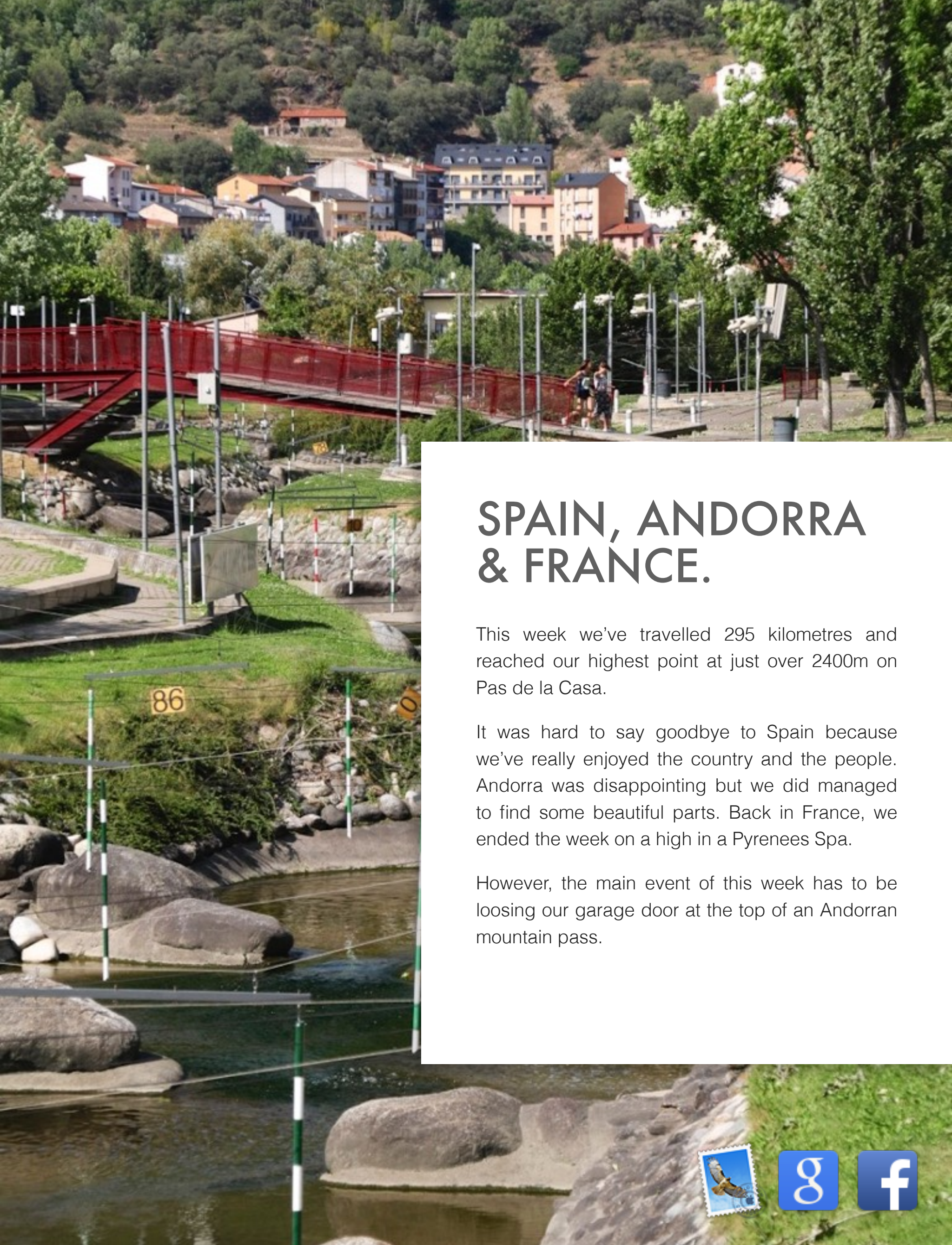


OUR BUMBLE

EXPLORING EUROPE IN OUR MOTORHOME.

BY JOANNE & CRAIG.





SPAIN, ANDORRA & FRANCE.

This week we've travelled 295 kilometres and reached our highest point at just over 2400m on Pas de la Casa.

