



France

Part 4

*Nice, St. Paul
de Vence & the
French Riviera*

July 1, 2015

July 1, 2015 - We drove to Nice and Francois drove the bus along the main road, while Cindy pointed out some landmarks so we could find our way around during our free time. We then checked into the Nice Hotel.





We had the whole morning free, so I took the tram train to the central part of Nice so I could walk around. It has an automated voice that tells you the tram stops, but it was in French. I had to look out the window to look for the landmarks that Cindy had pointed out so I would know where to get off.





I got off the tram at
this main square where
all these tall poles
were with sculptures of
men sitting on top.





The city was getting ready for a jazz festival.





This square had unique crooked black and white tiles and this large fountain with a statue of Apollo.





I left the more modern section of Nice and walked down the stairs behind the Apollo fountain to enter the part of Nice called “old town.” Below is the opera house.





It was also market day in Nice. I wandered through the shops and past old buildings.





Then I turned around and went another block over to the waterfront. I wanted to see a beach on the French Riviera up close rather than just from the bus window.





Although as the saying goes “neece” is nice, their beaches didn’t look very nice. They were full of rocks and stones. People actually lay down on the stones to sunbathe. Cindy had said due to the currents it’s hard to keep sand on some of their beaches.





After walking along the beachfront, I went back up past the Apollo fountain to that main square intending to take the tram back to the hotel. I started walking in the direction of the hotel, when I saw down a side street more parts of the old town that I didn't see before.





There were so many shops to stop and browse in. I kept walking through old town adjacent to the main road where the tram train ran.





At the end of old town I came to a more modern square. I realized I had walked almost back to the hotel, so I continued walking rather than catch the tram.





Then I saw a girl walking her dogs, and it was such a hot day the dogs were smart enough to jump in the fountain and cool off.



Another block or two and I was back at the hotel in time to rest up and after walking and sweating in the heat I changed into a clean T-shirt for the afternoon tour of St. Paul de Vence.





We met in the hotel lobby to board the bus. Cindy was staying behind but introduced us to a local tour guide who would take us through the old walled city. Francois drove us down the beach front road lined with large expensive hotels and condos. The Negresco Hotel on the left is supposedly famous and expensive.







We drove out of Nice onto a highway and eventually exited to the road leading to St. Paul de Vence.

The first sight of the walled city in the distance on the hill.





The painter Marc Chagall lived there for many years and is buried in the cemetery. Below is a sign with a print of a painting by Chagall showing the tower of St. Paul de Vence in the background of the painting just like the photo I took above.





The building on the right is a hotel just outside the walled city that the painters, writers and artists all hung out at.





On the left someone made a piece of sculptured art out of old cannonballs. Below is a bride in the back of a car heading to her wedding in a church inside the walled city.





Left - a part of the wall around the town.

Below is the cobblestone walkway leading into the town. Our guide pointed out the unique daisy design in the stones that continued through the town.





Entrance to the town and
above a cannon once
used to defend the town
from other neighboring
warring towns.





I just loved all the quaint old walled cities that I visited throughout Italy and France. Although they had similarities, each one also had its own unique character. The theme of St. Paul de Vence was mostly art galleries and shops.









This is the cemetery where Marc Chagall is buried.





A beautiful sculpture outside
an art gallery.





Fun, colorful art in a store window above.





I cupped my hands to take a drink out of this drinking fountain, and the water tasted so pure and fresh. They have drinkable water fountains all over Italy and France.





I stopped in this restaurant with this lovely view and ordered a crepe.
A few of my bus tour traveler friends joined me.





Mmmm....cheese crepe.

Saw this sign outside a clothing store...but the store door was blocked by a clothes rack and the lights were out. We determined it was just a marketing ploy to get people inside.





We left St. Paul de Vence and drove back along the beach front road in Nice to begin the next part of our drive along the French Riviera.







Our local tour guide pointed out this miniature statue of liberty on the beach front.





The house on the top of the hill in the photo on the left our guide told us belongs to Elton John.









Francois pulled the bus over here so we could take photos. Tina Turner also has a house somewhere up in these hills overlooking the French Riviera. This winding road is also where the car scene with Grace Kelly and Cary Grant in "To Catch a Thief" was filmed.









We then went on a tour of the Fragonard perfumery to learn how perfume was made. Every month they pick a fragrance of the month, and it was jasmine.





At every perfumery there's a person who invents the new fragrances, and they're called "the nose". There are only a handful of them in the industry that are called masters. They are able to distinguish above and beyond the average person's sense of smell whatever a fragrance is and in combinations of fragrances.

Similar to the Murano glass factory in Venice, the tour through the perfumery factory area was short, and they spent much more time in the showroom trying to sell their products.









I don't wear perfume, so I didn't buy anything. I sat and rested waiting for everyone to gather to get back on the bus. Then our tour director, Cindy, who wasn't on the bus with us somehow showed up at the perfumery to escort us to dinner, which was just up the hill across the road.



We had our dinner at Le Pinocchio on the outdoor terrace, which was lovely.





Some of my fellow travelers sitting at one of our tables. I can't even remember how many courses they served us, but I may have photos of each course except dessert, which was a rich chocolate cake with dripping fudge in the center.





Started off with a salad, and then I had delicious salmon and real French Fried potatoes. Then they served us camembert cheese and finally dessert and tea or coffee.

On the drive back down the winding road to Nice, a full moon came out in the twilight sky. Cindy appropriately played Dean Martin singing "Amore" over the bus sound system.



