



Strasbourg France for Alsace and Lorraine Regions Trip Notes September 6-18, 2018

Observations

- Half-timbered houses well preserved like nowhere else we've seen.
- European Union capital for humanities and for justice.
- Lazy - easy ten days in a historically significant hotel and area.
- Neat clean and orderly like Germany. Area has switched hands from French to German any number of times and kept the best of both.
- Autobahn speed is startling. We hadn't remembered the top speeds of 120 miles per hour that whiz past and often the most unlikely little cars. That is, when it's not like a parking lot of construction and that was a lot.

Reflections.

A lovely reply from a long term very special and well-traveled friend following our pictorials of the 3-star Michelin restaurant:



*Hi Tom, I got up early this morning because I'm scheduled to give a short speech at a meeting this morning and I need to prepare.
But instead, I'm having lunch with you.*

*Your photos are so vivid, I feel like I'm there. I can feel the weight of the dining utensils in my hand. I can feel the weight of the wine glass in my hand, and I can taste the wine.
I've never had this happened before and I'm finding it very interesting, the way my mind can create an experience from just seeing pictures.*

And now back to your email. What a wonderful lunch with a fantastic menu. I see that you're continuing to live extremely well.

Thanks for sharing the experience with me. End.

Me? I'm eternally grateful for what life has given me in friends and in travel experiences in particular. We have always put a high priority on travel over house or cars or material possessions. I grew up with parents who thought travel experiences were the best education and would pile us kids into a car and set off across country. Father had a small airport and would take us on weekend trips in a little single engine plane. Then as a young teenager he joined TWA as much so we could see the world. I married a vagabond and moved all over and then six years later married Tom the military man and had even wider travel experiences including living in some unique places. Tom opened the door to many travel experiences that I would never have considered.

Guess? Some of you will guess who the above writer is and know that she has seen the world like no other I have ever known or heard of. Even better, despite being 84 years old, she remembers every detail.

Lost? If you haven't already guessed, here is a clue: she once said that some of the best adventures she ever experienced was when she was lost. Think about that.

Strasbourg 500 years ago - the bizarre dance epidemic of summer 1518 -
https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/jul/05/bizarre-dance-epidemic-of-summer-1518-strasbourg?ncid=newsltushpmgnews_TheMorningEmail_070918

Notes from the trip

Off we go to Strasbourg

We were there on our recent cruise but not nearly long enough. Ten days should help.

Is it France or is it Germany? It is certainly half timbered houses and home to the EU cultural center. About every war it changes hands.

Nearby is Epernay, home to the Champagne region where we felt like we were having our honeymoon up on a hill in a lovely little cottage.

It was in the 70s and we were driving Tom's little Mercedes 190 SL. We will look for the Hotel and the adjoining restaurant soon. (Later I learned that Epernay was over 3 hours away – just like a typical tourist, I thought we'd just hop on over there! NOT!)



Tom has found the restaurant where we ate in Illhaeusin where we will try to eat again. He seemingly chose well because it is now a Michelin three-star which is top-of-the-line.

Our hotel in Strasbourg – from Tom



justinplusloren.com

Where to Stay in Strasbourg: Hotel Cour du Corbeau - Justin Plus ...

Where to Stay in Strasbourg: Hotel Cour du Corbeau

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In Alsace-Lorraine staying in Strasbourg for 10 nights.

You know this area for their unusual wines. Particularly Gewurztraminer which is only found here due to the unusual soil and climate. You also know it for its picturesque half-timbered houses and their Little France canal area.

I currently know it as the place where I let Siri make a fool of me again. We are losing our ability to read a map or to even be smart enough to start out with a map. Or a sense of direction, or even any common sense. Ms Siri Garmin contributed to our 7 Hour Drive from the Frankfurt airport to Strasbourg. The heavy construction on the German autoroute was partly to blame but some of it was on us. We fortunately had a nice Mercedes E class but even acquiring that could make for a story. We have too many times said that we would never go through Frankfurt Airport again and now we should add that we will never end in Frankfurt again. German efficiency does not exist there.

Our hotel is lovely. I sent you a picture of the outside which surely looks like a five-star as it's rated. However, as Tom says, the inside is closer to a three star. Fortunately we have two big rooms and separate bathroom and toilet. The breakfast is all you could hope for. If you rated The hotel for its location and historical significance, it is top-of-the-line.

