



# OUR BUMBLE

## EXPLORING EUROPE IN OUR MOTORHOME.

BY JOANNE & CRAIG.







# This Weeks Edition.

A brilliant week here in France with loads of good stuff to tell you. This week we had no major hiccups so we had time to get back in to flow of writing about our journey, taking some piccys and sharing our adventures.

We started in Pont du Gard and ended in Marseille covering 336 kilometres.





## PONT DU GARD TO AVIGNON

Cover: Colourful straw  
baskets for sale in Gordes.

Previous page: Statue in  
Avignon.

Above: Avignon's famous  
Palace du Pape's with one of  
the many bridges crossing the  
river that flow through the  
ancient town.

### SATURDAY 8 AUGUST

A hot and sticky night is an understatement. We were like two little pritt-sticks that uncomfortably and unwontedly stuck together every time we moved. I struggle in this high humidity and sweltering heat it just makes my skin condition worse, so come 5am I was tearing my hair out with the itching. Nothing for it, I popped an extra tablet, which didn't have any effect until the sun rise then WACK. The tablets side effect kicked in and knocked me out cold.

With a bad nights kip and too many tablets I didn't rise until late and then I shaped like a blinking zombie. We finally set off for Avignon just after lunch and the drive, well it was a bit of a haze. We arrived in Avignon and parked up down a small lane just at the side of the river. It wasn't a great view but it was quiet and only a short walk from the town. Not long and the heat and tiredness got to us and we exchanged words! Aka fell out. Thus it was that we spent a quiet, sweatily perplexed 'wtf was that about' afternoon sitting in silence.





The Palais des Papes in Avignon was the stronghold for many years for the Pope and several successors, It's defensive grew stronger with each successive Pope who feared for their lives.

Eventually boredom got the better of us and we crossed the bridge to the town and entered the walled city. The Palais des Papes completely dominates the town and whilst we were naturally attracted in that direction, we opted to see what else the town had to offer. Cobbled streets and shabby chic shops provided Avignon with a nice casual atmosphere. Craig was playing Mr cool after our tiff so rather than cycle together he followed behind knowing full well I would get lost. I on the other hand had total faith in my navigation skills until of course, I got lost. But I would not admit it, not over my dead body. I carried on peddling over the cobbles passing the odd little garden and quaint square. I asked my self, where the hell am I? The little voice in my head shouted loud and clear...you bloody idiot, of all the times to get lost! I proceeded to have several conversations with my inner voice, which just wound me up more. I paused to rest and try to identify some small element of the town. Once I caught my breath, I pursed my lips and headed off in a completely different direction. Through the corner of my eye I noticed a group of people walking in a given direction. A ah, I bet they know the way and so I quickly cycled in their direction and eventually I hit a main street. Phew, back on track. We did attempt to visit a couple of churches and a museum but they were shut, so off to the Palais for a toot. As we wound up the hill to the Palais, the size of the place started to emerge. The Palais was built in 1309 after Rome & France had a bit of a fall out (that explains it, it must be something in air). Originally the Papal courthouse and then later to a magnificent palace. Its grandeur and wealth attracted





hordes of princes and in turn hordes of yobs. Sadly the yobs pinched all the fine furnishing and then the townspeople helped themselves to what ever else was left, so inside there isn't a great amount to look at. After the Palais, a walk around the gardens with some stunning views across the town and surrounding area.

Back in Vin, we started to make polite comments in an attempt to make amends but we both failed miserably. Despite both our efforts silence still dominated the night. But we had plenty, interesting two second conversations like

What do you want to do tomorrow?

Don't know.

And then silence

Or

It's been hot today

Yeah

And then silence

We were greatly taken in with this way of talking but sometimes you can have too much of a good thing, so we quit whilst the going was good. Craig fancied a bit of TV, whilst I fancied some fresh air. You can't beat a nice stroll along the riverbank just before dark. It's not only cool but there is something quiet relaxing about watching a town go to sleep. As nighttime closes in the town floodlights turn on, one by one lighting up the prizes possessions. Within half an hour the town was a beautiful Amber glow but then dark, heavy clouds arrived...time to dash home. But, behind every cloud there is a silver lining..the heavens opened and the temperature dropped. At least we won't stick together tonight, folks.



Top & 1st page: Crucifix at the Cathedral.

Bottom: Golden Virgin statue sits on top of the belfry.





## AVIGNON TO CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE

Above: One of the many elaborate chateaus as we venture in to the Du Pape region.



### SUNDAY 9 AUGUST

We started the day a little frosty but the discovery of a nearly full toilet and ghastly odour broke the ice. Guess we'll need to set off then and find a service point.

