Monday, June 13

The Vantage Cruise Air Department issued our flight schedule. We arrived at Charles de Gaulle Airport (Air France 3653) however, follow-on flight tickets were confusing. Apparently our luggage was booked through to Lyon but through the French rail system. The ticket download from Air France (AF 7652) stated we would fly on an airbus and gave the flight number. However, the Interrupted Travel Voucher attached to the boarding pass lists that flight as (AF 7265), thus transposing the correct number.

In response to the confusion the AF Baggage Claim personnel at the airport were spectacular. A young woman walked us through some of the agencies, finally taking us to baggage claim. From there a man worked to recover the luggage as it wold not have been put on the airplane given the rail tagging. In the meantime he called to obtain permission from a supervisor to find us a flight at 16:10 (AF 7646) ... we
were in the last two seats in the last row of the aircraft.

This man then tried to call Vantage for us but two numbers did not work. We finally called through the US toll free telephone and then back to Vantage in Lyon to let them know we would arrive at 18:00. Then the gentleman walked us through the airport and the Air France ticketing agent to get new luggage tags and boarding passes. He stayed with us until everything was completely set up to his satisfaction. It was a very generous act to insure we would be safely on our way.

We boarded our aircraft and after an hour flying time we landed in Lyon. A driver holding a Vantage sign told us there was another couple who would join us for the ride to the ship. They would arrive from Amsterdam and a piece of their luggage was missing. Twenty minutes later we were met by Kyoto and Dominic Yang of Little Rock, Arkansas. Kyoto, a communications professional, is originally from Tokyo, Japan. Dominic is originally from Taipei, Taiwan. He is a Professor Emeritus of the Department of Chemistry at the University of Arkansas. His Ph.D. is in Organic Chemistry and I told him of my older brother Jim having his Ph.D., in the same field, from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Jim headed up a research department for Monsanto Chemical Company in St Louis for many years.

We were able to chat with Kyoko and Dominic for more than two and a half hours before we reached the ship. I had no idea that the ms River Discovery II would be docked that far away from the airport but had we arrived on time as scheduled, we would have met Captain Bernard (Popi) and Hotel Manager Jozef for the welcome cocktail and then met some of our fellow passengers.

However, we arrived at 8:30 pm. The dinning room was closing down and we were directed to seat ourselves. Our first introduction to the staff was a surly waiter who wondered why we were coming so late for dinner. We asked to see a menu and were informed the pork steaks were spectacular. An offered menu was never produced and dinner plates were set in front of us with the suggested pork dinner.

The staff was concentrating on clearing the other tables and one of the patrons walked by and suggested the fish was quite good. It was never offered and we asked if salad was available. Overall the service was poor and the attitude was unfriendly. We could only hope this would improve but we told the dining room manager that we were unimpressed with our initial experience in the dinning room.

We then went to our room to unpack and set up our stateroom. The long flight, the missed connection in Paris, the long drive to the ship, and the unsatisfactory dinner seemed like a bad omen for this trip.

**Tuesday, June 14**

The ship was docked at Chalon-sur-Saône, 130 kilometers from the Lyon International Airport. That is why it took two hours to meet the ship last evening.

"Chalon-sur-Saône is a commune in the Saône-et-Loire department in the region of Bourgogne-Franche-Comté in eastern France. It is a sub-prefecture of the department. It is the largest city in the department; however, the department capital is the smaller city of Mâcon. Located on the Saône river, it was once a busy port, acting as a distribution point for local wines which were sent up and down the Saône river and the Canal du Centre, opened in 1792."
After breakfast we collected our bus passes for one of the four buses which would move us about each day. Gheorghe Bihoi, our Cruise Director, would brief us each day concerning the next day's excursions but as we had missed this information last evening we were briefed at the front desk and advised to secure the vox systems from our stateroom as they would be instrumental to each day's tour. Today we would see Burgundy, one of France’s most renowned wine regions. Specifically, we would view the vineyards surrounding Beaune. This city earned UNESCO World Heritage status in 2015.

