

# MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | SATURDAY, 13 APRIL 2013

## Glorious Day

It's so great to be alive. The sun came out in Bled this morning and it turned out to be a beautifully pleasant day.

When we got up in the morning we were amazed to see over a dozen workers raking up the dry leaves and twigs around our site. I think everyone is thinking that the warm weather is about to start and the welcome mat needs to be put out for "we" tourists. Everywhere we go there seems to be a rush of activity. Locals only get a small window of opportunity so they have to be ready to build and renovate when the time is right. Even the road to Bled Castle was being upgraded so we had to walk up the steep slope along with all the other tourists (but going down was going to be far easier). The view from the top of Bled Castle was "to die for" - we could not get enough of the eye candy. Extraordinary. Below us was an expansive view across to distant snowy mountains while down below was the mirror-like dark blue lake creased only with the wake of little boats taking people to the island church. The bells started clanging and the birds kept up their loud chirping. Spring definitely appears to have sprung and it makes everybody feel more alive.

Inside the castle were the usual multimedia and static wall displays. We visited its iron working foundry and early printing works.



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## Local Interpretation

Its curious how what locals take for granted that we might find very strange. Sometimes we wonder what the hell something is about or what the interpretation should be. Some of this has got to do with not understanding the language but there are other things that are very different to how we do things in Australia. No outside taps to get water for our van, for example; strange mounds running around on the ground outside our van; similar birds to

home yet they make different sounds. Careful not to use particular hand/finger gestures. Everything is considered a learning experience. Listen and watch.

She'll will be right mate!!



What animal did that?



**HERETIC** The Slovenians rose up against the Catholic church during the Reformation. One of the key reformers is shown here. Not sure if his off-sider was named Mr Bean.



**CLEVER MONK** This monk was left in charge of the castle wines. He knew his stuff. He even knew that Canberra means "meeting place". He certainly surprised these visiting Aussies.



**COLOURED BEES?** Found these bee hives buzzing with bees in a backyard. Wondered if the bees knew the difference between the multiple coloured hives. How clever are Slovenian bees?

## HAPPY SNAPS



LOOK AT ALL THE LITTLE SQUIGGLY BITS



HEATHER HANKERING AFTER A HORSE RIDE



MUST BE BIG FROGS HERE?



VIEW FROM THE CASTLE TOILET



HOW MANY SHEETS NEED TO BE HUNG OUT TO DRY!

As soon as you see Bled you know instinctively why this place is considered to be such a gem.

Then it was back to that amazing view again. Bled castle is the oldest castle in Slovenia. It dates back to 1004AD. Bled island is Slovenia's only island. Except for a very small neck to the Adriatic Sea, the country is almost land locked.

Bled's beautiful scenery has attracted people with wealth and power for hundreds of years. It is one of the most frequented places in Europe. Apparently even today the "beautiful people" of the world continue to come to visit this place. Luckily we came to see it now and not in peak season.

### RIDING AROUND AND ENJOYING LIFE JUST LIKE THE LOCAL POPULATION

After the castle, it was time to ride on to our next attraction - the Vintgar Gorge. It is only a few kilometers away but the ride was all uphill and therefore reasonably demanding. The up side was that we had to travel slowly through some rather remote villages with interesting local houses and people going about their Saturday morning activities.

Everyone seemed to be cleaning up - raking, cutting, stacking, pressure washing. A number of oldies were actually sitting on balconies enjoying the sun.

We admired the variety of houses and noticed how they were constructed - big thick concrete block walls which are then plastered and painted. There were quite a number of unfinished houses - if you can't build it in three months when the weather is good then you can move in and finish it off next year.

We finally arrived at the gorge but to our disappointment it was closed due to repairs to the walkway. The river was really roaring - the aqua snow melt water looked beautiful. We cursed and turned around.

The ride back to the park was so much easier - all down hill. We arrived back at camp and spent some time just sitting on the water front taking in the view and the ambience. Everything seems to be in pairs here - the swans, the ducks, the couples - young and old.

A lovely day.





# PHOTOS



