

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | SUNDAY, 16 JUNE 2013

The Limousin

We had one of those beautiful moments this morning - you know the one. There we were standing on an old rocky bridge watching water weed waving around in the fast flowing stream below, while fish swam against the current and a family of ducks let the torrent take them downstream. Glorious sunshine - not a cloud in the sky. It all came together at exactly 10 am. Then the pièce de résistance - the bells of the abbey above us started to chime. The cacophony of sounds rose and made our hearts sing. Wow. A time to prop and take pleasure in the joy of living.

Brantome sits on an island on the Dronhe River. Numerous weirs raise the water level so that rapids create great sights and sounds. Five very old bridges cross to the island. It's architectural glory is the abbey, set hard up against the rocky cliffs. The abbey literally shone in the morning light. Some of the shops are still set into the rock face. There is much evidence of where even more dwellings had existed.

A band was practicing in one of the second story rooms and their music added to the atmosphere.

The water, the backdrop, the buildings, the bustling sounds of the tourists and the ducks going about their business was absolutely fantastic. It was eye candy with cream on top.



continued on next page



Exhausting Business

The next person who tells us that our exhaust has a problem will get the finger. So many times now well meaning fellow motor-homers, general motorists, ferry staff, park attendants and even people in the street stop us and point to our ridiculously low exhaust pipe. "You have big big problem with your camping car!!"

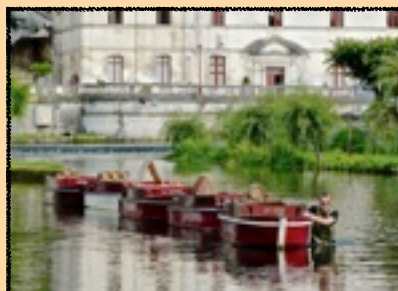
You should see their incredulous reaction when we shrug our shoulders and tell them "we know

and you should not worry for us.

We have been driving with this for over 2 months and it has not been knocked off yet."



COOL SIDECAR Noticed this beauty in the car park. Heather said she would love to have a ride in one but wondered if it came with air conditioning.



ESCAPED BOATS Found this guy towing his paddle boats back to their mooring site. Notice the waders. Paddle boats must be able to escape at any time of the day and night if they are not watched carefully. Deep lake!!



CROWN JEWELS Talk about being ultra security conscious. If criminals did not know where the expensive objects were kept in this church, they do now. The depot for valuable objects is behind this door (if you can't understand French).

BRANTOME



Heather joined the queue at the obviously popular local patisserie and came out with two loaves of fresh bread. They were still piping hot. Everyone else came out with a bread stick. It looked like swords were being handed out and people were off to defend the city.

We rode around and viewed the place from as many angles as we could. Reluctantly it was time to go. Exit time for caravan parks here is 12 noon.

Brantome will always be remembered as a place in France where I actually had goose bumps.

And so on to the next gem - Nontron - yet another town with embattlements.

We drove on up towards the town but were forced to take a detour through ridiculously narrow side streets. Eventually we found a place to park.

The view in the distance was not very inspiring. That was enough. It looked too steep for our bikes and we did not want to walk. Sadly we drove on. Some you win, some you lose.

And so, on with our drive north to the Loire. We came upon Rochechouart. Now this was so much better.

An enormous chateau dominated our approach so we parked outside the

town next to a small lake where we had lunch and watched fishermen trying their luck with very, very long poles. We rode up to the chateau and decided not to pay to go inside but instead visited the old church and ambled around the town.

Being a Sunday, most of the place was essentially closed down, but we still enjoyed the ride around the beautifully paved streets. The initial ride up via a steep road that perched above a lovely stream, was also a great pleasure. We actually spied a large snake here and tried to get a photo of it. Our encounters with local wild life have been that isolated!

Our three hour journey to within striking distance of the Loire valley also took us through Oradour Saint Glane. It's sad claim to fame is that it was destroyed in June 1944, when 642 of its inhabitants, including women and children, were massacred by a German SS company.

A new village was built after the war on a nearby site and the original has been lovingly maintained as a memorial.

We are camped now in Loches, about 40 kms from the Loire. Tomorrow we will start to go west along the river and then head into Brittany - if we have time!





PHOTOS



Chateau in Rochechouart



Intriguing spiral church spire - Rochechouart



Unknown village we passed through today