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4 months | 6 countries | 8 house swaps | 10 journey legs | 2 grand-boys +1

Saignon and Lacoste

It was a very late start today due to a very poor night's sleep. Unusually for our short stay here, the second floor was very hot and with the open window at night to let in the cool air, the mozzies came in droves. Old bastilles such as this don't come equipped with mozzie screens! We had intended to go further afield today but instead headed out late (about 10am) to two local villages.

Saignon was first on the agenda. It is like an eagle's nest on high that was originally born as a lookout post for the nearby provincial town of Apt. It has a peerless vantage point down the length of the Luberon Valley to the west, as far as the Rhone valley, and the hill ranges of the Cevennes and Alpilles behind.

On the way to the second village we dropped in to see Goult. Once again, a hillside village with its usually narrow streets and distant views. The banners showed that the village had some sort of a cultural celebration a few days before so maybe this was why there was little activity except for some bike riders. Most shops and even restaurants were closed.

Lacoste, only some 15 minutes away, is also very much a perched village and is remarkably preserved, its streets still cobbled, you still enter through the medieval gateway. It seems that centuries have passed without anyone noticing except for stone masons who have completed extensive upgrades to the walkways and buildings. The walk up to the remains of the castle (at the top of course) required a sustained effort. The place is like a set for a medieval movie. The views from the top equalled those of Saignon with many kilometres of farmed country spread below us. The castle (once belonging to the Marquess de Sade) has some of the restored interiors fitted out with interesting furniture, paintings and other decorations. It was instructive to note how many of the buildings have been integrated into, and on, the bedrock of the mountain. From Lacoste you can see other perched villages nearby — Bonnieux particularly, is in full view.