We've done very little but wander the town, found a couple of OK meals, one of us indulging in Alsatian ice cream, and lazed around with jet lag. Plus keeping Tom awake with my hacking cough left over from the air-quality allergy problem of Sequoia.

Strasbourg if you want to see more - <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strasbourg>.

Comments:

Well, you and Tom are still living well, as you were back in the days of your honeymoon. And you both are continuing to enjoy life. And as Tom would say, someone has to do it, and it might as well be you. Just keep enjoying life, and I'll keep applauding! Hugs to both of you.

Update on the pond:

Adam and Randy are in charge and doing well. Adam found still another leak and is working on it. I suspect that the ponds and liner are long beyond their expected lifespan.



In the new Polaris lounge. Even a favorite wine called Prisoner.

In Frankfurt airport looking at the ridiculously long line at Hertz rental car. It didn't get any better from here.

Within a half a block of our hotel. Then, the first meal.



Salad Nicoise.

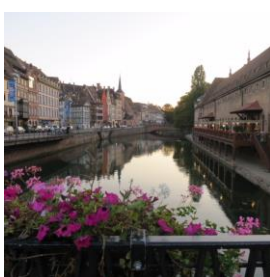
The cathedral is the largest in Europe. The spire dominates the city. We had drinks at this place in June.



This is a common meal in Strasbourg and they call it a tart. I call it a thin crust pizza. We ate at the river just across from our hotel.

The collage of pictures are from Wikipedia with a link supplied to you if you want to see more.

Tom on Strasbourg, Obernai, Illhausern for lunch Thursday - 3 Michelin stars! - Auberge d'Il



More from Tom: Sunday dinner and Monday boat ride in Strasbourg



Tom on a side trip to Baden-Baden, Germany - lovely place



Still in Strasbourg - part 4

In Strasbourg on September 12: The European Parliament will vote on a motion invoking Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union, which would start the process of establishing whether Hungary’s rights as an E.U. member should be suspended. Big deal. Will the far right continue unabated?

Meanwhile we continue to act like free-spirited tourists and seniors. We tour, we investigate, we eat a lot of different foods, and we nap.

Tom likes having a car. He likes driving. I do not. Any of it. Yet he stays patient and resolved to Stupid Siri, horrendous traffic and heavy road construction. Second case in point was going to Baden-Baden. One hour? Ha ha ha. It took 50 minutes to find our way out of Strasbourg. Three hours to get there.

Weather prediction was about as good as Siri’s GPS. From expectation in the high 50s to low 70s, we’ve seen mid-80s, creating a need to avoid mid-day sun and skipping the walking tours I’d wanted. So far.

The hotel is pleasant enough after some room and expectation adjustments and it certainly has an excellent location. It’s history: Michelin guidebook says it was once a fashionable inn which welcomed guests such as Turenne, the king of Poland Johann-Casimir, Frederick the great, and emperor Joseph II. The picturesque courtyard dates from the 14th century. Fortunately it is updated with modern amenities and yet retaining some of the old special historical pieces.

So on we go or as Tom says “someone has to do it”.



In Obernai not far from Colmar and on the wine tours. I was there in June. The entire town is filled with these half-timbered homes that have been pristine.

An investigation of our upcoming special 3-Star Michelin restaurant. We were last there in the 70s and it retains its top rated 3-star rating and has been in the same family for generations. Note that when we lived in this region there were only 13 three-star Michelin restaurants now there are about 20.



Over drinks and watching the ducks just beyond the nearly-Gondola looking boat. We read that you could have breakfast on the boat for a mere €60.

I love rosti and we found a restaurant with all types to include this selection of three. Obviously I liked it though it was a French rosti versus a Swiss rosti because it had added cream.



A picture of a picture of our hotel. The boat cruise and Tour included going through two canal locks. Part of the European huge complex.



Later over lunch watching the boats go through the first of two locks. Another day and into Baden Baden Germany. Bill Clinton is quoted as saying Baden-Baden is so nice you have to say it twice. We took a guided mini train tour, went up the mountain and even richer homes, plus sat for a long while over a meal and drinks.

One of the multiple of rich homes in this spa city which gained its fame in the late 19 century. I will end with a doorway into our hotel hall representing a year in the 1600s.

More Auberge, Obernai and Strasbourg:



Following a walking tour, pics by Tom. I went on to an evening walking tour in addition before meeting Tom for dinner.