It was hard to say goodbye to Spain because we've really enjoyed the country and the people. Andorra was disappointing but we did managed to find some beautiful parts. Back in France, we ended the week on a high in a Pyrenees Spa.

However, the main event of this week has to be loosing our garage door at the top of an Andorran mountain pass.





LLORVORSI TO LA SEU D'URGELL.

Above: Newly born foal taking its first steps.

FRIDAY 17 JULY

After we finished our bumble update we left our little river spot including all the nasty horse flies and ended up at the town of La Seu d'Urgell. Along the way, we stopped off at several points in a hope we could get an Internet signal in order to send our weekly bumble. When we finally got connected the email server had a dicky fit. Aargh today is not a good day for technology folks, it's testing us a wee bit! In the end we managed to get the email out as well as delete half a dozen emails that we didn't intend to delete! That's life on the road!

Our journey to La Seu d'Urgell travelled along the Noguera Pallaresa river, which is one of the most powerful rivers in the Spanish Pyrenees. In days gone by they would use the river to send logs downstream but nowadays, it just attracts humans wishing to propel themselves through its white water rapids. About half way through our route we stopped on the apex of a mountain to admire the views. We spotted a few wild horses and a mother with a very young foal. The foal had just discovered it's legs and it was having a ball bouncing all over the place until it crash landed on mum.

We climbed to around 1800 meters with stunning views that were a little clouded by haze and distant rain clouds. Up here, felt very rural and traditional. No resorts or bling just simple stone huts and hard grafting farmers. It truly did feel like stepping back in time. We continued on the road through successive outcrops of bare rock with the odd tuft of grass. As we start our descent, the rock walls start to rise high above and close in, along with the stifling heat.

Upon arrival in La Seu d'Urgell, we noticed signs for camper services, so we followed and ended up at a lovely free aire. There were around 15 Motorhome parked up, so we popped Vin on the end. Not long and another Motorhome tagged next to us. After about 10 minutes we were laughing our heads off. It was so noisy with televisions on full wack and Spanish whispers. It was like moving from a quiet detached house to a busy apartment block.

We arrived late and so a simple, elegant evening meal...crisp booty before bedtime.

SATURDAY 18 JULY

Good nights kip followed by a morning cycle around the town just to get our bearings.

The town was buzzing with local farmers selling their produce. It was market day and the streets of La Seu d'Urgell were alive with the hustle and bustle of traders shouting their spiel. The tiny stalls were scattered around the old quarters, which embraces the 12th century cathedral and cloisters. The dark, cobbled and arcaded streets offered a variety of smells from freshly baked bread, fresh garden produce to sweet honey and freshly cut flowers. This market sold everything from 'just picked' fruit and vegetables to 'just

fallen' off the back of a lorry tat. We don't think we've seen a place so alive in ages. We stopped at the local water fountain, Craig cupped his hands and slurped some water, whilst I just stuck my head straight under the tap, I was so hot. We wandered in and out and up and down enjoying the pleasures of a simple market day. There was so much to take in, crates of tomatoes alongside baskets of oranges, onions, garlic, apples, peaches, a wheelbarrow of apricots being heaved through the crowd by an eager little boy.

Joanne getting her juicing greens at a local market.





The town of La Seu d'Urgell.

Not long ago La Seu d'Urgell was a sleepy village but cheap property prices have attracted people from Andorra. With only a 40 minute drive to the capital of Andorra it means people can enjoy the income and taxation benefits of Andorra combined with cheaper living expenses of Spain. As with most places in Spain, it has an old quarter with charm and a new quarter with concrete apartment blocks and modern shops. On the west side of the town lies the Seminary, which is a majestic and very ornate building. Unfortunately, the gates are guarded, so we can get close enough to take a good picture.

Despite being high in the Pyrenees, it was still mad, baking hot. Once again the temperature gauge was off the scale, so it was at least 40 degrees. In an attempt to cool down and get some shade we put out the canopy but it wasn't enough. The sun was too low, so we got some string and hung two blankets to block the sun rays. It certainly helped take away the blistering heat but some folk just couldn't bear it and within half an hour the aire was empty. Everyone had taken to the tiny streets to find shade and shelter.

