



## France – Nice and Paris Trip Notes February 10 – 25, 2018

### **Highlights**

- Tom's return to the French Riviera Heaven. He probably would have chosen the nearby Cap d'Ail if we hadn't blown the budget and stayed at the famous Le Negresco Hotel on the Promenade des Anglais.
- He says he can never get enough of the Mediterranean water view and our corner suite had wrap around views with sunrise and sunset glows.
- Paris was an add-on after he read Janice MacLeod's second Paris book. He's now into her first book so maybe we'll get another Paris trip? I was just there in December.
- Priorities? Food! As you will see by the trip notes home.



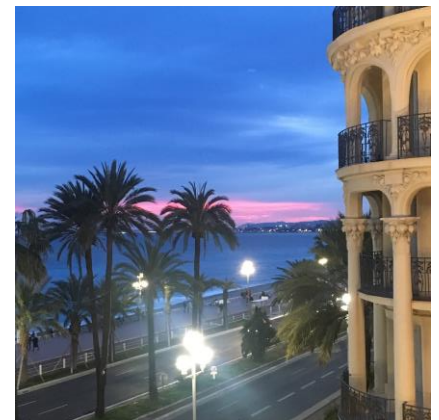
### **Trip notes**

#### **Off we go - first to nice Nice**

Nice feels comfortable. We've been here before. Starting in early 1970s when stationed in French speaking Belgium we lived in Cap d'Ail just outside of Monaco for one month. On the Moyen Corniche is a total submersion French language school run by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I took elementary studies while Tom joined the upper classes. (He had lived in France in the 60s and in his Belgian job he negotiated local housing in French).

We would return many times, once taking a house near to our old school, once a hotel in town, another time an apartment on the Promenade des Anglais, and most recently an apartment on the water within a stone's throw of Monaco. Always we would treat ourselves to a look-see or maybe even a drink in Le Negresco, one of the world's leading and historical hotels. This time, with the thought it's now or never, we are IN the hotel in a wrap-around suite with views of the Mediterranean exactly across the Promenade des Anglais.

We have six nights and then we head for eight nights in the very best which of course is Paris. Because heavens I haven't been there since December and withdrawal symptoms set in quickly. I'd like to beat my record of four times in a year to Paris.



Transport. Get into Nice was not near as exciting as the entry into the hotel. But that's another story. We treated ourselves to one first class ticket and one nervous-making upgrade certificate. It all worked out fine and we ate well with an appetizer of a Thai lemongrass shrimp, and green papaya and mango salad accompanied with baby spinach and fruits. Tom chose a spicy chicken dish Thai style with coconut ginger broth over udon noodles. I hesitatingly skipped the seared beef short rib that we always love and instead tried to be healthy with the quinoa salad with grilled chicken, kale, bell pepper, tomatoes and apple. I suspect Tom had the made to order sundae but I didn't look. I grabbed the cheese platter with grapes for consuming after landing.

The connection at Charles de Gaulle was quite messy and we were fortunate to have arrived 45 minutes early. Necessitated taking two different buses to a different terminal, having to check the luggage after having gone through security one more time. Long-long walks. Lots of stairs. It was tiring and then there was no club to which we have been spoiled. Parts at Charles de Gaulle airport seems so updated and modern and convenient and other parts are pure third world.

Yet realize that spending the night on a plane even on a lie flat bed is tiring in itself. We can't complain: our friends are on their way to Australia and they only got 1 of 2 requested upgrades. Can they share? Half and half time? Or two to a bed? Smile.

We did eventually arrive and no we didn't get the same ritzy Mercedes Tom had on our last trip, but we have a very nice black Mercedes C class. All that was nothing as compared to the scene coming up.

Tom had arranged for a sea view junior suite and yet I was unprepared for the size, the opulence, and the huge wraparound terrace and Gorgeous view through the palm trees to the Mediterranean. The hotel is historical in itself, a work of art filled with more works of art, and surprisingly the website pictures do not do it justice.

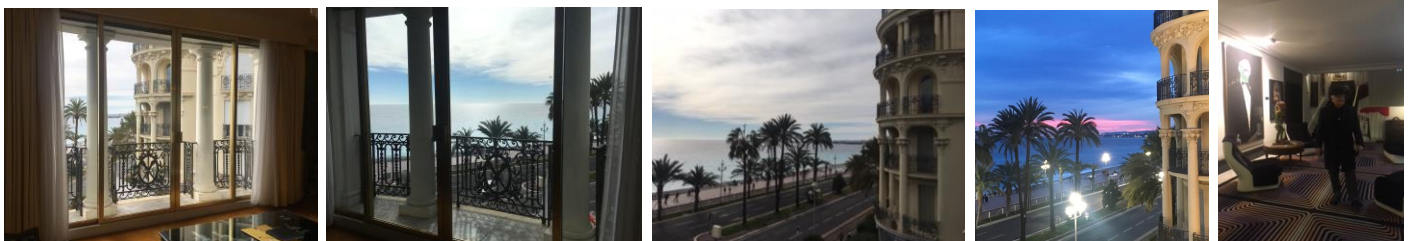
**Hotel - [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hotel\\_Negresco](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hotel_Negresco)**

Language school in the early 70s. Some memories last forever. This is one where you could never go home again though we tried to visit on one of our trips. One month of classes all day, lab in the afternoon, field trips, three meals a day, trying to stick to French speaking, and dancing in the evening. It was maybe the only time I wanted to be German because those Germans jumped around a lot and had no rhythm and I loved it.

We could walk into Monte Carlo about 1 km along a narrow little rocky path waterside. We did it often and every time we returned in later years we looked forward to having a drink at the café de Paris at watch the parade of people and cars ritzy cars. In early days when the dollar was really good we even ate at the famous café next to the casino. It wasn't very many years later until they stopped us at the door. I wanted to protest and then I looked around and realized that I really didn't belong.

We have a lot of catch-up to do but we should spend some extra time and our lovely room too. The weather was near perfect upon arrival though on the cool side; tomorrow it is due to rain but only for the day and then we have lovely sunshine in the 50s for the rest of our week. Maybe by the time we leave for Paris there snow will be gone. There were heaps of snow at the airport.

I'm sure there's more coming up. Some of you look forward to my reports and ask for more and the rest of you can just hit the delete button.



From Tom: Up-date - As I write this we're just back from a lovely dinner at a little family run restaurant in Nice, France recommended by our Hotel Negresco concierge. Perfect, a little fois gras followed by perfect, melt in your mouth braised veal cheeks and a couple of glasses of nice red from Languadoc - a hearty deep red with lots of flavor. The google images of the hotel are great. We're staying in a large corner junior suite facing the Med Sea. We lucked in to the Coco Chanel suite which looks to be the biggest of all the "juniors" but from what I can see, that's a misnomer.

Oh the city is wonderful - oh the room is wonderful - oh the view from our room is wonderful - oh the hotel is wonderful - etc., etc., etc. Oh, and did I mention, Life is Good!

**Monday - the first full day in Nice**

We would wake to glorious sunshine following the evening before's colorful sunset. Breakfast was a surprise as the picture will show. Who could imagine eating in the middle of a carousel?