By Tom on THE LUNCH

Well, heavier but lighter in wallet, satiated, amazed, spoiled, waited on by several, and brazenly stuffed! We're back at the hotel in Strasbourg needing a nap (wined and dined Doesn't even come close) but so glad we went and so glad we only opted for the three course menu instead of the eight course tasting menu) including amuse Bouche (oxtail and some special sauce), little tid-bits of special hors d'oeuvres, then one had the Fois gras first course while the other had the lobster, followed by a main course of salmon soufflé for one and tournedos of pigeon with Fois gras and truffles!!! For the other. But wait!! We're not through yet. I'm going to send the menu. And during this, we had maybe

four different glasses of wine - Sauternes with the Fios gras, Riesling with the lobster, Chateau Neuf du Pape with the pigeon (wonderful brown sauce).

And followed with a Gewürztraminer (but dessert late-harvest that we'd never heard of to go with many choices of desserts and varied peti-fours. Can you believe it??? Did we eat everything? Probably not but we tried.



By Diana: Auberge de L'III on the Ill river. 3 Michelin stars - the top! Also the oldest and longest held with 3-stars: <https://www.eater.com/maps/the-27-michelin-three-star-restaurants-of-france>

Auberge website: <https://www.auberge-de-l-ill.com/en/>

Sent you Tom's take. He says he may not want to eat for another three days and yet friend Judy asks if we were going again today. Not!

Guilt. It was a wonderful nearly full day experience. An hour away, a review tour of Ribeauville, a half hour walking around the grounds, then 3 1/2 hour eating multiple courses, followed by a little more time on the grounds.

I'm very clear that this is quite decadent and that I owe something back. There are plenty of people who could live a long time on the price of this meal. If I can do this, I should share. How fortunate we feel despite the decadence.

Yes it was elegant yet also bit stuffy: wait staff sort of tripping over each other with each having their own duties and ONLY their duties. I confess that we did enjoy the sommelier who had 17 years seniority there. We worked at not laughing at some of the customers like the tubby woman in big ruffles or the British woman in her very Brit hat. There were very few thin customers. Then there was the guy who stepped in the pile of dog poop in the parking lot and proved you can't remain stuffy.

My pictures might give you a little bit different perspective. Even more on the auberge's website.



Ribeauville - a sweet little town nearby to the Auberge.

In the Auberge, here is the ladies room complete with Hermès products, heated seats, sound effects, and lighted sink drains. Men's room and yes we "toured" each.

Riverside and the view from our table.

The next day we visited Baden Baden. Sorry – my reports and Tom's somewhat overlapped and aren't always in order: More on Baden Baden - https://wikitravel.org/en/Baden_Baden

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/07/20/travel/what-to-do-36-hours-in-baden-baden-germany.html>

Lazy days - our last full day in Strasbourg

Window shopping aka leche-vitrine in French translates to window licking.

We headed off to the Rohan palace with three museums inside and on the way decided that we'd seen a lot of museums and that we more preferred window licking.

In between we found a patisserie shop with things like gazpacho and a special vegetable pizza. And we found a monoprix grocery with more gazpacho and Johnny Walker red that we had been looking for. And we found spots for a little wine and a double espresso and lots more people watching. Do we sound like a couple of retirees?

So allow me to consider: If window shopping translates to window licking then what is people watching? Oops.

Real shopping? For those of you who know Tom's packing reputation (he packs at the last minute in about 10 minutes), he has not failed us and we had a couple of missing items so we've been real-shopping.

The hotel: We have grown fond of it. It isn't perfect but the location and the history are.

Hotel website - <https://www.cour-corbeau.com/en/history/>

In the heart of the city, imagine yourself wandering around and getting lost in the corridors and passageways of a 16th century building. You may glimpse the courtyard through your window, or a statue that seems be smiling at the thought of passing time. Memories of days gone by in an inn dating from the days of Tsars and Princes...

A little history about the Cour du Corbeau...