By early evening, there were a small gathering of South Americans. They enjoyed a healthy game of their local of boules in a box. All swigged down with a tin of warm beer and a few tunes from a car boot stereo. The cheerful group attracted quite a following until out of the blue the weather changed. First the wind creating a massive dust storm reducing visibility to zero. Then the thunder and lightening followed by 10 minutes of rain. Not a massive down pour but more like a slow drip of massive water bombs. Well at least it cooled the air in time for zzz land.

SUNDAY 19 JULY

Trip 2 day 223

Well by now we expected to be bumbling around Andorra but Spain won't let us leave. It's enticed us to stay a wee bit longer. There is something about Spain's atmosphere and culture that is quite attractive - the laid back approach to life and desire to have fun at least once a day. So one more day just to say thank you to Spain for being such a good country to visit.



Our last Spanish BBQ.

After a bit of a spring clean we had a nice cycle ride down the country lanes. Nothing extraordinary happened but with the Pyrenees as your back drop, I suppose you don't want anything to happen. On the way back we had a cycle around the Olympic park. It is basically a man made rafting and canoeing park that obtains its water from a nearby river. The place



La Seu d'Urgell's 1992 Olympic course.

looks semi abandoned. We walked around the place without any hassle and you could see canoes stacked up but there was absolutely no one around. A faded price list with extortionate prices of €60 for one hour of canoeing without

was empty, not a soul around. A quick look at the tariff board...wow, no wonder it's abandoned.

Back at base and not long before we were sat outside having our evening meal. But the best bit, desert and today we have, raspberry jelly, way hey folks! With full bellies we washed up outside, as stepping into Vin was like stepping in to a furnace.

To top the day off nicely, a little birdie shit all over Craig. He wasn't too amused but I reckon it's Spain's way of saying adios and good luck.

This trip, we've been on the road for 223 days and covered 8,826 kilometres, with an average daily spend of €23.79. It took us 12 days to get from UK to Portugal where we spent the next 103 days in the mild winter Portuguese climate. Once spring arrived, we were off and we toured Spain for the next 108 days. Portugal certainly offered some unspoilt coastal spots and a great winter climate. Buts Spain's dramatic and colourful history has created some amazing places and wonderful buildings. I wonder what the next country has is store?

Our bumble verdict - definitely worth a stop especially on market day.



LA SEU D'URGELL TO ANDORRA, ORDINO

Above: Number plate
showing the Andorran Crest.

Below: The Andorran Flag.



MONDAY 20 JULY

Up bright and early, so we could get a head start for Andorra la Valle , the highest capital in Europe at 3,356ft. After filling Vin with fresh water we did a quick supermarket sweep at Mercadona and off we set. Only 20km and we were crossing the boarder. Three lanes of traffic, two for cars and one for lorries and coaches. We are never quite sure which lane to take in these situations but with no height or width restriction we stayed in the car lane. Through the first barrier...yippee. Why we get so nervous when going through boarder controls, I will never know. We were doing fine until the dreaded hand of an official - halt. We looked like two rabbits in the headlight and all we need is a stamp on our forehead saying "guilty" Oh shit. Craig wound his window down and we both swallowed, in sync. To our surprise, the official asked us quite a few questions like where are we travelling from, how long have we been in Spain, how long do we intend to stay in Andorra etc. Eventually the official smiled, thanked us for answering the routine questions and waved us on. Phew. We moved to the next barrier, the police squad. We slowly crawled along the lane with eyes firmly fixed on the car in front



Images clockwise: A dead hare/rabbit. Typical Andorra Bank. The border at Spain/Andorra.

and then once clear, zooooom. Craig put his foot down and shot off, like every other person crossing the border.

Within minutes of entering the country we noticed a retail park then another and then another. All the way to the capital Andorra la Vella and then it got really bad. Just endless commercial properties, banks and retail outlets making the place look like one huge shopping complex. I know it's a trading route but why allow it to become so ugly and over developed? The

outlets aren't like at home, they are like commercial slums. The traffic was bad too. Two lanes of traffic just bumper to bumper with motorbikes dodging in and out of every gap. It was horrendous. Billboards plastered everywhere advertising just one thing...private banking. Well I know this place is a tax haven but never thought it would be so obvious. We tried to find a parking spot but it proved a nightmare, so we headed out of the city and pulled up at a petrol station.