Diamonds on the sea. Waves over the promenade. Walking tour of the most Wow Hotel Award. Art work everywhere. And rightly so, as portraits and pictures of the lady owner who has established women managers, women chefs and women's events to acclaim. It looks like she is going strong well into her 90s.

**Hotel's story** - <https://perfectlyprovence.co/the-fascinating-story-of-the-hotel-negresco-in-nice/>

**Strange real estate** - <http://www.nicepebblesales.com/blog/2017/04/23/the-rivieras-strangest-real-estate-negresco-nice-promenade/>

I wasn't fully into wanting all the breakfast food having had a near perfect meal the night before. Yet my new app to keep track of calories and nutrients showed a near full calorie count for the day - all consumed before noon.

Here is a description of our first night dinner, restaurant and food as written by Tom: As I write this we're just back from a lovely dinner at a little family run restaurant in Nice, France recommended by our Hotel Negresco concierge. Perfect, a little fois gras followed by perfect, melt in your mouth braised veal cheeks and a couple of glasses of nice red from Languadoc - a hearty deep red with lots of flavor. The google images of the hotel are great. We're staying in a large corner junior suite facing the Med Sea. We lucked into the Coco Chanel suite which looks to be the biggest of all the "juniors" but from what I can see, that's a misnomer.

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With warm sunshine and lovely waves we couldn't resist a long walk on the promenade des Anglais. We wandered into the edge of old town and then over into the center place at the arcaded/covered shopping and again couldn't resist a bit of shopping. We had intended to dine at a long-time favorite in old town at the food market but the rains started and we took in one of the closest restaurants in order to stay dry. It turned out fine and we knocked off one thing from our list - a Salad Nicoise. The rains didn't stop and were more like a monsoon so we bundled up and covered in plastic and scurried home. Nothing wrong with home and it was already getting dark.



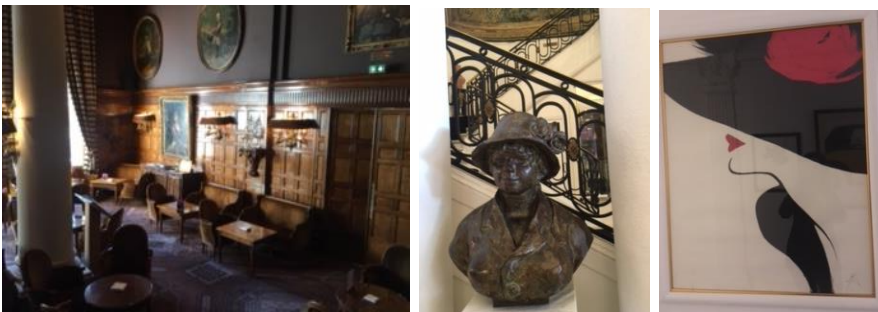
Lovely little restaurant that we'd return to still again on the last night. The soft melting cheese. Then Veal cheeks - we shared a dish it was so much. And so good.



Breakfast within a colorful carousel. The famous dome said to be built by Eiffel but maybe not but the Baccarat chandelier was built for Russia's Tzar who not only lost the throne but the chandelier too. Lots of art. Like The Thinker?



Another Thinker but more serious in antique chairs surrounded by contemporary art. Nearby were the rest rooms and here is the door to a WOW men's room, then the Women's Room door with Tom admiring not only the door but a unique interior. Diana mirrored in the interior. At first I wondered if I was in someone's private studio. Some more art work from our hallway.



This is where we had had drinks in the past. They are pretty dear also but a lovely rich experience. Mrs. Ruben by Ruben – could it really be? Our hallway is covered with this type of art. I found it fascinating how few brush strokes it took to make beauty. Another floor is all contemporary art. We have yet to see three other floors but will do so.



Yes that's our hotel and that's the sky of the day. Until it got much darker. Can you tell this to be their opera house? It probably looks a little more like an opera house from the pedestrian street. This is taken from the promenade. The sky is building up steam. See Liberty Lady in the foreground?

So then what are we to do but seek shelter. A salad nicoise from the town where it was supposedly created. Nice is not just French because it has long been owned by Italy.

We have lots more meals on our wish list.

### ***From Tom - Good ol' Nice***

Though we traipsed through a cold monsoon back to our hotel from a late lunch, we're still in good spirits and happy to be here. Some scenes: Our hotel, the poor Basset seems to be saying - "I just can't go another step". Tom's favorite pastime - watching water. Breakfast in the Carousel Room - sunshine but only 50 degrees!



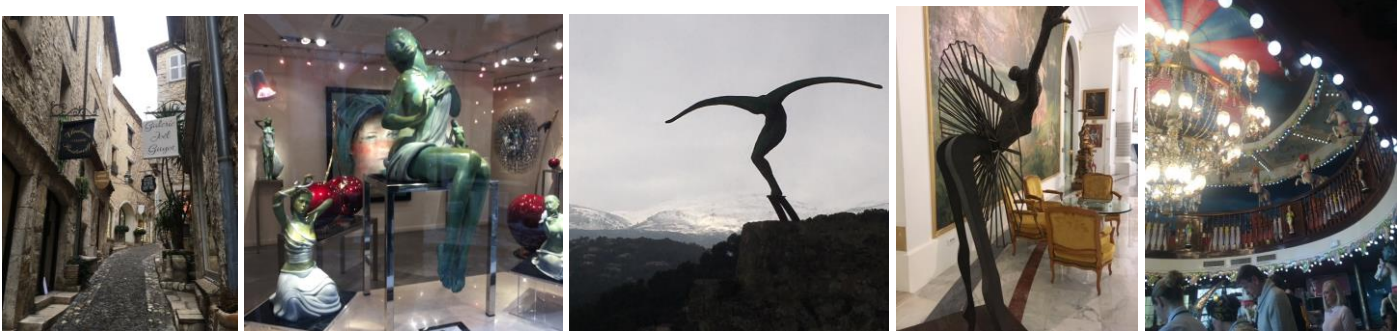
More from Tom: Modern lady in an antique elevator - what a line-up! – that is our room in the orange on the far left - more in the Negresco.



From Tom: What's Nice without a Salad Nicoise - dinner the first night (veal cheeks melting in the mouth) - pano of the front of the room.



More pics from Tom - Saint Paul de Vence on Tuesday - (note the snow on the mountains in the background of the flying man).



Wonderful art things in a great setting then back at the Negresco and their unique art stuff - hallway art, carousel breakfast room.