**Our bumble verdict - Avignon is one pretty place but we didn't do it justice. Definitely worth a visit.**

Today's route took us off the main road and back on to good old fashioned dirt tracks. The sort of roads you just love when it rained all night and left dirty big puddles. Looking beyond the muddy puddles, we passed through endless fields and terraced vineyards, which produce some of the most renowned wines in France.

Chateauneuf du Pape is a pretty little hillside place scattered amongst the vineyards with a simple church, a few cafes and plenty wine cellars. At the top of the hill the ruins of the once summer chateau with splendid views over the vineyards. We managed to park Vin right at the top of the hill next to the chateau, what a view.





Photos Clockwise:

- ❖ Craig looking for a cheap bottle of plonk, No “El Cheapo Lidl bricks in here”
- ❖ The ruins of Chateau du Pape
- ❖ Joanne carefully strolling through vineyards
- ❖ Red Bull gives you wings & fine wine apparently.
- ❖ A true vintage from the region.





Above: One of the narrow winding cobbled streets.

Right: Clock tower.

The place is a wine tasters paradise.



We had a tootle over to look at the 14th century ruins before embarking on a trek down to the village. The village pinched its name from the summer palace of the Avignon popes. We careful watched our step as we made our way down the river cobbled street. First point of call the cellar! Inside the stone cellar a display of fine wines with a price tag to suit everyone's pocket. Craig wandered in to the archive room to see if they had an old Lidl du Pape bottle but no such luck only some dusty old vintage worth a few thousand quid. As we walked further in to the

village it became apparent this place has no intentions of doing a BOGOF. The wines produced by the local vineyards don't come cheap thats for sure. But we are told the farmers carefully tend the vines covering them with large pebbles to soak up the daily sunshine, which is released during the night to keep the vines nice and cosy. However, we suspect the vines have a mind of their own and sneak a cheeky vodka and red bull every so often.





Top left: Joanne's shadow on the ruined Chateau.



Top right: Vins resting spot for the night

Bottom: The stones at the vines base retain heat throughout the night, improving the grapes.



To our surprise the village was very quiet. Only a handful of people popping in and out of the various wine houses. Well, we say quiet until half a dozen yanks arrived and then all we heard "oh my god, are you serious, I need to have that case shipped over ASAP". I really do wish they'd teach whispering in elementary school.

Back in Vin and we were nicely tucked in admiring the view when another motorhome arrived then another then another then another...wow we had neighbours. If it carries on at this rate we can have a van party. Two Italians, One German and One English. The English couple were from Blackpool, our neck of the woods, so we had a really good chat with them. Would you believe it, they'd bought a prison van to covert in to a mobile home and they'd come away for 5 weeks before the conversion!

Just before the daylight completely vanished I popped outside to take a photo. The German couple were sat outside with their two dogs of uncertain genetic background. I said hello then turned and walked off to take a photo.



"Don't take zat now, cumze back later" I nearly jumped out my skin. "I said cumze back later, zee around 10. You can then take zee photo from over zhere". Pointing at the ruin as he made his demands. I smiled and explained I only wanted a little photo of the Motorhome. "Yes but cumze back at 10". I lowered my head and scurried back in to Vin.

The side window was open to let in some fresh air. I was chilling nicely and soaking up the cool

breeze when all of a sudden I leaped out my seat. "Zee now, cumze now and take zee photo, hurry". I nearly shit myself, the bloody German fella stuck his head right under the window. His demands weren't backing down, so we grabbed the camera and took some silhouette shots just to shut him up. Thanks to our German neighbour we got chewed to death by Mosquitos.

**Our bumble verdict - great views, nice village and brilliant wine.**



The entire region is covered in grape vines, right up to the mountains. Some vineyards thinks its Hollywood.





## CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE TO GORDES

Above: View over the hills  
from Châteauneuf du Pape.

Below: Stone table points the  
way.



### MONDAY 10 AUGUST

For miles around the vineyards rolled and billowed with the odd dirt track wandering amongst the plump hedgerows. In the distance, the hillsides were prettily dotted with limestone ridges and the odd stone hut. What a view to wake up to.

I had a shower closely followed by Craig. Nice clean fluffy towels and what does he do, dry himself and then wipe the bloody floor managing to turn the thing black in two minutes.

We had a quick two hour chat with the couple from Blackpool, waved them off and then hit the road, too.