Our bumble verdict - park outside Andorra la Valle don't drive anywhere near the city.

We took advantage of the cheap fuel at €0.95 per litre and brimmed Vin to the max. We looked around and couldn't believe how bad this place looked. Naturally it is stunning with steep mountains and hills but it is ruined with its commercial outlets. What a crying shame. Our plan was to have a look around the city and do some shopping but not a cat in hell's chance in the Motorhome. Plan B - head to Canillo and the mountains and fingers crossed it's a little better. At Canillo we drove around the town and never even got out of the Motorhome. It was a purpose built sky resort and it wasn't nice at all. No character or soul. With heavy hearts we turned off and headed up the mountain side. As we climbed higher and higher we started to hit the countryside, the hills, the waterfalls, the natural beauty of Andorra. It was beautiful and the views down the valley were to die for.

For lunch, we found a great little stop at just over 1200m high. On top of the valley overlooking Canillo with waterfalls all around. It felt a million



Tea break in the Andorran mountains.

miles away from the hassle and bustle of the main trade route. In fact, it's hard to believe we are in the same country. Pure wilderness.

After a loud burp...a sign of a good meal, we set off to find a spot for the evening. We passed quite a few small but major road works, rebuilding deep chunks of narrow mountain roads. We slowly but surely wound up and up until we reached the pinnacle of the pass at 1978m. We merrily waved at a couple of strange walkers, who were pulling odd faces at us. Then all of a sudden we heard this almighty thud. Bang, bosh, wallop and an OMG what the hell is that? Craig looked in his mirrors, screamed holy F*ck and slammed on the brakes. I jumped out of the Motorhome to find half the contents of the garage sprayed all over the road. In complete shock, I looked at the garage....where's the



Missing Door.

Snapped hinge.

door? The 4ft door was missing? Holy mother of Jesus, the door is rolling down the bloody mountain. Like the clappers my little legs ran after the door. I hurled the door to the road side and then began frantically picking up all our bits and bobs from the road. By this time, Craig had pulled over and was running to help. Between us

we moved everything to the side of the road, so as not to cause an accident for other motorists and also to protect our stuff. Fortunately, we spotted a little lay by, so Craig dashed back to Vin and drove to the lay by. I grabbed our stuff and trundled back to Vin. Both of us totally shocked at what happened and lost for words, we just gawked at the garage hole. After about ten minutes, the shock wore off and reality kicked in. Jesus Christ we have no garage door, in the middle of nowhere, 2000m up a bloody mountain and it's about to piss down. We looked at the damage...despite the tumble the door only had a small dink on the corner edge. The hinges that hold the door on, one completely snapped in half and the other twisted like a corkscrew. The internal door frame was twisted near the latch. A small scratch and dint on the rear panel & post plus a few knackered seals. Given what just happened, the damage isn't that bad. Still needs repairing and will cost a fair bit but in scheme of things no major damage and most of all no one hurt. Right, quickly on to a temporary fix to secure the van and also make it waterproof for the storm coming over the mountains. With a chunk of rock he bashed away at the hinge. It took some doing but he got there. For the snapped hinge, he drilled a couple of holes along the edge. Slowly but surely we got the garage door in place. A couple of pieces of string to make it more secure and job done. It wasn't perfect but it was a damn good temporary fix. I have to hand it to Craig, he is bloody good at problem solving and making things work with hardly any materials. I wouldn't have known were to start. To top it, I stand back and look and would have no idea it was a bodged job, he's good. We packed away all the other bits and bobs...nothing broken and set off

After a bum twitching ride down the mountain with hairpin bends every 50ft...just when you don't need bends...we arrived in Ordino. The half an hour ride was tense, as we both listened for the slightest noise and glared through wing mirrors at Vin's rear. The views around the countryside were missed completely and within



Climbing wall in Ordino.

ten minutes of arriving in Ordino the heavens opened We parked on the municipal parking car park right next door to the sports centre and climbing wall.