Annabelle, our local, formally trained tour guide, introduced herself as we began our 35 kilometer route north through sculptured vineyards of Burgundy. The layout of the vines here is as unique and different from each of those we saw in Germany, Italy, or Portugal. They are pruned much closer to the shale filled soil to take full advantage of the sun's stored heat each evening. Just observing the fields and speculating on the impact on the differences and how each method evolved to produce their vintage made for a lovely drive through the countryside.

"Beaune is the wine capital of Burgundy in the Côte d’Or department in eastern France. It is located between Paris and Geneva.

Beaune is one of the key wine centres in France and the annual wine auction of the Hospices de Beaune is the primary wine auction in France. The town is surrounded by some of the world’s most famous wine villages, while the facilities and cellars of many producers, large and small, are situated in Beaune itself. With a rich historical and architectural heritage, Beaune is considered the "Capital of Burgundy wines".

It is an ancient and historic town on a plain by the hills of the Côte d'Or, with features remaining from the pre-Roman and Roman eras, through the medieval and renaissance periods and up to recent history and modern times.

Beaune is a walled city, with about half of the battlements, ramparts, and the moat, having survived and in good condition, and the central "old town" is extensive. Historically Beaune is intimately connected with the Dukes of Burgundy."

Since there would be four busloads of our shipmates descending on a venue at any one time, events were staggered when possible. Our group proceeded to Cellier de la Cabiote, an XVIII century cellar. Here we received a briefing concerning the Burgundy wine region and then tasted several wines while listening to descriptions of the varietals and how each produced the specific vintage we were sampling. We were then given the opportunity to purchase mustard, black current syrup and Burgundy red wine. We chose to bring a bottle of one of the sample wines back to the ship for the afternoon cocktail hour.
Re-boarding the bus, we set out for the 15th-century Hôtel-Dieu, a former charity hospital famed for its perfectly preserved poly-chromatic roofs.

"The Hôtel-Dieu de Beaune is a former charitable almshouse, founded on 4 August 1443, when Burgundy was ruled by Duke Philip the Good. The Hundred Years' War had recently been brought to a close by the signing of the Treaty of Arras in 1435. Massacres, however, continued with marauding bands (écorcheurs) still roaming the countryside, pillaging and destroying, provoking misery and famine. The majority of the people of Beaune were declared destitute. Nicolas Rolin, the Duke's Chancellor, and his wife Guigone de Salins, responded by building a hospital and refuge for the poor. The majority of the population of Beaune were destitute, and the area had recently suffered an outbreak of plague. Having gained permission from Pope Eugene IV in 1441, the hospice was built and consecrated on 31 December 1452. In conjunction, Rolin established the "Les sœurs hospitalières de Beaune" religious order.

The building's design was probably overseen by the Flemish architect Jacques Wiscrère and remained as a hospital until the late 1970s. There is a documentary record of a large range of Flemish and French masons, painters and glass cutters employed for its construction. The facade is today regarded as a superior example of Northern Renaissance civic architecture and a treasure trove of panel painting, given its numerous portraits of Rolin, his wife and members of his extended family."

I was fascinated by the layout of the buildings which allowed for sub-floor drainage to the nearby stream. The central layout of the wards, which allowed the nurses to circulate on the outside of the rows of beds and still curtain off each patient, seemed quite ahead of its time. Then too, the interior of the wards allowed for families to attend their loved one when possible.

We toured the chapel, the king's ward, which he never even visited (hospitals were often contagious I presume). The hospital kitchen was large as were the public rooms. And we observed the Louvre Museum restored Beaune Altarpiece "The Last Judgment" by Van der Weyden.
As forward thinking the hospital must have been, I also speculated that today's museum view of how the hospital operated and the realization of the state of normal hygiene at the time must have presented huge challenges to running such an hospice. The efforts of Duke Phillip the Good certainly earned him favorable placement in the history of France... and the achievements of mankind.

While touring on our own we found Le Café du Centre and enjoyed a pint of Belenium Ambree Numero 2 from the local microbrewery. Then we returned to the ship using a different route through the Burgundy wine region. This brought us back to the ship at 13:30 for lunch in the Compass Rose Restaurant.

Our afternoon excursion was a short drive to the Conservatoire Chalon-sur-Saône, an artistic educational institution approved and controlled by the State, represented by the regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs (DRAC). It offers three specialties, music, dance and drama. The conservatory accepts people from 5 years to no age limit, it is possible to come and take classes at the conservatory throughout the year, participate in weekly classes, master classes and improvisation workshops.