In 1528 "La Cour du Corbeau" housed a hotel that went by the name of "Zum Rappen". However, it seems that there was already an inn or post house here even before that. The Cour du Corbeau is a rare example of an architectural ensemble built as a hotel from the outset. After operating as an inn for over three centuries, it only closed its doors in 1854. Over this long period, the "Zum Rappen" inn welcomed a number of famous travellers including the Duke of Bavaria in 1570, the Swedish general Gustav Horn in 1632 and Marshal Turenne in 1647, to name but a few. Through the different eras, certain visitors even left writings behind them, such as in 1664 the Duke of Chevreuse, accompanied

by Balthasar de Monconys, who was dazzled by the beauty of the engraved copper buckets used to draw water from the wells and public fountains. Others preferred to stay at the inn incognito, such as the German Emperor Joseph II or the King of Prussia, Frederick the Great.

In 1852, not long before the hostelry closed down, a part of the buildings was occupied by glass makers "Ott Frères", who preserved the magic of this place for almost 130 years.

In 1871, a braid maker named Seitz set up business in the Courtyard. One of his customers was the Shah of Iran. Certain parts of the Cour du Corbeau served as lodgings for his workers.

In 1930, the Cour du Corbeau was listed as a historic monument. After the departure of the OTT glass makers in 1982, the Cour du Corbeau was left empty and derelict.

In 2006, a pool of developers (Scharf Immobilier, Foncière de la Montagne Verte, Histoire & Patrimoine) bought the architectural ensemble known as Cour du Corbeau .

In 2007, the Herculean task of renovating the site began. It was to last two years. The new owners and architects strove to bring its history back to life and preserve its original cachet. They worked like archaeologists, restoring carved wood façades and balusters, even uncovering even the historic inscription of the establishment's name carved into the wood. On 1 May 2009, the new "La Cour du Corbeau" hotel opened its doors and brought the site back to life, in keeping with its neighbourhood which was already reinventing itself by reviving its past glories. End.

I would like to think there are ghosts. I'd like to meet one.



This puts new meaning to the term of walking your dog.

Alsatian sauerkraut with meat selections. Later more Quiche Lorraine.

From Tom - Last night of the vacation—Frankfurt, Germany Sheraton Hotel:
And now for a little different picture from my normal. This is what a \$32.50
burger looks like (delicious by the way and with sweet potato fries too!



Itinerary

Thu Sep 6

7:20pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#960

Fri Sep 7

9:20am Arrive Frankfurt FRA

Rental car Hertz - drive approximately 2 ¼ hours to Strasbourg

Hotel Cour du Corbeau-McGallery by Sofitel – 10 nights
6-8 Rue des Couples, 67000 Strasbourg, France Tele: +33 3 90 00 26 26
E-mail: info@cour-corbeau.com, reservation@cour-corbeau.com

www.cour-corbeau.com/en/ - Situated in the heart of Strasbourg, a stone's throw from the Cathedral, the Cour du Corbeau is one of the oldest hotels in Europe as well being one of the finest examples of Renaissance architecture. Each of its 63 rooms – all different – reflects a part of our Alsatian history and culture. Here an effect of the light, there some attic rooms, or a private garden... They all offer those who love a cosy setting a spacious but warm haven, where they will have the magical impression that there are secrets to discover. For a unique experience in refined surroundings.

Mon Sep 17

Drive to Frankfurt airport and turn in rental car 5pm

Hotel Sheraton Frankfurt Airport Hotel – 1 night
Airport Terminal 1, Hugo Eckener Ring 15, Frankfurt Airport, Frankfurt 605-49 DE
Tele: 49 69 69770

Tue Sep 18

11:20am Depart Frankfurt FRA via UA#961
2:28pm Arrive Newark EWR

Emergency:

U.S.Consulate General
15, Avenue d'Alsace, 67082 Strasbourg Cedex
Tel.: (33)1 43 124 880

Registered with STEP at www.travel.state.gov

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

Tourist ideas:

See Michelin book on Alsace/Lorraine/Epernay Champagne region

Per Tom -- Pavillon Gourmand, 101 Rue du Rempart S, 68420 Eguisheim, France
<https://goo.gl/maps/9KGhQonYzS62>

L'Auberge de l'III, Illhaeusern – 3 star Michelin - 45 minutes from Strasbourg in Illhaeusern, France
https://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant_Review-g424978-d966043-Reviews-L_Auberge_de_l_III-Illhaeusern_Haut_Rhin_Grand_Est.html#photos;aggregationId=101&albumId=101&filter=7&ff=249563271

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strasbourg>

Consider some of The Wayfarers hike/trip itinerary since trip was aborted.