What a day! Now we need to think about finding a repair garage but with no internet and phone costs at £5 per minute, we think we might have to go to France, sooner rather than later. The rest

of the evening we pondered over the day and we're sure that one day we will look back and laugh but right now, we still feel rather delicate. Worst of all, Craig gave himself a hard time for leaving the door unlocked. It's so unlike him and for that very reason, it is driving him mad.

Our bumble verdict - the pass from Canillo to Ordino plenty walks and stunning scenery

TUESDAY 21 JULY

Woke up, big stretch and scratch. As we came too, the events of yesterday came flooding back. We hope the repair held up against last night's down pour. Craig had a check, double check



Fields of tobacco growing in the hills.

and triple check and yip, his good bodge is watertight.

After breakfast, we had a little stroll around the village. It's quite nice here with stone buildings, a few cafes, restaurants, church etc. A river running alongside and the odd allotment dotted around the town makes it rather a pleasant stay. Views down the valley are magic and what a beautiful day until the black clouds arrived and then it thundered like billy oh. Jeez if that's god

up there stomping around in his size 10's then he sure is in a bad mood. Every time the thunder roared it made me jump out my skin. Then the rain arrived and it didn't stop until early evening. It lashed it down with the odd hail stone thrown in for good measure. At one point the whole town just looked like a waterfall. No matter where you looked water was pouring from it. Even the wall was oozing water! Well no chance of looking at the repairs today or trying to find a garage in this weather, so we walked over to the sports and library complex. A great little facility with rest area and free wifi.

So what did we learn in the library...officially called the principality of the valleys of Andorra. This little country of just 450 square kilometres lies between France and Spain. In 1278, it was granted semiautonomous status under joint sovereignty but in 1993, it gained democratic constitution with its monarch headed up by two co-princes - Spanish bishop of Urgell and President of France. So how did Andorra become such a trade route? Well during the Spanish civil war and WW2, it kept out the fighting and instead smuggled goodies to its neighbouring countries. Trading in high demand goods like alcohol, tobacco, fuel and luxury items earned Andorra its name. With such a reputation Andorra boomed and so did its economy. The city attracts the shoppers, whilst the towns and villages attract the wealthy. With cranes and diggers in every town and village, Andorra is more like a building site than anywhere we've ever seen. Hard to believe this little country was cut off from the world until 1950 and even today, it has no airport or rail system just handful of chaotic and overstretched roads. Well you can guess what happened, we utilised the facility, did all our admin, system updates,

map data etc. We discussed our options for repairing Vin and decided no rush. Yes, we want a proper repair but as the temporary fix is secure, there is no need to dash to France, find a dealer and all for the sake of missing out on Andorra. A quick look at the map and we can see there are some Hymer dealers on our planned route through France, so we will carry on with our plans and go back to bumbling around.

The good thing with free community wifi is the connection speed. It's always super fast. We even managed to FaceTime my sister Mandy, who had a full house, so lucky for us we got to say hello to most of the family in one go! The best bit was an iPad sloppy kiss from Oliver and Lucas, my two cute great nephews. Then we FaceTime'd Craig's dad who'd gone camping in Wales for a couple of days. Can't believe he's in a tent at 70! So good to chat and see family and friends, gives you a right boost!

Below: Vins
windscreen says it all...
...and boy did it.





ORDINO TO EL SERRAT

Above: Parking spot just below a Ski resort. No snow in July though.

WEDNESDAY 22 JULY

Woke to another roaring day in Andorra. Last night, a few more Motorhomes arrived, so Vin didn't feel so lonely.

After a FaceTime with pops and a final bit of admin we had a walk around Ordino. At the side of the sports facility, a tourist office, so we nipped in to see if they had any information. It was a typical set up, big, fancy, empty office with handful of postcards on the counter. We managed to extract a little brochure on Valle de Nord and a bus timetable from the unhelpful chap.