We took our seats in the auditorium and listened as the music director briefed us on the mission of the organization as our cruise director translated. Then we were entertained by a quartet of conservatory professors who played classical music for us in two twenty minute sessions.

Returning to the ship we watched as Captain Bernard took the ms River Discovery II into the main channel and we departed and sailed south on the Saône to Mâcon. As we sailed we retired to the
Peppermint Lounge for the cocktail hour. We met with Kyoko and Dominic Yang and then were joined by Sue and Al Olsen.

The Olsens are from New Jersey and we spoke of our being stationed at Fort Monmouth in 1969. Sue taught pre-school education and family development. Al is an engineer. The six of us enjoyed each others company and we would usually find a table for six for the cocktail hour and dinner each day.

That was true for this day as well however Liz and I did not last to see the evening entertainment, La Strada, in the Peppermint Lounge at nine o'clock. The ship was scheduled to arrive in Mâcon at 22:00 and I presume we did, but it wasn't until the next morning that I noticed were were berthed next to ms Scenic Emerald. We would be collocated with this ship several times on this cruise.

**Wednesday, June 15**

Today we have the opportunity “offering a glimpse into Burgundy's grand past”, said Sylvie, today's local guide. We will board buses for a 30 kilometer drive through rolling landscapes and small villages. The major stop will allow us to visit Cluny Abbey, a Benedictine monastery founded in 910 that once housed Europe's most treasured library.

"Cluny Abbey, dedicated to St Peter, is a former Benedictine monastery in Cluny, Saône-et-Loire, France. It was built in the Romanesque style, with three churches built in succession from the 4th to the early 12th centuries. The earliest basilica was the world's largest church until the St. Peter's Basilica construction began in Rome.

Cluny was founded by William I, Duke of Aquitaine in 910. He nominated Berno as the first Abbot of Cluny, subject only to Pope Sergius III. The abbey was notable for its stricter adherence to the Rule of St. Benedict, whereby Cluny became acknowledged as the leader of western monasticism. The establishment of the Benedictine Order was a keystone to the stability of European society that was achieved in the 11th century. In 1790 during the French Revolution, the abbey was sacked and mostly destroyed, with only a small part of the Abbey surviving.

The Cluny library was one of the richest and most important in France and Europe. It was a storehouse of numerous very valuable manuscripts. During the religious conflicts of 1562, the Huguenots sacked the abbey, destroying or dispersing many of the manuscripts. Of those that were left, some were burned in 1790 by a rioting mob during the French Revolution. Others still...
The French Government worked to relocate such treasures, including those that ended up in private hands. They are now held by the Bibliothèque nationale de France at Paris. The British Museum holds some sixty or so charters originating from Cluny."

The Cluny Abbey was only a few meters short of the current length of St. Peter's in Rome. Our first stop took us to a model of the abbey within the several walls built to protect the monastery and the supporting city. Here we were briefed on the influence of the abbey in the catholic church and in France.

Our guide then invited us to the Porte d'Honneur, the entrance to the abbey from the village. Its classical architecture is reflected in the pilasters and Corinthian columns of the majestic Clocher de l'Eau-Bénite (Holy Water Belfry), which crowns the only remaining part of the abbey church, the south transept.

Between the two is the reconstructed monumental staircase, which led to the entrance of the abbey church, and the excavated column bases of the vast narthex. The entire nave is gone.

On one side of the transept is a national horse-breeding center founded in 1806 by Napoléon and constructed with materials from the destroyed abbey.

The other side is an elegant pavilion built as monastic cloisters in the 18th century. The gardens there once contained an ancient lime tree (destroyed by a 1982 storm) named after Abélard, the controversial French philosopher who sheltered at the abbey in 1142. I was appreciative of the reference as I had read of the controversial love story of Peter Abelard and Héloïse d'Argenteuil fifty years ago.

Off to the right is the 13th-century Gothic building that served as a wine cellar on the bottom level and a flour store (or granary) on the upper level. The flour store has a beautiful oak-and-chestnut timber roof (c.1275) and now functions as a small museum, displaying models of the abbey, various artifacts, and a collection of exquisite capitals from the vanished choir.