On route we stopped at some Hicksville Lidl. Probably the worst Lidl we've visited. With only half stocked shelves, no water, sticky floors and short dated produce this store wasn't the 5 star Lidl we've come to love and cherish. We got a few bits and headed off. But all is not lost! Fifteen minutes down the road and we arrived at another Lidl. This was slightly better stocked but extremely busy. We got our bits and took our place in the queue behind four other shoppers. Then the 'French shopping thing'



kicked in. One by one each of the shoppers left the queue and dashed back in store for something they'd forgot. Or so we thought. Nope. They left the queue only to continue their shopping returning to periodically to chuck the items to their basket. This rinse and repeat process goes on and on until it's their turn to be served by the checkout assistant. In fact, one lady picked up more goods nipping back and forth than her original basket. How bazaar is that? But I suppose all countries and cultures have little habits that seem alien to others. Us Brits have some cracking habits. Eventually we were served by a bubble gum chewing assistant who looked more like a bull terrier with caramel stuck in its teeth, but she was extremely pleasant, I'd like to add.

The road to Gordes was sleeping policeman heaven or in our case hell. Every two minutes screech, bump, bash. This process went on most of the drive until we hit a road block. We followed the diversion sign and turned right. Unfortunately this was the only diversion sign to be followed so we drove round in circles for a while trying to suss out the alternative route. After several de ja vu moments we pulled to one side and checked out the options. Eventually we found a route albeit a little small road but it was brilliant. No road bumps and field upon field of

orchards. What a pleasant drive. Once out of the orchards we popped out at a quaint little village with a lavender museum. We tentatively pulled in to the car park looking for an adequate space. We noticed a few bus bays and shot over. As we stepped out of Vin we could smell the wonderful aroma of lavender. Not sure Craig would agree. We'd actually pulled in to the museum not for a toot but for water. In the middle of the car park they had a water fountain and Vin needed a drink. Fortunately it was quite late and the museum wasn't too busy, so we hogged the water tap and brimmed Vin. In between, I had a wander over to the rear of the museum to watch a lavender press demo and a little stroll through the lavender bushes. I was in my own little world filling my head with lavender scent when out came the bee brigade and chased me away. Cheeky buggers don't they know we are on Our Bumble!

Eventually, we arrived at our stopping point for the day which had taken considerably more time than we expected. Good job we are not in a hurry. The spare piece of land just 2km from Gordes village had several Motorhomes already settled in for the night. With only a half an hour of daylight remaining we fired up the BBQ and had a feast of lightly charred offerings to end the day nicely.







## GORDES

Above: The hilltop town of Gordes.

Below: Church figurine.



### TUESDAY 11 AUGUST

I love our wash n drive little utility room. It is just brilliant. Yesterday, we'd put a wash in our 'really useful boxes' and so this morning, I was up and spinning two boxes of clothes, bedding and towels. Next, I hung them to dry on our interior camouflaged washing line and off we trot to Gordes.

The 2km uphill walk to Gordes was quite pleasant when you managed to get shade. Unfortunately we found little and so I arrived looking like a dripping lobster. I took 5 minutes to shake off my excess fluid and make myself reasonable. Craig on the other hand looked fine, as usual.

Gordes is a picturesque hillside Provençal village and it is a magnet for the rich and famous. Film directors, artist and anyone who is anyone comes here. At the apex of the village a huge 12 century Chateau de Gordes, which still bears the bow and arrow scars from the Roman - Gallo times. All around the chateau scattered in tiny allies and under the stone arches were street vendors selling artisan products and local handicrafts. Crammed between the stalls and the perpendicular wall of the chateau are





Photos Clockwise:

- ❖ The market stalls surround the chateau.
- ❖ Chateau from the jardin.
- ❖ Little church in the centre of the village
- ❖ The towns tourist office.
- ❖ A dog in a rucksack admiring the food stalls.



cafes and bistros offering delightful French cuisine. The whole village was buzzing and it was just the most joyous of places. We wandered in and out and up and down looking at all the stalls. I managed to purchase a crispy almond twist and consume it like I'd not eaten in weeks. The chateau wasn't open or not that we could see, so we didn't get a chance to view the fine paintings of Pol Mara. Not that we know his stuff anyway but we could pretend. However, we did get chance to view inside the church where a pleasant lady welcomed Craig to the faith. Not sure that's the kinda welcome Craig likes but he grinned politely and she began her sermon. His face was a picture, he didn't know what to do or say and the lady went on and on. I found myself holding my breath and biting my finger in an attempt to not burst in to laughter. By the time the lady finished her religious blessing, Craig looked rather lost for words.

The gentle trot down the road to Vin was much easier than the trudge up. About half way down we stopped to take a peak back at the village. It dawned on us, it's a bloody big rock not a hill. From here you could see the wonder of Gordes and the magical attraction. The myriad of medieval lanes lined with elegant posh pads and paddling pools.

Glad to say the fine French air and sunshine dried the clothes, bedding and towels, so all we needed to do now is fold them neat and put them away. Then we got down to some serious business...bed making and cleaning, bring it on..duster!

Just around the corner from where we are parked is the village of Bories. There isn't much there but it is a weird little place covered in

beehive shaped huts made of overlapping stone. Nothing to rave about really but their primitive look is rather intriguing.