Our bumble verdict - Ordino great little place

After a final toot and some tobacco for Craig, we set off to El Serrat. But before we set off, we checked, double checked and triple checked the everything was shut! The valley road passed fields upon fields of tobacco plants and the number of building plots and cranes started to decrease. At the head of the valley a small village of El Serrat with handful of hotels and chalets. Then a steep climb up mountain through dense scotch pine. Up and up until we reached the end of the road and a new record for



Photos clockwise:

- ❖ Cows at a ski lift!
- ❖ Andorra's mountain views.
- ❖ Tobacco grows everywhere.



Vin...2120m. Even with a busted garage he still made it, what a good old chap. We stepped out and the first thing we noticed, the cool no sorry the cold air. Hey at last we have a break from the heat. I smiled and Craig frowned hehehe. We looked around...ski slopes don't half look different without snow! The ski lift all abandoned with the chairs just dangling like a disused fairground ride.

As we admired the views the cloud started to roll in. Sneaking over the peaks and down in to the valley. I don't think it's wise to take a walk in this weather. As we walked back to Vin we watched several calves juggle up to their mums. Not long and we were surrounded by cows. Craig got rather paranoid especially when one young lady cow decided to rub up against Vin. That's it no more bloody dents, we are off. And with that we moved down the valley to a car park right at the side of a waterfall.

Once the idiot in an old fiat car stopped doing donuts on the car park, we had a lovely, peaceful evening watching deer dash up and down the mountain. As usual in Andorra, it rained for about about half an hour but thundered for about four hours.



EL SERRAT TO DORRES, FRANCE.

Above: Views of Andorra
near the border with France.

THURSDAY 23 JULY

On route to Pas de la Casa we hopped, skipped and jumped a few towns. First, Messina a nicely stocked ski resort with cafes and bars lining the Main Street. Then through a 3km tunnel which seemed to take an eternity to get to the other end..the light, where is the light? Not long and we arrived at Encamp with a much more commercial and industrial feel about it although it did appear to have a good ski lift. It seemed quite a scruffy place with nightclubs down every alley and damp 'wee' walls.

From here we had two choices the Pas Tunnel or the windy mountain pass. Yep, you guessed it, we took the windy road options and drove up to the top pass. Once at the top we check the altitude and yippee, we'd reached another new height in Vin 7,900ft. Must admit, that's the best thing about having a 5.3l engine and excess payload, we can pretty much get where ever we want without feeling the engine is struggling. We parked up, had a cuppa and then a walk up the hill. Before we set off, I noticed a mark on Vins bonnet? It was like a massive rusty water mark? We checked under and around the bonnet area and all OK, so we not sure where it came from but its made a right mess



Images clockwise: Craig and his bag of goodies. The road to France near the border, go right through a tunnel or left and up over a mountain pass. Shop till you drop in Andorra.

of Vin's paint work. We washed off what we could but looks like we'll need to get a bit of t-cut to see if it will polish out. Poor Vin is taking a right old battering this week. After our distracting we set off and at the top, we were level with all the Pyrenees mountain tips, it was superb. Quite a few of the dark granite peaks still had blobs of snow hidden in the crags and ridges. The

dramatic views down the valley with a dozen or so scattered stone barns amongst the summer hayfields.

After a bite to eat we wound our way down the other side of the mountain and entered the horrid, run down town of Pas de la Casa. To put it blunt, what a sh*t hole just wall to wall of duty

free shops. We were in two minds as to whether to have a walk or not. We wanted to see if Andorra was actually cheaper or if it was all hype but on the flip, we didn't want to walk around such a horrid place. Umm, I suppose we should have a look to kill our curiosity. We parked on the road and walked up to the town. It was really busy and no matter where you looked, people were stocked up with Andorran duty free goodies. We had a toot in several shops but basically they all sold the same - alcohol, tobacco and cheap Chinese copycat goods. Craig was interested in electronic goods but we only spotted two tiny shops that didn't look that reasonable. In the end we went back to the first hyper store and Craig bought some tobacco, a bottle of cheap Pernod, filters, papers etc that should last a good few months. I bought, well I wonder if you can guess what I bought and no it's not perfume? Answer on the last page. Price wise, Craig's tobacco worked out at €5.20 for a 50 gram pouch compared to €8.50 in Spain and Portugal. The real deal alcohol is slightly cheaper but there is a lot of rip off stuff and therefore it makes it look a lot cheaper e.g. Craigs rip off Pernod €2.99 for 1 litre but no

doubt it's just paint stripper with an aniseed whiff.