There are eight Romanesque capitals in all, each 80 cm high and displayed on an original column from the choir. The themes are generally refined and symbolic, as befits such a sophisticated abbey: the seasons, personified tones of plainsong, the palaestra (exercise ground), four winds, four rivers of paradise, trees of paradise, and the theological virtues. Also shown are Adam and Eve, the sacrifice of Isaac, and some mythological animals.
The Musée Ochier, in the abbatial palace, contains masterpieces of Romanesque sculptures. Remains of both the abbey and the village constructed around it are conserved here, as well as part of the Bibliothèque des Moines (Monks' Library).

As we followed our guide we could easily picture in our mind's eye the various transepts and buildings which would have obstructed our way through the grounds were they still present in their original form. That only enhanced our wonder at the immensity of this ancient community.

On our way back to the ship we again used a different route to go to a local cheese farm (Chèvrerie La Truffière). The owner and his partner raise 150 goats and these were located in the barn for our visit however the owner, Sylvain Chopin, informed us they were anxious to be let out into the field and "knew" that would take place after our group left. "Our goats are mainly of Alpine race, however there is still the presence of some Saanens. The Alpine race was mandatory to enter the AOC Macon."

M Chopin briefed us on the operation of his farm and answered questions about how long before a goat would be able to go into production; how much milk each could produce; and why the seven male goats were kept in a separate field until September. “We don't put them with the females until September and then they are put to 'work'.”

After the briefing we entered the shop to taste four of his cheeses. We also tasted a white wine which we enjoyed. We purchased one bottle to take back with us for our cocktail hour.

After our lunch on the ship we had leisure time for the afternoon. We were able to cross over the top deck of the ms Scenic Emerald to the shore. The road alongside of the berth was under construction so we then walked to a crossroad and further to the pedestrian zone of Mâcon.

Mâcon is the prefecture of the department of Saône-et-Loire in Burgundy. Mâcon is home to over 35,000 residents, who are referred to in French as Mâconnais.

On 21 October 1790, the matriarch of a prominent local family gave birth to a son who remains highly visible in his hometown, the Romantic poet and historian Alphonse de Lamartine.

Alphonse Marie Louis de Prat de Lamartine, chevalier de Pratz was a French writer, poet and politician who was instrumental in the foundation of the Second Republic and the continuation of the Tricolore as the flag of France.
As you enter the pedestrian zone you pass by a prominent building with a mural depicting their favorite son. Then after entering the shopping center we walked to the Maison de Bois, a wooden house built between 1490 and 1510. It is “the oldest house in Mâcon, and certainly the most famous. Its facade, entirely built in wood, is decorated with a multitude of saucy statuettes. These are characters with grimacing men and monkey’s masks, some standing, some sitting, winged, naked or dressed but sometimes only with a scarf or a bonnet. Some of their stretched arms alternatively hold the head or the tail of a fantasy or real animal.”

We walked through the area with the intent of locating a cafe for coffee and pastry and selected La Maison de Bois Restaurant and sat down. Unfortunately the waiter informed us that the pastry chef had not come in this day so we moved on. There were a lot of people walking through the district who seemed to be window shopping as we were. We continued on through the pedestrian area and then walked one block east to the road along the river.

In the distance we could observe the Pont Saint-Laurent. Even before Mâcon existed, the Saône could be crossed via a ford. The Roman legions built a wooden bridge during the Gaul conquest, and it was only in the 11th century that a stone bridge was constructed; it only consisted of six arches and was fortified as early as 1223. The Saint-Laurent Bridge was among the few bridges of the region that were not destroyed during the Second World War. Since this time its appearance has not changed and it has twelve arches.

Walking back toward the ship, we stopped in at a small grocery store and picked up some French mustard and a local bottle of wine. Then we walked the two blocks back to the ship in time for the cocktail hour, followed by the briefing of the next day's schedule by Gheorghe, the Cruise Director. This daily briefing would be held fifteen minutes before the dinning room opened.
Thursday, June 16

This morning our plan was to explore Beaujolais, a scenic wine region known for its vibrant, fruity red wines. Our guide, Sophie, stated we would drive to Hameau Duboeuf, the 1st Theme Park of Viticulture and Wine. We would enter Le Hameau du Vin (The Hamlet of Wine), but the theme park also consists of Un Jardin en Beaujolais (A Garden in Beaujolais), and Le Centre de Vinification (The Winemaking Center).