<https://www.thewayfarers.com/europe/france-walking-vacations/alsace-walking-vacations>

Headlines:

- Vibrant mix of French and German culture
- Fine Alsatian cuisine and wines
- Fascinating military history from both World Wars
- Vineyard covered hills
- Picturesque villages with half-timbered houses and cobbled streets

Sunday Overnight: Hotel a la Cour d'Alsace

Rendezvous in Strasbourg for the short journey to our hotel in the heart of Obernai, one of the loveliest villages in Alsace. Take a stroll before the Welcome Dinner, our first taste of the renowned Alsatian cuisine.

Monday Overnight: Hotel a la Cour d'Alsace

Next morning, we follow a charming valley to Boersch, a typical Alsatian fortress community. On the way, we visit a handicraft marquetry studio, and head through vineyards and pastures to Rosheim for lunch. In the afternoon, we visit the 12th-century church before walking back through forests and vineyards

Tuesday Overnight: Hotel Le Clos Saint Vincent

This morning we visit the mountaintop sanctuary and shrine at Mont Ste-Odile. After a visit, we cross the majestic Vosgienne forest, descending to beautiful Barr for lunch. Our afternoon trail varies between woody hills and vineyards, to Bernardvill for a wine tasting. We transfer to our hotel before dinner in a traditional 'winstub' in picture-perfect Ribeauvill.

Wednesday Overnight: Hotel Le Clos Saint Vincent

Bring your camera for our visit to the towering castle of Haut Koenigsbourg, one of Europe's most important medieval fortresses, with far-reaching views to Germany's Black Forest. In the afternoon, we discover the ruins of three castles of the Ribeaupierre family.

Thursday Overnight: La Maison des Tetes

Our morning walk takes us into Ribeauvill along the celebrated Alsace Route des Vins, through vineyards of Riesling, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir and Gewrztraminer grapes. Lunch in picturesque Riquewihr, before walking on to another fortified village, Kientzheim, nestled within the ramparts. On the way, we pass the WWII memorial remembering the soldiers who gave their lives in the battle of La Poche de Colmar.

Friday Overnight: La Maison des Tetes

Our final walk takes us to the Vosges Mountains on shaded forest paths, as we make our way to the moving WWI memorial at Le Linge. The battlefield contains numerous black and white crosses marking the final resting place of French and German troops. Lunch in a typical local auberge and an opportunity to taste the Munster cheese before returning to our hotel and our Farewell Dinner.

Saturday

After breakfast, the Wayfarers provide a courtesy bus transfer to the rail station in Colmar.

From Wayfarers where I tried to join:

Centuries of alternating
domination by France or

Germany have left this pretty border-land enjoying a historic blend of cultures that offers unsurpassed diversity and richness.

Nestled between the beautiful French Vosges mountains in France and the border of Germany, there are fairytale landscapes with multi-hued villages, Europe's highest concentration of feudal castles and of course, that distinctive Franco-Germanic cuisine.



Think narrow streets filled with colorful, half-timbered houses and shops selling traditional, local wares. In the past the colors had a significance, and town houses which often had shops on the ground floor, were painted according to the business - bakeries in one color, butchers in another, shoemakers in a third and so on.

And the wine! The famous Route du Vin, the Alsatian wine route, includes at least 100 wine producing villages between Strasbourg and Colmar, producing some of France's best wines. We'll wander through vineyards of Riesling, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir and Gewurztraminer grapes - and we'll certainly be tasting the results of the winemakers' hard work.

Wine and food go hand in hand here and we can expect to enjoy simple but delicious lunches of local produce and dine in a traditional "winstub" in the heart of one of France's most picture-perfect villages. Try Munster cheese, pretzels, choucroute, or sauerkraut, smoked sausage and Flammekueche, the Alsatian pizza.



Haut-Koenigsbourg

A walk up to the incredible 12th century castle of Haut-Koenigsbourg affords mesmerising views across the entire Alsatian Plain as far as the Black Forest. No wonder it was one of Europe's most important medieval fortresses.

Our final walk takes us to the Vosges Mountains on shaded forest paths, as we make our way to the moving memorial at Le Linge. The battlefield contains numerous black and white crosses marking the final resting place of French and German troops, marking the site of some of the closest, most intense and bloody trench fighting of the First World War. Particularly poignant in this, the 100th anniversary of the Armistice.