Our bumble verdict - A great drive and worth a stop if you want some cheap booze.

Andorra is one beautiful place when you go up in to the mountains and villages. However, if you stay of the main drag and go in to the towns then you will be disappointed. Would we go back to Andorra? Probably not.

With Craig in the mood for blowing all our cash on fags and booze, we set off for France before he got the urge to splash more cash. The drive to the border crossing was actually quite nice. A deep valley with Andorra on one side and France on the other. At the border crossing we drove straight through the unmanned barrier. No checks or controls. In fact, we've seen more security at a Tesco petrol station!

The route to Dorres didn't feel like France. Not sure where it felt like but certainly not France. Our mobile beeped several times as we meandered between France and Spain. Eventually, we arrived at our stop for today, Dorres.



Joanne takes a last look at Andorra.



Don't look now, here comes Vive La France.



DORRES TO VILLEFRANCHE DE LA CHALFORT

Above: A railway bridge
crosses the Tét valley.



“Vive La France”
again.

FRIDAY 24 JULY

After all that shopping in Andorra we need to chill and relax, so what better way than at a Spa. We donned our kinnis and grabbed our towels and headed off down the dirt track. Five minutes later and we arrived at the Roman baths. A natural, hot sulphur spring that runs through granite baths and pools. We paid our €4.80 (each) entrance fee and trundled down. It was only a small set up but very neat and compact. At the top of the facility the two original granite baths (the size of a normal UK bath) inside a concrete shed. To the side a two tiered bathing pool and then further down the grounds, a new arched pool with sun loungers looking out to the Pyrenees.

The waters absolutely stunk of sulphur but we got it and dunked our shop till ya drop bodies. We knew they'd be hot but by gosh, not this hot - 40 degrees. It was a cracking day just chilling and relaxing as long as we didn't think too much about sitting on a fault line. You know that crack in the earth that could at any moment open up and swallow us! Thankfully not a rumble from the devil below just from God above! By mid afternoon thunder clouds were gathering, so we packed up and headed back.



Probably as well because our wrinkled bodies were getting a little too wrinkly.

As we got Vin ready, I put the swimwear and towels in the wash, they stunk to high heaven of sulphur. With a little extra washing powder to kill the smell we set off. Half an hour later and we were in our first French Lidl checking out the new goodies. Craig was running up and down the aisles like child on acid. All these new products, new prices and new words! So much to take in, where do we begin? Well, I know where we finished...at the till and €42.40 lighter. Some products a little more expensive than Spain and some a little less but overall probably about the same.

We started at the top of the Cerdagne plateau and drove down the Tet valley. The drive was beautiful with lush fields and orchards deep in the valley. Sheer mountain cliffs and gorges dominated the area. We spotted the little yellow train in the distance, which trundles up and down the Tet valley. Building this road and railway was no small task and maintaining it, well we got to hold our hats off to the French. Its a bloody good road.



Images clockwise: My Andorra treat, Fairy. The winding Tet Valley roads & the touristy little yellow train.

About half way down it started to rain and by the time we got to our resting place, it was pickling down. We pulled in to the village of Villafranche de Conflent. We tried for the main car park but it was sectioned off? After we quick look around we realised we just missed the annual village fete. Never mind. With the car park closed we drove round the corner and noticed people parking at the side of the medieval wall. We tucked Vin in and settled down for the night. It

was raining hard and poor Vin was covered in road grim and brown mud from slashing rain. Then two minutes later..bang...we arrived just in time for the evening fireworks. What an end to the week!

Oh and what did I buy in Andorra...orange and lemongrass Fairy, divine!



OLAH! BECOMES BONJOUR!

Yes were in France as you've already worked out so we needed a new name, Spain was Olah! so obviously France becomes Bonjour.

Well the big one this week was as you have gathered, refitting a missing door. Not many pics for you as I was a little busy at the time plugging a four foot by four foot hole.

**FUBAR: A phrase from the movie
"Big Trouble In Little China"
meaning....**

Fucked Up Beyond All Recognition.