“In continuing the family tradition, Georges and his wife Rolande are joined by their son Franck. In 1993, Georges opened the first park dedicated to vines and wines: Le Hameau du Vin. Today, the park is maintained by Franck's wife, Anne. She works every day to satisfy a clientele of families around their passion for the terroir. This unique theme park takes visitors through 2,000 years of vine cultivation history, with a collection of rare family objects and interactive activities.

Wine enthusiasts from all over Europe can also explore the Romanèche-Thorins train station, which saw a great deal of regional trade activity over the years. In good weather, a walk in the Garden of Beaujolais is a chance to discover a variety of aromas: from flowers to fruits and spices which make up the wines' rich flavors. Lastly is the vinification center, opened in 2003, reveals the secrets of winemaking and traditional winemaking techniques.”

Entering the museum we were able to view a fresco tracing the history of the transportation of wine from the trains back to Egyptian barges on the Nile. Then we entered several exhibits displaying initial and improved tools and equipment developed to improve wine making and combat insects and fungus which could destroy production over two centuries of viticulture.

My favorite was an massive 18th-century wine press crafted from hand-hewn timber. Weighing approximately 20 ton, the screw mechanism to close the press was also hand carved and the diameter of a telephone pole.

Entering a theater, featuring cinéma dynamique Ciné Up, one steps on a platform surrounded by handrails to view a film of Beaujolais from the air. This flight is punctuated by animated honey bees which race over the terrain and guide us through the beautiful countryside. As you “fly” over the terrain the platform tilts and turns to accentuate the feeling of flying over southern France. You even experience the mist as you travel over the rivers.
The tour concludes in a large sales room where you taste four of the wines and later may purchase wine related items or bottles from the winery. There are two automated musical instruments reminiscent of those found at The House On The Rock in Spring Green, Wisconsin. One presented an accordionist and a drummer. The other was a patriotic tableau which played the American National Anthem (or presumably German, Spanish, Italian, etc.) followed by La Marseillaise.

Leaving the museum, we returned to the ship by way of a different scenic drive. After lunch we set sail 50 kilometers south to Trévoux. In the afternoon the chef gave a demonstration of making Crème brûlée. There was no tasting after the demonstration nor did we ever have Crème brûlée served on any menu from Vantage. I think it was just a time killer as we sailed.

When we reached Trévoux we tried to berth next to a field where we watched several groups of Frenchmen playing Pétanque. This is a form of boules, where the goal is to toss or roll hollow steel balls as close as possible to a small wooden ball called a cochonnet (piglet) or jack, while standing inside a circle with both feet on the ground.

The water was high and apparently the ship could only tie up to two of the three pylons as one was submerged. The captain had to sail the ship further upstream. As we sailed the cruise director announced that at the evening entertainment they would watch the European Cup (England vs Wales).

**Friday, June 17**

“A rising tide lifts all boats!” Our ship was berthed next to the Scenic Emerald and as we went to the top deck of our ship and then on to the top deck of that ship we were greeted by crew members of both vessels to be mindful that one should be careful not to strike our head on the girders of the bridge. The water had risen to the point that our ship could not pass under the bridge.

We loaded the four buses in Trévoux and drove the 35 kilometer to Lyon. “The vibrant Rhône River port of Lyon is justifiably celebrated as the food capital of France as well as a UNESCO World Heritage City.”

About for kilometers north of Lyon on the banks of the Saône near the Pont de Collonges we came to the restaurant of Paul Bocuse. This family house has become a gathering place of gourmets from all over the world.

“Paul Bocuse is a French chef based in Lyon who is famous for the high quality of his restaurants and his innovative approaches to cuisine.

Bocuse's main restaurant is the luxury restaurant l'Auberge du Pont de Collonges, near Lyon, which has been serving a traditional menu for decades. It is one of a small number of restaurants in France to receive the coveted three-star rating by the Michelin Guide.