**A day in St Paul de Vence**

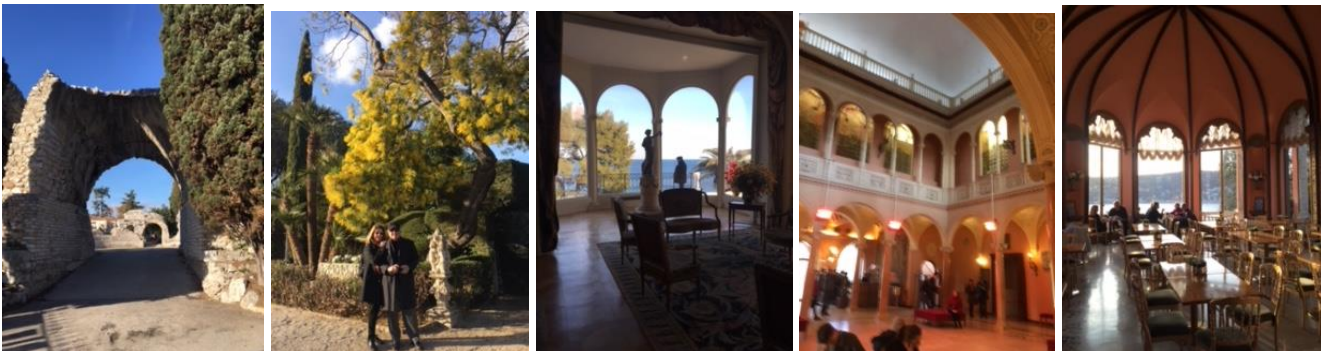
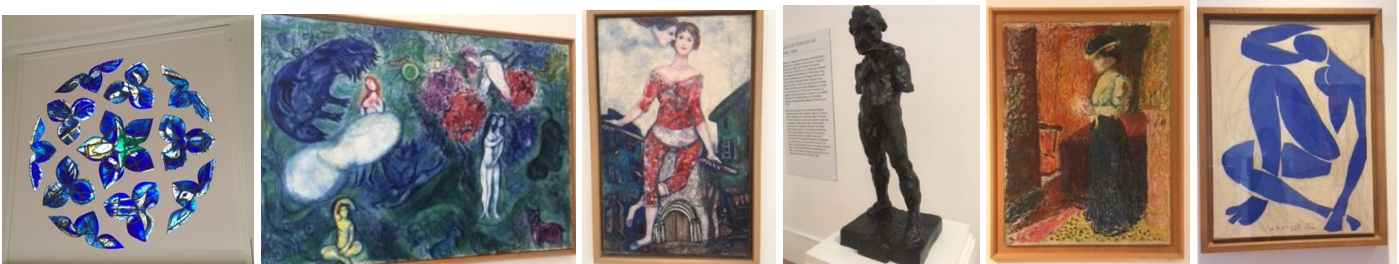
A drive to and a visit in the hilltop town of Saint Paul de Vence is always high on our list when in this area. There are a number of hilltop towns with our next favorite being Eze Village. But a car can get nowhere near and it is a strenuous hike up the hill so we avoided that one to memories only.

Of course we have to start our day in the carousel room with a big breakfast which pretty much blows the entire calorie count for the day. So I quit counting.



**Wednesday was our art day**

We arranged for a guide to drive up the hill to the Chagall museum, then on up to the Matisse museum, onto the open Roman forum ruins, and finally to the Villa Rothschild on the peninsula of Cap Ferrat. It was easier to have a guide even though we had previously visited some of these places. We learn more.



**Monaco - you can't go home again**

Are we the ones that change? You can't go home again was proven out. Monte Carlo, Monaco, was not what we were looking for this time. The traffic, the congestion, the over-the-top bling, was not entirely to our liking. Nor memory.

We always look forward to the parked-car-show in front of the casino. There were usually unique examples but not as many as we've seen in the past. We look forward to the people-watching at the café de Paris but there were lot of scroungy examples this time. The hotel de Paris was under total renovation so we didn't need to see if they would let us in or not. The food at what should be one of the best was just edible and the service like the French reputation but not what we usually experience.

I would not list it as a wasted day however as the view was incredible and the walk through the gardens was as we remembered. The weather was reasonably mild without a lot of wind but certainly necessitating a coat and scarf and gloves. Tom seems at ease with the driving in the traffic and the little teeny narrow streets with some of them dead ending.

Speaking of driving, he has made sounds of slumming it with his smaller Mercedes C class. The last time in the French Riviera we had an S class which is typically a limousine and prior in Austria we had a similar big deal Mercedes.

A drive through and around and short stop at our old haunt of Cap d'Ail was as we wished. We should have eaten in Cap d'Ail. The following evening we would return to the restaurant of the first night because it was so wonderful and we would even order similar food.

**Cafe de Paris** - <http://www.montecarlosbm.com/restaurants-in-monaco/brasseries/>

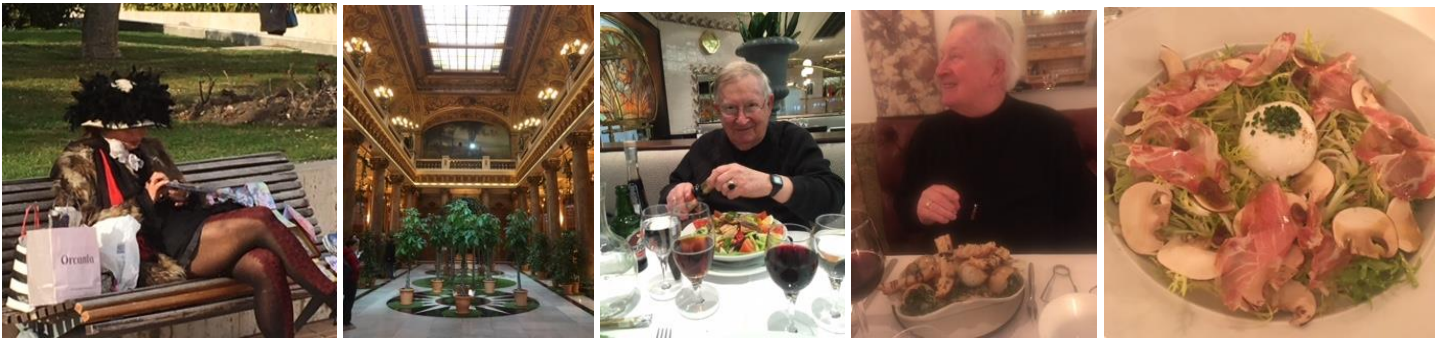
The over-the-top yachts more as we remembered to include Lady Moura that has been there for the longest we can remember. You might be amused to see the picture of this huge yacht and what looks like little toy boats surrounding it. It was a boat race of maybe 24 footers and a couple multi-man skulls. **Subject: Lady Moura yacht** - [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady\\_Moura](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Moura).



Artwork along the Promenade des Anglais is always worth a picture or two. This particular hotel has a variety of oddities. The latest 500 Mercedes with AMG added. Our hotel also granted us a continual car show. The small and tight streets of Monaco can be a challenge to negotiate. Especially when a front loader blocks the street. The casino of Monte Carlo.



See the covering of the hotel De Paris? And one of the newer Rolls Royce parked in front of the casino. But no cars quite match this million dollar Bugatti called a Vyrion. People were lined up to get their pictures taken with it. See the little toy boats in front of the yacht? They are not toys at all. This is a view of the casino from the Mediterranean side. That modern weird sculpture of a hand is new.



I'm not sure what this older woman was selling but she sure was colorful. This is one of our many views of inside the casino. We did not go into the gambling or restaurant portion as much because we don't gamble any longer and because it was a €17 per person cover charge. The cover charge would have made the €24 hamburger really pricey. This is our lunch in the café de Paris described above. And of course it was the right place to have another salad nicoise.