First asses the damage:- The top hinge was completely snapped in half, The bottom hinge was bent beyond belief. The doors outer frame was bent, The doors inner frame was bent, The doors aluminium bottom was bent, The outside plastic trim was snapped, The doors opening strut had snapped, The door frame itself looked like a racing circuits chicane. The vans rear pillar and rear panel were



Where the hell is B&Q up here, 2000+ metres up and a storm is coming.



Our garage door, propped up by the roadside and in mid repairs.

dented and the rubber seals on the rear pillar and door were damaged. Not an easy task to repair with limited tools and the mother of all storms looming overhead.

The first job was to at least get one hinge to work, I figured that if I put the bent hinge on the bottom and tied the top bit up it would be our best chance. I scouted around and found two flat rocks, one to smash the bent hinge into the other, twenty minutes later and some tweaking with the pliers it was as good as I could get, Not perfectly straight but at least it may be usable. In straightening the hinge the locator pins on the backside were now all mushroomed out so they had to be files back into shape too. The bent hinges screws were still in the door frame as they had ripped through the countersunk holes, I removed them and tapped the bent heads back into shape.

Time for a fag and a little think, how the hell can I fix a snapped hinge, All sorts of ideas rushed through my head, could I do this or could I do that, then all of a sudden, "Simple" I thought. Just re-drill the damn thing knowing it would be at least an inch short. All I could do was try it and hope. One cordless drill to the rescue and I drilled proceeded to drill two fresh holes as close to the now existing edge of the hinge as I dared and then crossed my fingers.

The doors aluminium bottom was battered back into shape and the doors internal frame also battered back a little. Time for another fag before I attempted to offer the door back into place, with the aid of a folding stool a thick mat and a piece of string I screwed the bottom hinge back on. I had to use two washers to stop the screw heads going straight through the holes that were now



That's what I call FUBAR! or in English it's commonly known as a snapped hinge. Crap design of a hinge, the factory countersunk holes are way to deep.



This must be where the door hit the floor, Very little damage considering the weight and force of impact.

too big, knowing it made the hinge fatter but I had no choice.

Now on to the top hinge, what was left of it was left of it was screwed into place but it sat inside the frame now instead of sitting outside where it should, I carefully attempted to close the door but the mangled inner frame on the locks side stopped it, Five minutes of bashing with the aid of another flat rock and a pair of pliers and it was as good as new, sort off, but at least the door now closed, The doors strut was now turned upside down and miraculously snapped into place even though a piece was missing. A loop of string was used again just incase it came off.

All the tools and rocks were put away with a huge sigh of relief, The dam thing closes and even locks. Fortunately the storm didn't arrive until later that day as that would have made life hell trying to fix it and boy did it rain. In fact I have never seen so much rain fall in such a short time so I kept my fingers crossed until it finished. I rushed to the door and opened it, how much water had got in, a little I could live with, a lot would be a nightmare, Thank god for that, not a single drop, followed by another big sigh of relief. Time for a celebration fag and a glass or two of some Ricard which I'd just purchased. It's like Pernod, a strong 45% Aniseed beverage.

We'll have to wait until we find a decent Hymer dealer to improve the repair but it'll do for now. The cost to repair it though won't be cheap, my own simple mistake did this and it's a gut wrenching mistake.

Ah well, more bits to buy and replace. At least no one got hurt and when you consider that our Nigel starts chemo in the next few days, life's too short to complain. Good Luck Nigel.

Countries Visited

A few people have asked about the countries we've visited and our route, so we've mapped out our routes on the following page with some of the main stops numbered.

We always avoid the toll roads unless there is no option like Switzerland etc. and tend to choose scenic routes when possible with the exception of large distances in one journey.

The countries visited are as follows:-

- | | |
|-----------|------------------|
| ♣ Andorra | ♣ Italy / Sicily |
| ♣ Austria | ♣ Luxembourg |
| ♣ Belgium | ♣ Portugal |
| ♣ France | ♣ Spain |
| ♣ Germany | ♣ Switzerland |

LAST YEARS BUMBLE IN HOMER.



THIS YEARS BUMBLE IN VIN.