The rest of the evening we spent looking at the sky and watching the wonderful meteor shower. It was pretty spectacular and something not to forget. I bet we saw around 50 or so meteors and you could even see the red glow as it hit the earth's atmosphere. The best bit was when we went to bed, we could still see the meteor show through our sky light. Nite nite folks.

**Our bumble verdict - go on market day, it's brilliant.**



Street vendor selling garlic.





## MARKET DAY IN GORDES

Photos Clockwise:

- ❖ Coloured baskets for sales.
- ❖ Joanne buying an almond twist.
- ❖ Iron bike full of fruit.
- ❖ Aromatic herb stall.
- ❖ Shiny bowl of local olives.





## GORDES TO AIX PROVENCE

**Above: Lourmarin Chateau,**  
The town is full of Arty Farty  
Artisan shops full of English  
tourists.

**Below: The towns water  
fountain. Notice the limescale  
build up from the mouths.**



### WEDNESDAY 12 AUGUST

The drive to Aix Provence can be summed up in one word 'stunning'. We've never been to this part of France before but it is just like we imagined. We bumbled through a landscape of steep hills covered in fragrant pine trees and lavender bushes all complemented by a beautiful blue sky. Tiny hamlets and small farms offering a glimpse of idyllic life in the countryside.

We pulled over for some lunch at the pretty village of Lourmarin. At the entrance to the village the elegant and dominant Lourmarin Chateau, surrounded by the lush green land of Provençal. The village was exceptionally pretty with narrow back streets, cosy cafes and frighteningly expensive art galleries. We heard a lot of plums and sliver spoons and bumped in to the odd Giles. With one too many Wooster's we trundled off to our next stop.

**Our bumble verdict: Lovely village but very expensive.**





Above left: The chateau water gardens.

Above right: Joanne on the Brompton in AIX.

Below: AIX water fountain.



As we arrived at our parking spot in Aix Provençal I had a very strange experience. Now don't worry, I am not going to give you all the gory detail but I got real bad stomach ache, you know the kind that makes you go ouch. Fortunately, I didn't have far to run. After about 5 minutes, Craig shouted "stay where you are chuck, I am just moving the van to a better spot". Well I never. I was already clinging on for dear life and now I had to brace myself. Holding on to the sink with both hands, I had a moving experience in more ways than one!

Our parking spot tonight is definitely shabby without the chic. Right next to a sports centre with a skate boarding rink and opposite a cemetery. But when in a city it's more about the safety factor than the view and here it feels safe. On top of that we have fresh water and toilet facilities courtesy of the a little football club.

After a quick cycle to vent off some energy we retired to our little abode next to the zombie park.





## AIX PROVENCE TO MARSEILLE

Above: Little angels guarding a family grave in St. Rafael cemetery.

Following page clockwise:

- ❖ A sheepish restaurant in town.
- ❖ The restored bells of the church.
- ❖ One of the many art galleries in Aix.

### THURSDAY 13 AUGUST

Yesterday, we only skirted around Aix Provençal, so today we explored a little further. We are parked only 1km away from the city, so it's only minutes to reach.

Our first stop, a little church just off one of the main streets. We were on the bikes, so we took it in turns to go inside and admire the architecture. Inside only a handful of people and it was quite plain but none the less, pleasant. Whilst I was inside Craig took a battering from a local beggars child. The little imp found it highly amusing to lob stones at him and hear him say ouch in an English accent. I arrived just in time to save the child from being impaled on the church railings. Craig took shelter in the church and I sat and watched the world go by. I was just thinking, I can't make my mind up about the French. They are either completely and utterly friendly or completely and utterly rude. My opinion changes daily.. then...I was stood at the side of the church with both Brompton's on their stand. Out the way of the entrance and doing no harm to anyone when this old French lady walked around the back of me and deliberately pushed one of the bikes over. She muttered something in French as she carried on





walking towards the church and up the church steps to the entrance. Never looking back once. I was utter flabbergasted and stood gob smacked. I wanted to shout something but no point, I didn't know the right French words, damn. Instead I looked up and said "you make some weird folk, God".

The city of Aix doesn't feel like a city at all. It's more like a group of small villages linked together by tiny alleyways. Each one offering something slightly different. We spotted the odd high street store like Rolex but in the main, the shops were small independent stores or local artisan stalls. At the end of every alley, a village square with some obelisk or water fountain in centre. Surrounded by chic cafes offering delightful dishes like mussels 'n' frites. Market stalls offering beautifully presented flowers, sachets of lavender, handmade soap and plenty

more. Aix once the capital of Provence until the revolution has an air of snobbery. Other than the museums, the city doesn't have many attractions but with such a great atmosphere who needs them. Having said that, we were on our way home when we spotted a cathedral. Inside, a typical French church adorned with glorious paintings and stained glass but then to the right side another section. This section was something very different, it was outstanding. Marble pillars, sculpted images and detailed alters. If you are ever in Aix we truly recommend you visit the cathedral and the cemetery.