The next night we would return to our new favorite place where we ate the first night. Here's an interesting escargot dish which we followed with the same melt in your mouth veal cheeks from our first night. My salad was a soft egg and thin slices of the special ham. We watch them slicing the ham and the smell permeates the small restaurant as much as the smell of truffles.

### ***Onto Paris.***

The French Riviera was wonderful but now we are in Paris and this is probably where I am meant to be.

Leaving Nice was interesting for a few reasons. (1) It is not supposed to be raining there. But it was. (2) The Carnival and the beginning of many parades that would go by our terrace as we were leaving. I'll add a link about the festivities. With all of the Promenade des Anglais closed, it was a challenge to get our car out. Yet we had time and it all worked out. (3) The plane was listed as delayed and the lounge attendant said we didn't even need to leave the lounge until 4 PM. I happened to look at the board at 3:30 and saw that it was boarding so we ran. Fortunately not far. Because we were in the air well before the original departure time of 3:50 PM. I wonder how many people missed the plane? It is a reminder to always stay near the gate from the original boarding time.

### **Nice Carnaval - <http://en.nicetourisme.com/pro-carnaval-de-nice>**

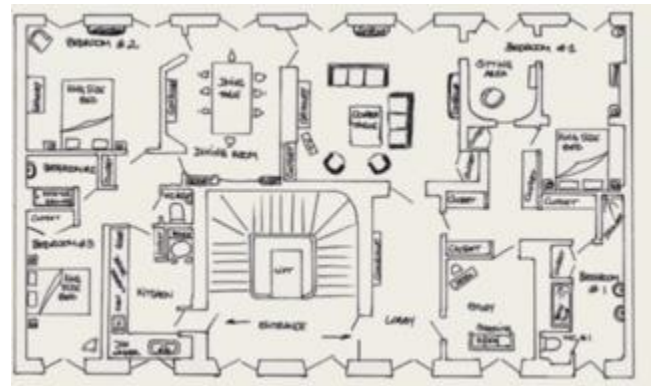
Many of you know that we put a heavy emphasis on our dwelling. Especially because we spend a lot of time in the apartment, the decision was made to ratchet up and have the experience of the best of the Palais Royal. Because of some scaffolding, the company we always deal with offered us a discount so our five days was extended to eight. Well actually the eighth day was because the air was so much cheaper a day later it was like a free day. Here is the rather conservative description of the apartment.

Amazing Apartment With Direct Views On The Gardens Of The Palais Royal - This truly stunning, newly renovated, 3 bedroom apartment with 2500 sq ft situated in the heart of central Paris, directly on the gardens of historic Palais Royal and a short walk across the beautiful gardens from the Louvre Museum. It is the ideal spot for families, friends or couples traveling together who want to experience real Parisian living.

The apartment is in an elegant Parisian building that is part of the original Palais Royal built in the 17th century. The building elevator takes you to the 2nd floor where you enter the apartment either through the spacious main entrance, or directly into the kitchen.

The apartment has three bedrooms, all of which have king beds (one can be separated to make two comfortable single beds) 2 bathrooms, a huge living room, a separate dining room that can welcome 12 guests, a large fully equipped kitchen and an office. Each bedroom has plenty of closet space. We also supply bathrobes, fluffy towels, liquid soap and hair dryers in each bathroom.

The very impressive living room has exceptionally high, beautifully molded ceilings and huge French windows which look directly onto the gardens of Palais Royal. The grand dining room with table and chairs for 12, is quite charming with its traditional wall-papered decor. The apartment has one color television with cable, a DVD player, CD/radio player, and a phone that you can use to call anywhere. The fully equipped kitchen has a large refrigerator, dishwasher, separate washer and dryer, oven, juice maker, coffee





maker, toaster, iron and all utensils necessary for cooking and eating. The elegant decor in this very special apartment is so beautiful, it will make you want to stay forever. Everything in the apartment has been modernized to give maximum comfort and convenience while maintaining traditional 18th century charm. To ensure your comfort, the apartment has central heating. End.

Later I'll take some pictures of little close up items showing that it is filled with fresh flowers, antiques, gold fixtures, lighting, coffee table books, and mirrors everywhere. But for now here are some of the pictures from the web.



We would end our day with a short walk, grocery shopping, and filling our tummies with French baguettes, cheeses and pates. Oh, and trying to find our way around the apartment maze.

### ***Small details of our apartment - part 2***

Chris and Ouida, we are so sorry about your emergency - both because of the family worry but also because you are not now with us in Paris. Thinking of you.

All, I suggested in an earlier email that I would send some small details about this over the top apartment.



Fresh tulips. Amenities in large size of 3 ounce. Loads of art work.



Two halls of mirror cabinets with drawers and shelves. Swan gold fixtures and surround shower nozzles.

**Update from Paris - a couple days in**

Yes we are still alive and still enjoying Paris but busy for a couple of retirees.

We are often entertained by [www.Paris-walks.com](http://www.Paris-walks.com) and we are now two down and one to go. From the website: "Paris during the Occupation and Liberation. Hear how the Parisians survived the dark years of the Occupation from 1940-44 on this walk. We see the Champs Elysées, Presidential Palace, Hotel Meurice, place de la Concorde and ministries with an uncomfortable past, and hear stories of daily life, the Gestapo, the Resistance and the Liberation." End.

We have been with Brad before and admired his knowledge of history once again. This was a new tour for us but a revival of sites and bits of info.

Food is always foremost on our mind but a favorite where I rarely miss was far too busy so we gave up the Trocadero brasserie. We didn't give up a walk on the Champs DeMars with an overview of the Eiffel Tower. It was jam-packed with both Sunday strollers and tourists. Fortunately a little café found out of desperation turned out to be just fine. That was not exactly the case with our all-time favorite the next night. Again it reminds me that you can never go home again. We enjoyed the ambience but the food wasn't quite right.

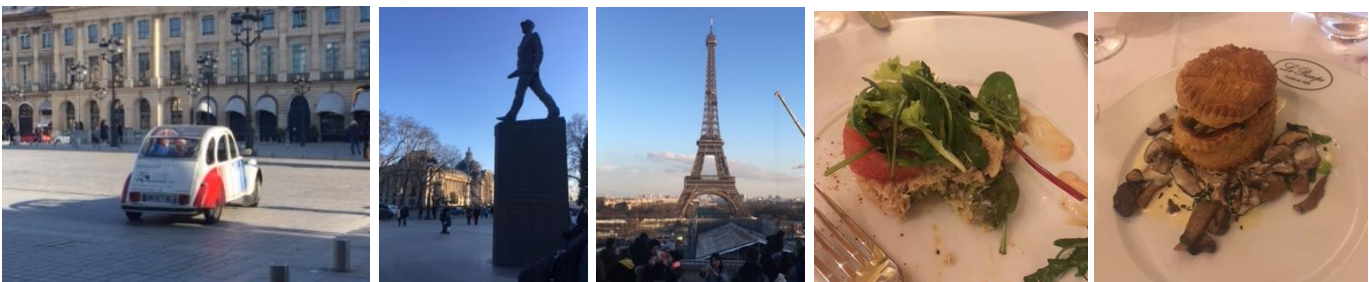
From their website: **Le Procope, the oldest café in Paris** - "legendary restaurant in the 6th arrondissement of Paris since 1686, Le Procope is a place full of history. Reflecting its prestigious and historic setting, the Procope offers traditional cuisine through different specialties such as Coq au vin and the calf's head." End.

