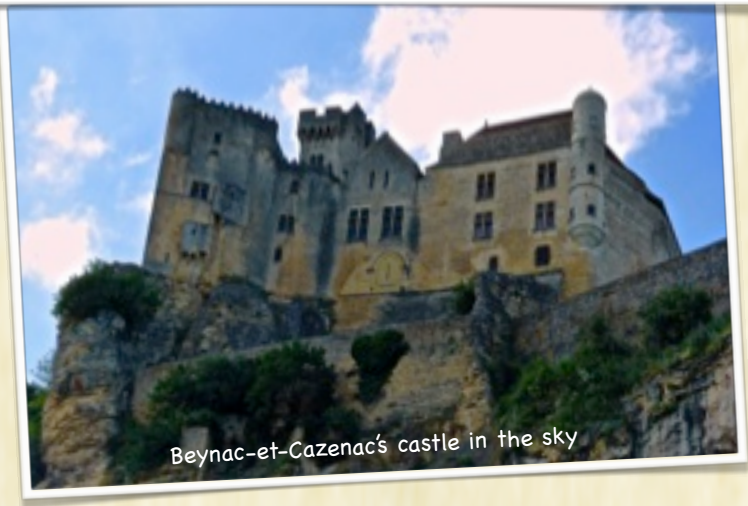
One of the many Dordogne Valley chateaus



La Rogue-Gageac



Romeo Romeo wherefore art thou?



Beynac-et-Cazenac's castle in the sky



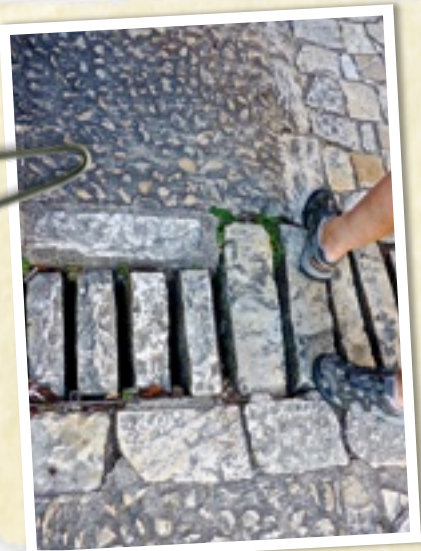
DOORS

HEATHER SEEMS TO HAVE A FASCINATION WITH FRONT DOORS. SHE KEEPS SNAPPING THEM AND I KEEP DELETING THEM FROM OUR ALBUM. I KEEP TELLING HER THERE ARE TOO MANY DOORS IN EUROPE FOR US TO DOCUMENT BUT SHE KEEPS SNAPPING AWAY MERRILY. I GUESS MY DELETING WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME.



BUSKERS

WE HAVE SEEN QUITE A FEW BUSKERS DURING OUR TRAVELS. MUSIC ADDS TO THE ATMOSPHERE AND WE WELCOME THEM. SOME ARE PRETTY AWFUL WHILE OTHERS ARE ACTUALLY VERY GOOD. I HAVE NEVER SEEN THIS PARTICULAR ONE BEFORE - A MIX OF LARK, LUTE AND HARP. THE SOUND COMING FROM THIS THING WAS QUITE EXTRAORDINARY AND VERY BEAUTIFUL. I COULD HAVE LISTENED TO IT FOR HOURS.



CLEVER CLOBBLING

WE SEE COBBLED PAVING EVERYWHERE. ARTISTIC DESIGNS AND PATTERNS ADD TO THE LOOK AND FEEL OF A STREET. DRAINAGE CAN BE A PROBLEM THOUGH (LIKE ON CONCRETE AND BITUMEN ROADS). IN THIS CASE THE WATER DRAINS INTO SLITS BETWEEN THE STONE BLOCKS. INVISIBLE - AND VERY CLEVER.