



France

Part 3

St. Tropez to Monaco

June 30, 2015



June 30, 2015 - We drove to the Port of St. Maxime to catch a boat to St. Tropez. Our tour director explained it was easier to park the bus in St. Maxime and take the boat over to St. Tropez.





These were the small boats.





As we cruised out
into the open
waters we started
to see yachts.





Entering the Port of St. Tropez we saw a lot of yachts of varying sizes docked. St. Tropez is called "the playground of the rich." It is where Brigitte Bardot was discovered when she was a teenager babysitting there.









This is the small ferry boat we cruised from St. Maxime to St. Tropez on. We docked and gathered on the pier to hear instructions from our tour director, Cindy.





Some yachts
docked in the Port
of St. Tropez.

Cindy took us on a
short walking tour
orientation, and then
gave us free time to
explore, shop and eat
lunch. It was market
day at St. Tropez.





The outdoor markets have everything. This stall had the most colorful candy assortment I've ever seen.





Most of the “sit-down” restaurants were closed until noon, and that’s when our boat was leaving. So, after I explored the market and a few streets of St. Tropez, I decided to get a crepe and sit by the water to enjoy the scenery.







I walked up some stairs
to this area and saw
fantastic views.













It was time to get on the ferry and cruise back to St. Maxime. Several yachts were also leaving just behind the ferry.









Back in St. Maxime for a bathroom break and on the bus to begin the drive along the Cote d'Azur to Monaco.











There were no border checks, as we crossed over from France into the small country of Monaco.





Cindy pointed out this beautiful villa, and I snapped a few photos from the bus window.





Cindy explained that we were going up to the top of "the rock".

The rock was once the fortress of the area that was fought over for its strategic location. It is now where the palace is located.

A parking structure was built into the lower level of "the rock" where Francois parked the bus. We then took a few escalators and elevator to the top. At first I thought the building below was the palace, but it is the oceanography museum.





The oceanography museum.







Just outside the oceanography museum is this small yellow submarine, which belonged to the underwater explorer Jacques Cousteau. Cindy played The Beatles song, "Yellow Submarine" as we walked past. Jacques Cousteau was director of the museum.





We entered this beautiful garden, the Princess Grace Memorial Rose Garden, right next to the oceanography museum.













We walked up this brick walkway to see the palace. You can see it at the top looking like a castle. Cindy cautioned us not to be disappointed because it is not a spectacular building.





Sure enough it was a very plain looking building with just a small corner portion of an original old fortress.







View from up on “the rock” of yachts docked in the port and the city of Monte Carlo. The casino is the beige building with the old green roof in the top right corner of photo.







Monaco attracts so many wealthy people to reside there because there are "no" taxes. It did cost 200 Euro to park our tour bus though!





This street of lovely houses is right near the palace.

This unique building is right next to the church.





Cindy gave us free time, so some of us walked down to see this church where Princess Grace and Prince Ranier were both married and now buried.





Inside the church.





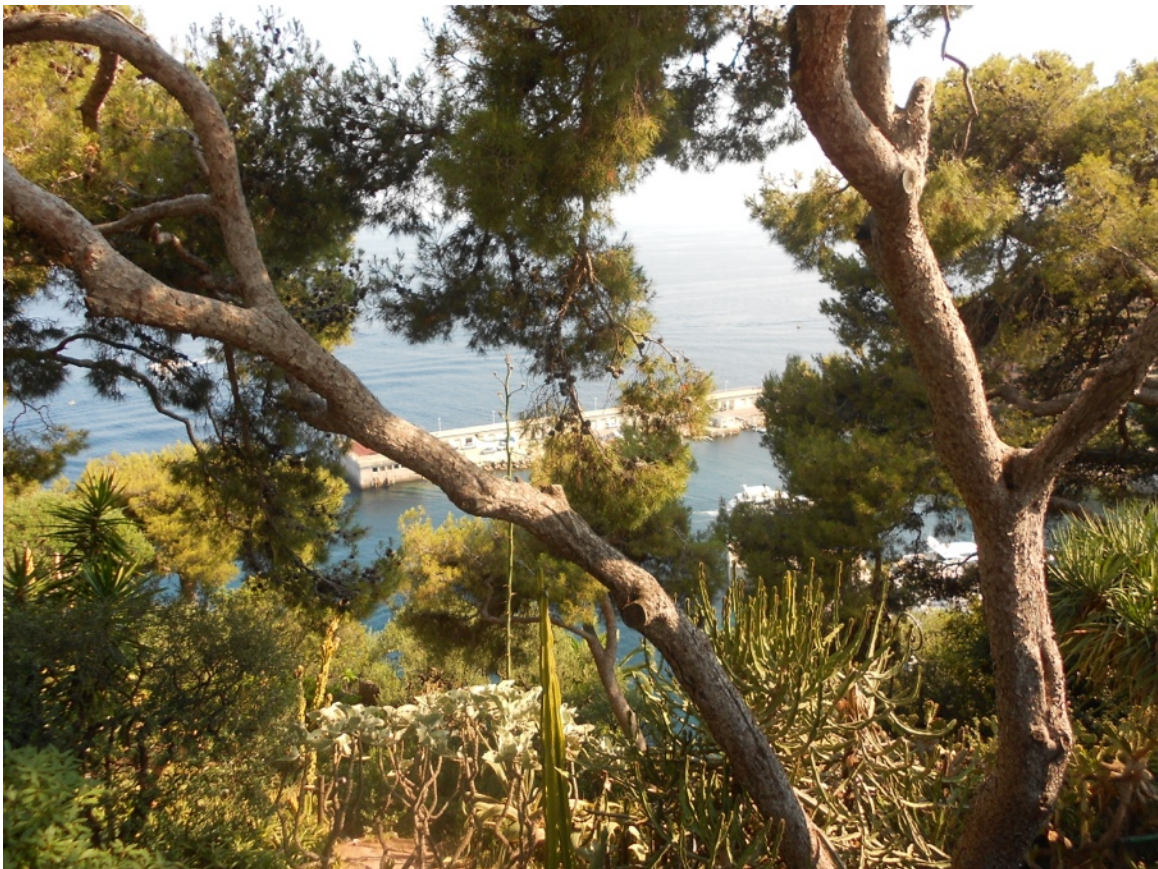
This is the tomb of Princess Grace inside the church behind the altar. Below is a drawing of Prince Rainier and Princess Grace. It stands between their two tombs.

We learned from Cindy that their marriage was somewhat “arranged.” The Palace at the time thought to get someone from Hollywood as Prince Ranier’s wife to boost Monaco’s waning presence in the world. Marilyn Monroe was considered at first but thought to be too racy to be Princess of Monaco. While Grace Kelly was filming “To Catch a Thief, it was arranged for Prince Ranier to meet her. He continued to correspond with her, and it is believed they fell in love even though their initial meeting was arranged for the good of the Monarchy.





This is the tomb of Prince Ranier inside the church behind the altar.









We said goodbye to Monaco and went down the elevators and escalators to the parking garage to once again board our tour bus.