On the way back to Vin the weather turned and rain drops started falling. In England, we'd run for cover but here the rain provided a welcome break from the sticky heat.

**Our bumble verdict - pleasant up market city without any drama.**



Photos all from St. Rafael cemetery showing strange graves and fallen heroes.



À LA MÉMOIRE DES AIXOIS MORTS POUR LA PATRIE				
1919	1918		1915	1914
CIALIERO JEAN AN MOUGINS ROGER CHRISTOL OCTAVE AUTRAN JEAN BAPTISTE ROUVIER MAURICE MARIAUD MARIUS BEINET JULES MANENT CHARLES BOSSY FERNAND BOURGUE GEORGES LAURENT CLAIR BREMONT ANTOINE FEDY CASIMIR MARTIN RAOU GIBERT EUGENE	BRULAT HENRI TOURNEL GASTON GILLY JULES BERGANDI BAPTISTE SOULAS JOSEPH BLANC AUGUSTE DUPOUX LEON LIEUTIER MAXIME GRANET JEAN LAVISON MARCEL HELENROTH PAUL DELICNE JULES OLLIER HENRI CIAMPOLI PAUL RICHARD DESIRE AYRES LUDOVIC COVA GEORGES BLANC MARCEAU PARENT MARCEL GREGOIRE JOSEPH PEATEL MAURICE	 GAS ROUDET NEDY SUFFREN RAOU BARRET MARTIAL GROLIER MARCELLIN BARTHALAY ALBERT FABRE MARIUS DAUSSAN MARCEL GUILLLOT FERNAND PAOLASSO PIERRE MONTVALON ROB VERRIER MAURICE LARGER ALBERT MASSE MARCEL SALAKINI RAOU BARRET MARTIAL BONIN CASTELLANE	GIRAUD MARIUS GARNERO MICHEL FABRE AUGUSTIN DELATTRE EUGENE LAMPD CHARLES VERT EUGENE FENY JULIEN PARDIGON J BAPTISTE POMMIER ALPHONSE ROUX LEOPOLD GUIGOU ABERT JEAN AMEDEE MOUTTET ROGER VICARI PAUL VICARI J LEON <b>1916</b> FARRAL ALPHONSE TOURNON LOUIS LYBO MARCEL SEILLERD PAUL HERMELIN LOUIS	TRAVERSE GABRIEL SUFFREN LOUIS GUELFI DOMINIQUE LEZAUD SIMON ROURE EMILE FABENC PIERRE RIC BOISGELIN GUYOT MONVAL ROCHE ANDRE AL MOUGINS ROGER SYLVESTRE MARCEAU NATIER DE SABOULIN VALENTIN SIMON AMPHOUX GABRIEL GLEYRAD JUSTIN BIRTHELEMI FERD SUFFREN ABRIEN FACELLAR JEAN RENUCCI ANTOINE RICHOND JOSEPH SUFFRE LEON







The Arch de Triumph.



The journey to Marseille was dull as dishwater but travelling at 85km an hour on a motorway is never thrilling. But a fast journey every so often is good for clearing any coke build up, so Vin was well pleased with our choice in roads.

We pulled off the motorway and came to a grinding halt, we'd hit the pre sunset traffic jam. Within a few minutes we found ourselves in the sort of neighbourhood where swarthy men in white vests lean against lamppost cleaning their teeth with sharp objects. A quick glance around Vin to make sure all the doors and windows were locked. Yip we're safe and sound. For a mile or so we crawled along kebab alley watching the huge skewered meat that resembles an elephant leg, turn on the spit.

Craig parks up for the night.....



.... and checks his viewpoint from the cab.





Then came the crowds of of people, pushing carts, carrying sacks, swigging tea and looking at us like we were a something from out of space. We'd arrived at the colourful and chaotic Arab street market where traders lay out their goods on flatten cardboard boxes. Selling everything from spices to scrap metal, a real bazaar that we were quite happy to admire at from the safety of Vin.

Vin did a slow car conga all the way through the.city. It took us over an hour to get from the south to the north side but the hive of city life meant we had plenty to watch. No matter where we looked, it looked interesting and characterful and nothing like we'd imagined.

Eventually, we found a brilliant parking spot right on the front about 2 kilometres out of the centre. Located on Cornice President JFK with splendid views out to the ocean. After several weeks inland it felt good to be back on the coast, listening to the waves lap crash on to the rocks and the cool sea spray on your face.

To end the night an electric storm and what a show. It was like a firework display with colourful clouds and bolts of lightening. The storm carried on until the early hours providing us with an eventful evening.