Tom wanted to eat at the same table upstairs where we have eaten before on our own, also with Marie, and more recently with Kim. But upstairs doesn't open until 7 PM which meant that I missed the fun of their set menu which always has some surprise dishes on it. And is a major bargain. I've done it before and will have plenty of opportunity to do it again another time. Tom's Coq au Vin favorite was too dry and they tried to make it right but it wasn't the same.

Still another walking tour and from the website of Paris-walks: **THE OLD MARAIS QUARTER** -

"We explore the south side of the Marais, which is the most unspoilt historic quarter of Paris, and see beautiful architecture from picturesque medieval streets to splendid classical mansions, and the lovely royal square, the place des Vosges. We look at architectural treasures, medieval houses, local history, some Jewish history, the wall of the Righteous, and we hear stories of the celebrated inhabitants such as Victor Hugo, who collected material for Les Miserables while he lived here, and Mme de Sevigné, who wrote witty letters with gossip about her contemporaries." End

This tour was with Richelle who we have toured with many times but not on this one. We always learn a lot more from her and we were willing despite the cold and wet.



On the Place de Vendôme in front of the famous Ritz hotel and Chanel headquarters, one finds a fleet of Deux Cheval (sp?) They advertise "Authentic Paris" tours. The ride looks painful to me and especially when over cobblestones. Charles DeGaulle statue in front of the Petit Palais. We don't know what they are building between the river and Trocadero. Can it be good? Some of us don't like change in Paris. We do know that it was a mass of people so we got out of there quickly. At Procope with an appetizer of stacked tuna, avocado, grapefruit, greens, etc. The restaurant is a

long time favorite but we had often been warned that it turned more touristy. I suspect we will go again anyway if only for the ambience.



The copper pot of coq au vin has been enjoyed many times. Do you know these fixtures for filling your water bottle? At first there were about a dozen donated to the city and now they are duplicated. The French are apologizing for starting all this crazy water bottle pollution and Restaurants now readily give carafes of Eau d'robinet (sp?) or faucet water where as they used to refuse. The refusal was not because the water was bad, quite the contrary, but because they wanted to sell bottled water. Now the bottles are overwhelming the dumps. Inside a converted hotel particular or old manor house and now a government building.



Old Marais still has some of the timbered houses and you can tell which were timbered houses and now covered by stucco by their "belly" - the building that leans out over the street. They aren't collapsing but were built that way to give less of a footprint and thus less tax. Of course our walking tour took us into a few churches. Lovely and at least warmer. France wouldn't be France without a lot of churches. Hotel de Sully. Not a hotel at all but one of these old manor houses. We have always walked through the grounds to get into the elegant Place de Voges.

**An easy life in Paris - to date**

While it was sad to miss our friends at the famous Palais Garnier for a ballet, I enjoyed it very much. Also old memories of daughter Alayna (and sometimes me too) studying ballet from a member of the Bejart school for our five years in Belgium. We lived close enough that we would come to the opera for ballet performances.

About "Oneguine" the ballet - Who are you then. My guardian angel or a perfidious seducer?  
 - Tatiana, Eugène Onéguine, Alexandre Pouchkine

Romanticism and Saint Petersburg dandyism take pride of place in this great classical ballet. Alexander Pushkin's verse novel, *Eugene Onegin*, is a tale of missed opportunities, lost loves and bitter remorse. It is also a ballet by the choreographer John Cranko, the first representative of the Anglo-Saxon tradition to take an interest in these dramatic themes filled with emotional intensity. He was rapidly captivated by the thwarted love and tormented passion that characterise this work of Shakespearean dimensions. Extracts from works by Tchaikovsky support the lyrical flight of the dancers' movements and the theatricality of the work. End



A meal in the Marais where they too offered not just a logo but art work. This was on a business card. The Opera at night is always a stunner. Inside not too bad either. The Chagall ceiling is one of two Chagall works Tom likes. Many French sites are painted within. The dome inside is supposed to remind us of the King's crown.



We rarely miss this restaurant up in Montmartre. Lunch is a bargain. Dinner there in December felt over the top so I won't do that again. That's the famous Fish Soup where one partly prepares it at the table: the spreaded-bread goes into the soup followed by the shredded cheese. My first course; then layered vegetables and a heap of salmon with saffron sauce. Half of it is home in the refrigerator. We had a character of a waiter from Morocco. He fancies himself a philosopher and probably talked too much yet he was quite entertaining to include this selfie that he tricked me into. He is also in the mirror behind Tom in the above picture. We might have been full and half at the dinner came home but Tom would subscribe to the idea that there is always a pocket left in the stomach for dessert. More art work. What is a mermaid that comes from a lobster? This restaurant is a sign that "you can go home again" and we will hope to again.



Place de Tertre is the noted square with artists even in the winter. Not only were they crazy being out in the cold but more so those who were sitting to get their charcoal portrait done. One restaurant had a different kind of sign. You could imagine they got tired of giving directions. Check out the one on the bottom. Then. What would Paris be without a walk on the Champs Elysee. This is always with mixed emotion. The waiters reminded me of penguins.

Back to the opera, where pictures during performances either are not allowed or people never do, here are three from the web. In December I sent you interior pictures and especially inside the Versailles-like Hall of Mirrors. Who could resist despite the pricey drinks. Now one can reserve a stand-up table or buy into the sponsor's lounge.



Lovely photos at <https://traveltoeat.com/paris-opera-ballet-at-the-garnier-paris/>

***You maybe can go home again.***

To those of you who think we only come to Paris to eat, we oftentimes agree. We luck out most the time but not always.

Practically out the back door of our apartment (where we have stayed at least four different times) is a big-time favorite that we never miss. Nor has it disappointed us yet.

From their website: Le Grand Colbert, taken from the name of Louis XIV's famous minister, a well versed man on French cuisine in which some dishes still refer to his celebrity, is situated in the heart of the 2nd district in Paris which borders the Palais Royal gardens, la Place des Victoires, the Stock Exchange and well known theatres such as Les Bouffes Parisiens, La Michodière as well as Le Theatre des Variétés, Palais Royal and many others.

HISTORY - At the beginning of its construction in 1637 by Guillaume de Serrant (using plans by Le Vau) the building was a town house. It was sold to Jean-Baptiste Colbert in 1665 then to Philippe d'Orléans in 1719. In 1806 he was busy trying to raise money for the treasury until the building's sale in 1825. The town house was torn down to make room for the building we see today as well as the opening of the Galerie Colbert in 1825. The Galerie Colbert at this time was a competitor to its neighbor, La Galerie Vivienne. In the same vicinity several fashion and perfume stores as well as reading rooms opened up. It was under the reign of Louis-Philippe that a new store opened its doors under the name, Au Grand Colbert. The name was kept until 1900 when it was turned into a restaurant. It was, up until its closing a few years ago, one of the "hot spots", the best deal in Paris. Under the influence of the National Library, the owner, all of the original details were renovated in 1985 at the same time as the Galerie Colbert. You can find in the large room an architectural volume which is quite impressive, walls as high as 6 meters, relics, in particular, sculpted pilasters and their consoles. You can also admire paintings in a Pompeian style of which there are very few examples in Paris. The mosaic floor, exactly like the one in the Galerie Vivienne, is worth admiring.