*It was one hell of a lighting storm, it lasted most of the night.*





# MARSEILLE

## FRIDAY 14 AUGUST

Breakfast overlooking Chateau d'If and the ever so pretty coastline of Marseille. It's here where they filmed the Count of Monte Cristo and the great escape of the hero, Edmond Dantés. With bellies full, it was time to explore. Oh I nearly forgot, most of the travel guides don't give Marseille a good write up, so we'd planned on giving it a miss. So glad we didn't.

Marseille was originally founded as a port by the Romans in 6th century AD. Over the years it's certainly had its fair share of events and reading between the lines its took a fair battering. Plague, poverty, war and terror to name but a few. In recent years the government have invested in the area, giving it a make over as well as address some of the crime. Marseille has a very down to earth and cosmopolitan feel about it but like all cities the outskirts have some unsavoury characters.

We cycled in to the city, hugging the coastal path all the way to the centre passing the wonderfully arched Monument aux Morts des Orientés. Up in to the gardens and round the

Palace du Pharo, which offered splendid views over Vieux Port, the hub of the city. The palace is right at the end of the port and a little far for day trippers to walk, so no crowds just the odd mother and child playing on the well kept lawns.

Then round the port and harbour with 1000's of boats in dock. Some big and some not so big. We gazed up La Canebière one of the main street in Marseille, which stretches for over a kilometre, providing a wonderful sweeping view of the Marseilles grandest boulevard. I took a quick snap and as I lowered my camera I came nose to nose with the French Foreign Legion. "Let me see your camera". I froze, for a second I thought I was looking at Dolph Lundgren and his mates in the film Universal Soldier. I nearly wet myself. "Photo, delete, photo! It is not permitted". Three soldiers built like brick shit houses and dressed in full uniform with guns the size of rocket launchers stood telling me to delete photo. I couldn't even find the on button never mind the delete. Craig came to my rescue and helped delete a photo of La Canebière with 3 tiny Universal Soldiers in the corner. That will teach me to take a picture of a street!







Photos Clockwise:

- ❖ Monument aux Morts des Orient.
- ❖ Marseille coastline
- ❖ View from the harbour toward the cathedral.
- ❖ Statue behind Palace du Pharo look out to port.
- ❖ Modern art in front of the Palace du Pharo.





# CATHEDRAL LE MAJOR'S DOMES

Photos Clockwise:

- ❖ Cathedral domes.
- ❖ Cathedral under restoration.
- ❖ Interior Statue and mosaic floors.
- ❖ Entrance archways ceiling.



Once my heart returned to a normal rhythm we set off towards the fort. Down towards the waters edge, so we could see the fortresses as we looked back towards the city. Marseille is blessed with two forts to guard the harbour, St Jean to the north and to the south St Nicholas. The latter, a present from Louis XIV built to keep an eye on the city and ensure the people of the city did as they were told. From here the views across the city are wonderful.

Then a cycle round to the chocolate and vanilla stone building that really caught our eye as entered the city last night. The roof line of domes and towers providing a captivating site for anyone entering Marseille by ship. It took us a while to work out what the building actually was due to all the external renovations masking the signs. It was in fact the cathedral. I went inside first whilst Craig stopped outside with the bikes. It is very grand and Gothic outside, but inside I found it oddly lifeless. The sort of place that gives you a cold shiver especially when the eyes on the statue seem follow you around the place. Whilst the inside restoration had taken place, it still felt rather neglected and unloved. The brass was dull and unpolished, the pews were worn and the naves almost bare. It had been drained and void of its soul.

From here we wandered in and out of the city. Up to Arch de Triumph and around the Belsunce Quarter. Quick toot in a few museums and buildings of interest before going back towards the harbour, In the middle of the city right at the front of the harbour Basilique St Victor, the city's oldest church, which attracted a group of loitering gypsies. Unfortunately they distracted our attention from the church, some begging and some aimlessly wandering

around, all in all making us feel a little uneasy. Where the bloody hell are the Universal Soldiers when you need them! Then just around the corner we hit the gritty city area with handful of drunks and vagabonds all exchanging swigs of alcohol for drags of fags.

Finally the old town, Le Panier. We continued to cycle around tiny streets, jolt up back street steps and bobble over cobbled lanes. In 1943, Marseille was under German occupation and this area became the ghetto. The Nazis gave the 20,000 occupants just 1 days notice before they planted dynamite around the city and blew it to bits. So not much left of the old town in terms of historic buildings but still an interesting



Corner hotel at the harbour area.





# NOTRE DAME DE LA GARDE

Photos Clockwise.

- ❖ Exterior view.
- ❖ View over Marseille.
- ❖ Entrance to the Basilique.
- ❖ Interior dome detailing.
- ❖ The crypt
- ❖ Interior view of the Basilique





Marseilles seedier side is mixed in with the posh side. Prostitutes rub shoulder with the rich and famous.



place to wander around! Out of the corner of our eye we spotted Notre Dame, so we started the epic journey of climbing all the way to the top of the hill. It was a horrid half an hour of huffing, puffing and panting. By the time we reached the top we were knackered. We took a pew and caught our breath as we admired the truly wonderful views over the city. The Notre Dame de La Garde dominates the city and you

can see the grand church and its large gold virgin from virtually anywhere in the city. Outside not as grand as the cathedral but inside complete opposite. Only small but beautiful decorated in gold and vivid Mediterranean colours. The walls and ceiling covered in tiny mosaic tiles that were so tiny you couldn't tell they were tiles.



A cool mirrored ceiling at the harbour area. No one else seemed to notice.

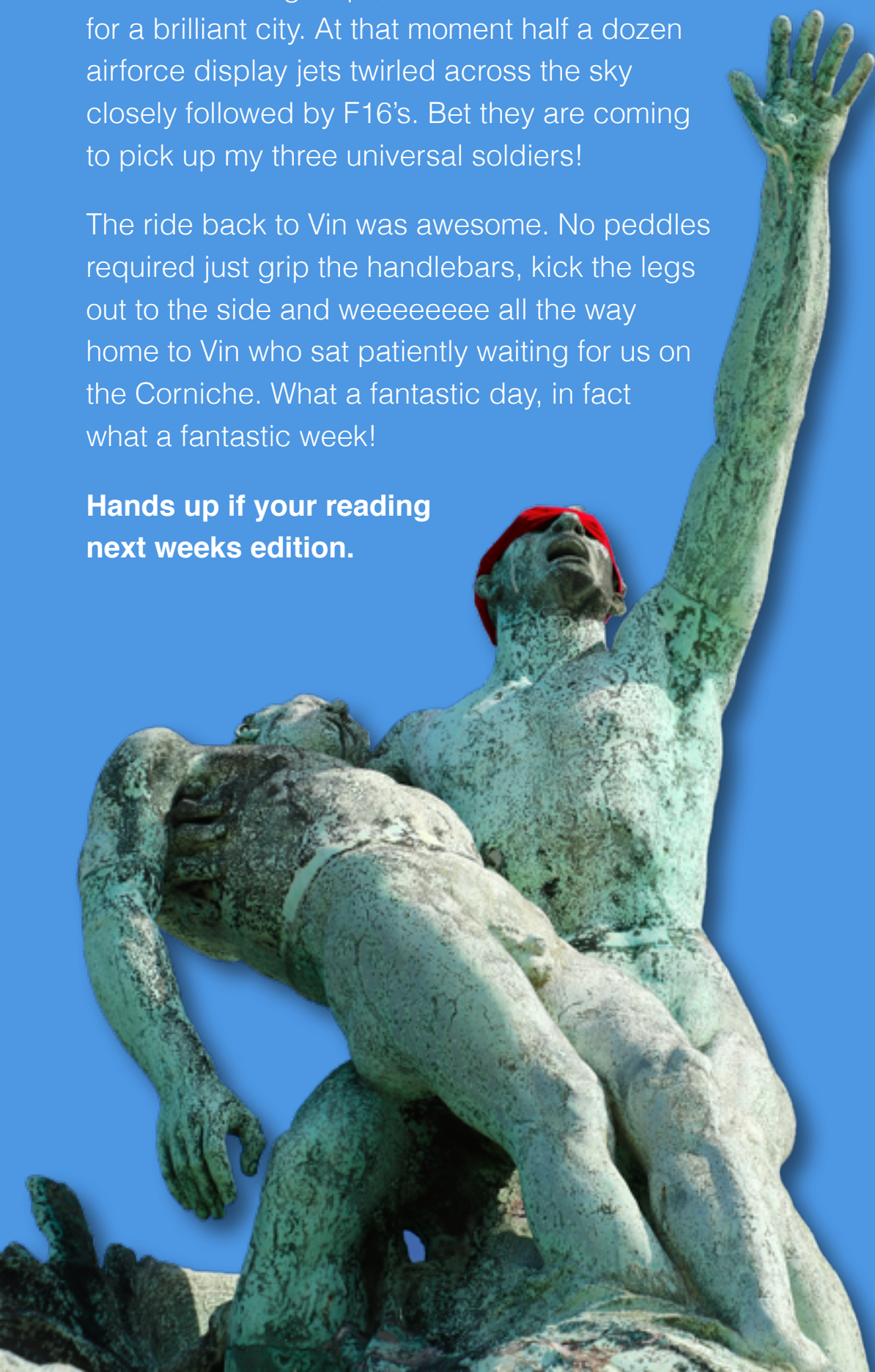


With hundreds of people clambering over the pews and the aisles it was hard to appreciate its true beauty. Underneath the main church a small chapel for people wishing to pray and a small area for people to light candles in remembrance of a loved one.