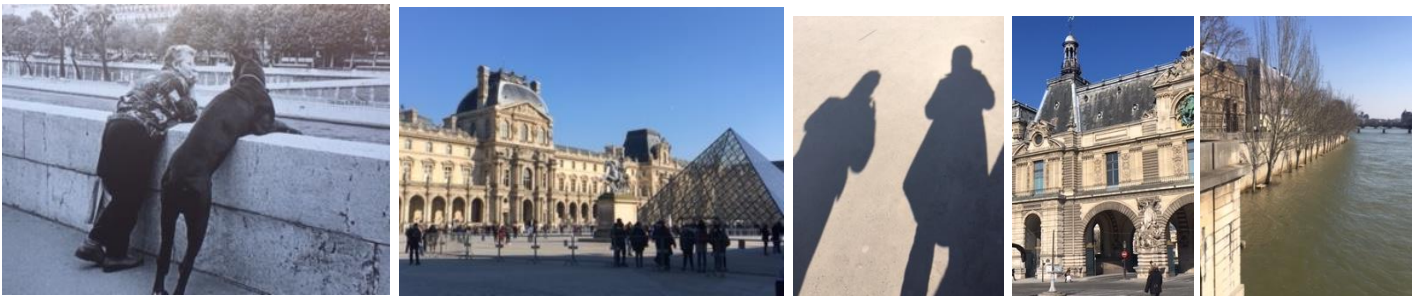
Today, Le Grand Colbert has now been listed as an historic monument and has been managed by Joel Fleury since 1992 and his business team. They welcome and serve a cosmopolitan clientele among which are actors, top models, designers, movie stars, businessmen, tourists and some regulars. This client diversity has given Joel Fleury the stature of Grand Brasserie Parisienne. His chef proposes a full menu and offers a choice of traditional brasserie meals where typical French dishes are mixed with original recipes that have an exotic touch. End

The price is good especially for the area. Nearby is the famous Le Grand Vefour where menus start at €315 - then add wine. Yet not far away are streets with specialty Japanese and Chinese restaurants where you can get noodle dishes for a pittance.

Just as acceptable to me are the small delis and grocery stores and eat in my own apartment. We do plenty of that also.



Fricassee must mean cooked a long time. It is a chicken dish and why it is any different from coq au vin I can't tell you but I am sure Tom could. This was his dish. Though I ordered duck, it was the seasoned thick potatoes that was the highlight. I never met a potato I didn't like.



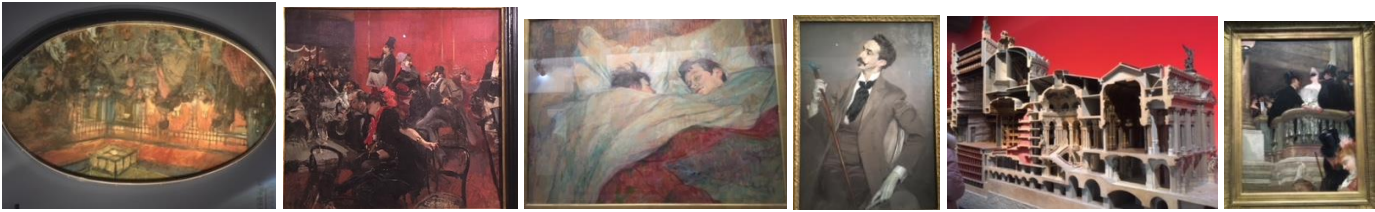
A walk thru the Palais Royale Courtyard thereafter gave me a photography exposition. Can you imagine a Paris apartment holding this puppy? Just as shocking, we would later see the same "couple" getting off the metro! Then, this is just to prove that we did go into the Louvre grounds but not into the museum. I remember when we all hated the glass pyramid by I. M. Pei but now it's well accepted. We do selfies after all. They have an advantage. The floods were not devastating but they were pretty rough and the water seems to be quite high still. You will see the tops of park benches barely floating. All of the waterside walkways are covered with water.

### ***A day in the Musée d'Orsay.***

I sent a picture taken by Tom earlier with his restaurant "table view" at M'O. Smile.

We always get into the Musée d'Orsay and as much to dine in their opulent restaurant. Yes it has a view of the River Seine too but didn't you like the Behind View sent earlier? We find this museum easier to navigate so was surprised at how it's rated as a top 10. Not far in collection size from the Louvre which is a bitch to navigate. At M'O they rotate their art and have specials. This time it was Degas - coincidental since I'm into a historical novel about Mary Cassatt and Degas.

Their other special was of Impressionists who showed at the first Impressionist Show after being rejected time and time again from the Grand Palais traditional art show.



From Tom: **At the restaurant of the Musee d'Orsay yesterday** - I asked for a table with a view



Lady Liberty again, right in front of one of the Musee d'Orsay's famous clocks.

**From Tom: A few scenes from Paris**

Favorite brasserie; Montmartre - artist in Place de Tertre; Waiter in our favorite restaurant in Montmartre (mermaid with lobster tail is logo); Art seen in Place des Voges; Procope - oldest brasserie still in operation in Paris. I know - but somebody's gotta do it.