With all the people, I was glad to get outside. For a bit of fresh air. We sat on the bench looking out across Marseille and then looking back at the church. The main dome crowned by a large gold virgin that gleams out to the sailing ships, what a beautiful monument for a brilliant city. At that moment half a dozen airforce display jets twirled across the sky closely followed by F16's. Bet they are coming to pick up my three universal soldiers!

The ride back to Vin was awesome. No peddles required just grip the handlebars, kick the legs out to the side and weeeeeeeee all the way home to Vin who sat patiently waiting for us on the Corniche. What a fantastic day, in fact what a fantastic week!

**Hands up if your reading next weeks edition.**







Valeriy, our Russian friend we met in Spain sent us this pic of him sailing in Russia with his son Vadim on what looks like a homemade half boat, half submarine. Great job Valeriy, say hello to the family for us shipmate.

## STAINS, PIZZA AND TV.

### Bonjour!

Not much this week and no photos to save space except the one above. You've seen enough already. I did have a couple of thoughts to share though.

A quick update first though. I managed to get the tyre pump working again, It was just a bad connection on the cig lighter end. Dam it's fast, Joannes bike has a slow puncture (I'll fix it soonish) and it went from flat to 100psi in about 4 seconds. I also attempted to make a new spring

for the habitation door that's bust, I nicked the spring inside one of the pushbike tyre pumps, reshaped it to match the broken door one but sadly the tension is a little too weak so the bungie fix went back into place for now.

So then, when we were in Andorra we pulled up at the road side one day, I had a walk around but upon returning to the van i noticed some orange runs down the front bumper. I attempted to wash them of with soapy water but it had no intension of coming off. Rather cheesed off it was left like that for a few days, The bumper & other plastics are white plastic (probably GRP) and not painted so decided to try a little bleach, I applied some



with a cloth and the marks immediately improved, I then washed it with soap and did it again the following day. Now the marks have completely gone, so I tried it on the plastic lock surround on the outside toilet cassette access as it had started to yellow with the prolonged exposure to sunlight. It too immediately came up like new. So if you have any stains on plastics try a little El Cheapo thin bleach first before the expensive chemicals, it may work for you too.

On the topic of washing the van, what about tar marks on the bodywork & wheels? Use expensive cleaning products, no thanks, just try wiping it with a little petrol, they come straight off and it doesn't damage the paintwork. Tar is a petroleum based product so petrol works a treat.

Everyone likes pizza, i usually make them from scratch including the dough, but every so often I cannot be bothered so an El Cheapo from Lidl does fine. The problem is though that the ovens in campers & caravan are a bit crap and don't heat evenly like a fan oven at home. This makes the pizza's end up like burnt biscuits before they done. The answer is too use a frying pan and grill instead of the oven for pizzas. Place the pizza in a dry frying pan and stick it under the grill until the topping is just cooked. Now transfer the pan to the hob and it cooks the bottom perfectly within a couple of mins and give it good flavour too. I even do this with fresh pizza and it also cooks quicker so saves a little gas.

Now the grill reminds me of a rattle or squeak, When driving along the grill mesh bit will always rattle in the tray so use a silicone mat to stop it, The thin baking sheet type are ideal and are also heat proof so are safer than stuffing the grill with

something potentially flammable in case you forget to take it out when you light the dam thing.

The thick type used as heat plates for pans are also idea on the work surface to stop damage and also take up little space and don't rattle. They great at protecting the table too from hot serving dishes etc. I got some from the Pound shop so they aren't expensive things.

TV's.... The TV we have is a Avtex model, It plays movies, it can record what you watch, plays music, pictures etc. It has a DVD and connects straight to the satellite dish with no decoder as it's built in, it even is 3D capable and full HD. We use none of these feature except one, The ability to watch films and movies stored on a hard drive attached via a USB socket. The problem is the Avtex TV's only play MP4 files and nothing else, final, thats you lot, nothing more. However if you press the Source button and then type in 0852 on the remote it allows you to change some settings in a hidden menu, select USB at the bottom of the list and change it to on, The TV now plays AVI and DIVX files too, the type that are scattered all over the internet and are freely available to download from certain internet sites. Not that we should download a ton of stuff before leaving the UK, but now the TV is able to play them if we had downloaded a ton of stuff before we left. You know what I mean. "Choice is always better than no choice."

Well that's it for now so tatty-bye till next time.



# LAST YEARS BUMBLE IN HOMER.



# THIS YEARS BUMBLE IN VIN.