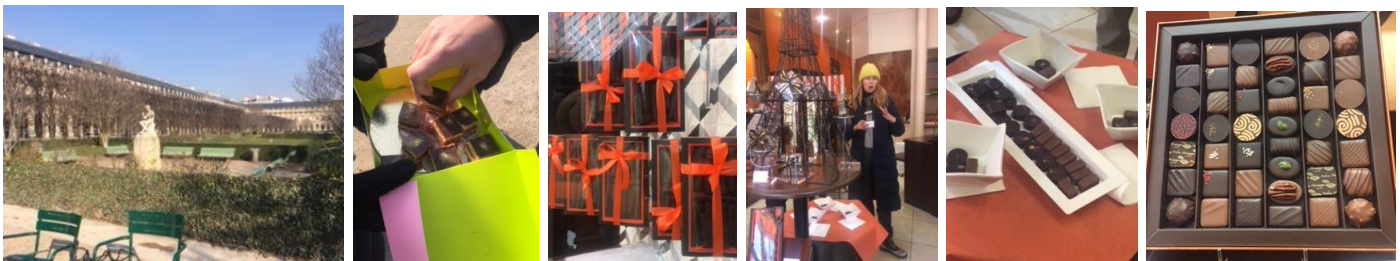


### **The chocolate tasting tour**

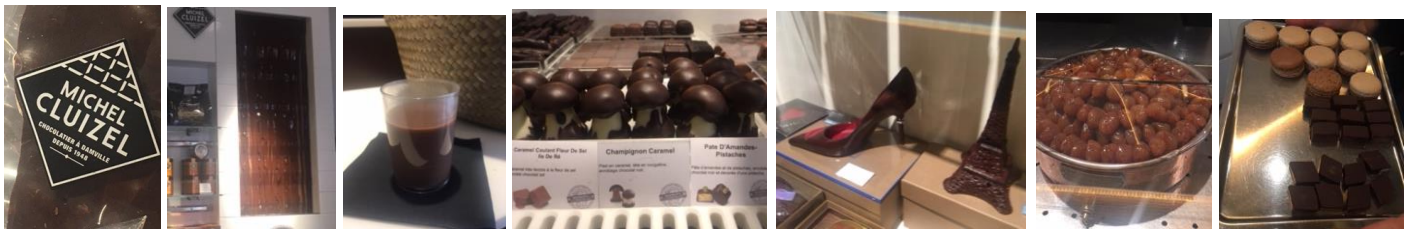
This requires a separate report. It filled me for the day which is not to say I didn't also go off for a big meal with Tom but more on that later. From [www.paris-walks.com](http://www.paris-walks.com). These walking tours are always a great bargain with top rated guides. From their description: Learn how to select and appreciate top quality chocolate. We visit a variety of superb chocolatiers on this enjoyable walk which mixes history and anecdotes with chocolate and pastry tasting including a superb old style hot chocolate.



First stop was a water fountain and reminder that we might need a bottle of water. Above is just an aside. A Mexican restaurant with still another odd face. In front were mounted police that are seen fairly often. I don't mind the heavy police presence but I do mind the baggage check at pretty any building. It is interesting that you rarely see fat French people. Is it that they walk a lot, or that they eat smaller quantities, or that their food is fresher and with less preservatives, or that nothing uses as much sugar, or could it be as our guide suggested, dark chocolate is very healthy. There are as many chocolate shops as cocktail lounges in Kansas City which I always said were on every street corner. The chocolates are super pricey and super small. Beauties. Maybe that causes one to eat slower.



Into "our" Palais Royal to hear more of royalty's impact on the rise of chocolate. As a medicine. For the rich. See the daffodils in bloom? Richelle our tour guide. We were with her at the Marais tour and will be again on Saturday at a unique carnival museum. It was a good thing I had a baggie because I got chocolated out. This beautiful box comes with a cost almost €100.



We were sent home with a small wrapped gift. Yes, you are seeing that correct. It is a chocolate fountain. This famous chocolatier is known for his stiletto creations. Candied chestnuts are a delicacy and easily cost three euros each. Our last samples also came home. We would soon be off to our neighborhood Le Grande Cafe where some of it came home too. (We could open our kitchen of leftovers to the homeless).

**Carnival Day in Bercy - You CAN be a kid again.** Thank you Richelle for encouraging us to go and being a super tour guide. From Trip Advisor - **Musee des Arts Forains - All You Need to Know Before You Go (with Photos)** [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g187147-d2507208-Reviews-Musee\\_des\\_Arts\\_Forains-Paris\\_Ile\\_de\\_France.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g187147-d2507208-Reviews-Musee_des_Arts_Forains-Paris_Ile_de_France.html)

**About Musee des Arts Forains** - The Pavillons de Bercy-Musée des Arts Forains house one of the largest collections of entertainment and fairground art's objects. They are located in ancient wine warehouses built by a Gustave Eiffel apprentice in the end of the 19th century. Discover the site and its four venues: Théâtre du Merveilleux (Theatre of Marvels), Salons Vénitiens (Venetian Rooms), Théâtre de Verdure (Vegetal outdoor area) and the Musée des Arts Forains (Museum of Fairground Art), all displayed with themes such as Cabinet of curiosities, Venetian carnival, Extraordinary gardens and funfairs of the Belle Epoque (End of the 19th century). This private museum is opened throughout the year, only by appointment in order to experiment the spirit of the place in a lively and participative tour. The

guide takes the visitor on an out of time journey, enables them to ride carousels and listen to an automaton show. The Pavillons de Bercy are opened to visit throughout the year only by appointment. And exceptionnally without booking twice a year during the European Heritage Days and Festival du Merveilleux. All the venues can also be rented for private events.

From website - Les Pavillons de Bercy - <http://arts-forains.com/en>

**A MUSEUM OFF THE BEATEN TRACK IN PARIS** - Laughter and parties did not have a museum, yet so many are dedicated to wars. I created a world of dreams that could not have existed without the visitors who brought it to life. JEAN PAUL FAVAND

**ONE OF PARIS'S HIDDEN GEMS** - As soon as you step into the Pavillons de Bercy, you will forget everything that belongs to your daily life. This extraordinary site, also known as the Musée des Arts Forains (Museum of fairground arts), takes you off the beaten track. Discover a unique collection of objects from the performing arts of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is a timeless getaway into the themes of curiosity cabinets, carnivals, incredible gardens and Belle Epoque funfairs.

**AN ENTERTAINING MUSEUM IN PARIS** - To live this original Parisian experience anytime in the year, you only need to [book](#) for one of our tours (excluding special openings).

**AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE IN A PARISIAN MUSEUM** - Freed from the traditional window displays and labels, this conceptually innovative lively museum has existed for over 20 years thanks to its visitors. One of the singular aspects of this site that combines culture, conviviality and curiosity is the possibility to play with centenary attractions or ride old merry-go-rounds. Its pioneering scenography, based on the mix of tradition and modernity, turns the visit into a holistic show, where objects and visitors become actors.



Room after room of magic. Magic mirrors – that is Richelle and me. Old time magical games that everyone got to play. Huge statues. Talking and singing shows. Merry go rounds of horses, another of mystical creatures, and finally one that was bicycle powered. Everyone got to ride.



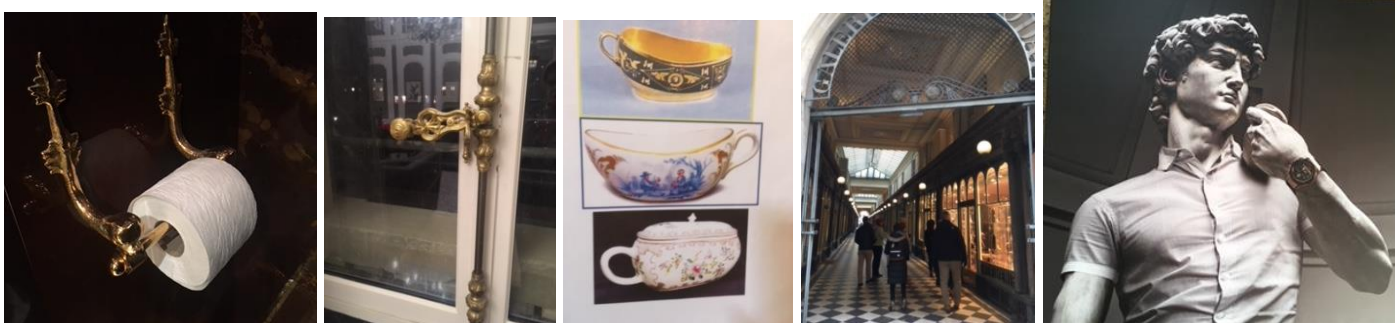
A Disney collection. Richelle rode along and with the braking system. No wonder. It really got fast due to some strong pedal power. And finally, im the Village of Bercy, French Onion Soup to Tom's taste.



## Leftover Tidbits of interest



Tom often has the Italian Affagato. He usually has to explain how he wants one ball of vanilla ice cream to which he pours one espresso over the top. For the price of a coffee and a dessert, it sure seems to go down fast! Is this a little Italian car? It's three wheeled and has a luggage rack on the back. Then in Monaco outside the casino on the water's edge are various works of art. These two fatties have been there a long time, and in fact so long that the boy's private parts, which despite being especially tiny, is rubbed to a shiny bronze color. Now if you had a zillion dollar Rolls Royce, don't you think someone would park it for you? Like in front of the casino? It is even far too long for the parking space. I really like the Paris Ferris Wheel that's still on Concord Square but it, like the owner's Christmas Market, is on the way out and will be no more.



Though Tom had to slum it with a Mercedes C class instead of an S class, he did have a gold Dolphin toilet paper holder and window locks the size of two hands. Fortunately we don't generally need the next picture. See those three gravy bowl looking porcelains? Remember how long and voluminous were early women's dresses? Know that an Opera was many hours long. So how to deal with lack of toilets? Your slave helper would bring you one of these bowls to discretely slip under your dress. I bet many are innocently used as gravy bowls now days. Then into one of Paris's many Passages. Before shopping malls, there were a series of elegant covered passages. I've wandered from one to another and find some a delight with ritzy shops, and some just a warren of junk shops. Finally, into the Village of Bercy we found a photography show of famous statues allegedly clothed in modern clothing. Michelangelo's David should never wear a shirt, let alone pants.

**And finally** and a fitting end to our France trip as we have a 6:30am taxi to the airport. After we left – it snowed a lot in both Nice and Paris. Next up is Milan where there was also an unusual snow.

## ***Itinerary***

### **Sat Feb 10 – Day 1**

6:15pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#57

### **Sun Feb 11 – Day 2**

7:36am Arrive Paris Charles de Gaulle CDG for plane change

9:55am Depart Paris Charles de Gaulle CDG via Air France#7702

11:25am Arrive Nice NCE

Rental car Noon - Hertz EH52420093F5PRTG until Saturday at 2pm

Hotel Le Negresco – 6 nights Double Jr Suite Sea View  
37, Promenade des Anglais, 06 000 Nice, France Tele: 33 4 93 16 64 00  
Tele: 33 04 93 16 64 50 reservations [www.lenegresco.com](http://www.lenegresco.com)

### **Mon-Fri Feb 12-16 – Days 3, 4, 5, 6, 7**

Open with ideas below

### **Sat Feb 17 – Chris and Ouida**

7:35am Arrive Paris Charles de Gaulle CDG via UA#57

Uber from CDG to apartment. Paris Vacation Apartments, [pva2rent@gmail.com](mailto:pva2rent@gmail.com).  
Pierre-Louis will be at the apartment to welcome you. In case of any delays, problems or questions, you can give him a call. Please call us when you are leaving the airport or station so we know you are in route.

Access directions: Ring bell marked SF. Someone will answer and buzz you in. The door will then open automatically. Take elevator to first floor, so press 2<sup>nd</sup> floor button on elevator. Apartment is on your left. Ring bell and someone will be there to meet you.

Tele Pierre-Louis +336-26-53-06-20

Tele Fanny +336 24 41 22 84 or Tele Fred +336 11 23 29 98 or Tele Daria +336 63 60 67 14

### **- Tom and Diana – Day 8**

3:50pm Depart Nice NCE via Air France#6237

5:20pm Arrive Paris Orly ORY

Taxi from Orly to apartment – PVA says taxi is as easy as CDG and presume a set price

Apartment Amazing 3-Bedroom Palais Royal – 8 nights (4 for Chris and Ouida)  
30 rue de Montpensier, 75001 Paris  
Tele: 01 77 18 85 81 in apartment – free to land lines but not to cell numbers  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor with an elevator

### **Sun Feb 18 – Day 9**

2:30pm [www.Paris-Walks.com](http://www.Paris-Walks.com) - Paris during the Occupation and Liberation. Hear how the Parisians survived the dark years of the Occupation from 1940-44 on this walk. We see the Champs Elysées, Presidential Palace, Hotel Meurice, place de la Concorde and ministries with an uncomfortable past, and hear stories of daily life, the Gestapo, the Resistance and the Liberation. Meet at metro Tuileries

### **Mon Feb 19 – Day 10**

Richelle searching for architectural tour and only found [www.guiding-architects.net/architecture-tour/paris/](http://www.guiding-architects.net/architecture-tour/paris/). Ouida inquired of architectural society.

Consider [www.ParisbyMouth.com](http://www.ParisbyMouth.com) – best of the best food tours

Richelle suggested her museum at <http://arts-forains.com>. Requires reservation and 16 Euros each.

Richelle offered (still available?) a fashion tour of Palais Royal area. She gives one through [www.Paris-Walks.com](http://www.Paris-Walks.com)

### **Tue Feb 20 – Day 11**

10:30am Diana and Tom with [www.Paris-Walks.com](http://www.Paris-Walks.com) Marais 1 by Richelle, then lunch, and Picasso Museum

Carvavalet Museum still closed.

7:30pm Palais Garnier tickets for 3 to see Oneguine Ballet

### **Wed Feb 21 – Chris and Ouida**

9:25am Depart Paris Charles de Gaulle CDG via UA to Newark

### **Thu Feb 22 – Day 13**

Paris-Walks chocolate tour – reservations required but probably not doing

### **Fri Feb 22 – Day 14**

Dinner at Richelle's home; FaceTime to Marie?

### **Sat Feb 23 – Day 15**

Open though Bethany could come from Brussels for a visit.

### **Sun Feb 25 – Day 16**

6:30am Depart apartment via taxi

9:25am Depart Paris Charles de Gaulle CDG via UA#56

12:25pm Arrive Newark EWR

### **Emergency** – Print for wallet

No consulate in Nice.

U.S. Embassy Paris, 2 avenue Gabriel, 75008 Paris

Tele: [33] (1)43122222 Alt Phone: (33) 1 42 66 97 83

Emergency Assistance Plus Program – 24/7

United Mileage Plus member #0186014 (card in file and in D's Wallet)

Tele: 866 816 2073 or 60 328 1752 collect

### **Reminders**

No washcloths or bar soap (usually) in French apartments

### **Ideas to do in Nice:**

Day 1- rest up, dinner

Day 2 – Do a review tour including up on the hill

Day 3 – St Paul de Vence – and find restaurant we missed last time

Day 4 – Cap d'Ail, corniche, and restaurant near to last apartment

Day 5 – Rothschild Villa

Day 6 – Picasso museum up on the hill

Fill in: Monaco to sit at Café de Paris and check out the cars; Opera tour; Porte of Nice area Food tour; Water tour

**Ideas to do in Paris:**

Nothing, dinner, grocery shop

Champs d'Elysee usual walk

Musee d'Orsay and their restaurant

Montmartre and their restaurant, return down rue Martyrs 'best street in world'

Il St Louis and Cite islands

Richelle's park? Reservations needed

Restaurants: Café de la Paix, Grand Colbert, Procope, Montmartre, Vivienne Passage