Bocuse is considered an ambassador of modern French Cuisine. He was honored in 1961 with the title Meilleur Ouvrier de France. (The National Society of the Best Workers of France)”

We then continued on to the center of the city to our first stop, the Halles de Lyon gourmet market.
Les Halles de Lyon Paul Bocuse, are 48 traders (oyster, cheese makers, bakers, pastry chefs, gardeners, butchers, but also butchers, fishmongers, caterers, restaurateurs and wine merchants) who defend the taste memory of our regions without hesitation to put to honor the finest products elsewhere, raising the senses and cultivate excellence. In each of them resonates the soul of Lyon, capital of gastronomy.

Our guide invited us to peruse the various stalls and the wares of the vendors of the market. Everything appeared to be hand culled and without blemish. Upon reflection, I would expect nothing less. I enjoyed seeing a few Frenchmen having a morning brioche with their Pastis (an anise-flavoured spirit and aperitif). We were not quite that adventurous but we did stop at a patisserie and bought a baguette and an almond pastry. We also stopped a few shops away and bought a bottle of Beaujolais to take back to the ship.

Our guide then took us through Vieux Lyon. During the middle ages and the renaissance, this was the heart of the city. Now, it is one of highlights of a visit to Lyon. The houses are painted in bright colors and are often hundreds of years old. The little streets are not only filled with history, but also with traditional restaurants and shops. She explained everything about the neighborhood and led us to some hidden ‘Traboules’, old passageways between houses.

“Traboules are narrow passageways through a courtyard that will take you from one main street to another. They were created at the height of the silk industry to get bales of silk from one place to another without exposing it too much to the rain.

There are 14 traboules in the Croix-Rousse area but not all of them are open to the public as they cross through what are now private courtyards. In fact in the 19th century the courtyards were mostly private too, but people didn’t worry about things like that then.
You will find six traboules open to the public, especially the one that leads to the Maison Brunet, which during the Revolt of the Canuts (silk workers) became their citadel. Built in 1825, it has 365 windows (for each day of the year), 52 apartments (for each week of the year) and seven stories (for the days of the week).”

We were surprised to see a display of live silk worms to remind us of how the silk industry was a major part of life in the city. I also enjoyed seeing the cobbled streets and its buildings dating from the 15th and 16th centuries.

We then were offered the opportunity to go back to the ship for lunch or take a later bus at 14:30. Kyoko, Dominic, Liz and I chose to have a local meal. We went to an interesting place for lunch, Les Pavés de Saint Jean. The restaurant was empty when we arrived and as we sat down four other tables joined us and a few minutes later the restaurant was full.

Liz and I shared Salade Lyonnaise (lardons, croûtons, oeuf poché, salade du jardin) (bacon, croutons, poached egg, garden salad) and Terrine de foie gras de canard faite maison, confiture d’oignon Beaujolaise, pain toasté (homemade duck foie gras terrine, Beaujolaise onion jam, toasted bread). Everything was delicious and we enjoyed the opportunity to savor the tradition of the typical Lyon restaurant (Bouchon Lyonnais).

When we did arrive back at the ship were were able to join the silk-painting demonstration aboard ship. It was already in progress but Liz missed very little.

Once we were all back on board the captain then set sail 50 kilometers back north to return to Mâcon. I am sure it was frustrating to Captain Bernard and crew but we could not clear the bridges and it would be prudent to return to our dock in that city. This would also put a strain on our cruise director as they would need to reprogram many of the planned excursions.

At the evening briefing Gheorghe Bihoi informed us that tomorrow everyone would tour the medieval village of Pérouges. This had been an optional excursion but as we were not docked in Lyon the cruise line decided to offer the tour to everyone and our charges for the excursion will be returned to us later.

**Saturday, June 18**

We would have a 100 kilometer drive through the countryside before we would reach the medieval
village of Pérouges. When we arrived Christian Soulliaert, our guide, led us first to the church where we were briefed on the history of the city.

"Pérouges is a medieval walled town, on a small hill overlooking the Ain River valley 30 kilometres north of Lyon in the Rhône Alps. It developed in the 14th-15th centuries based around the local wine and weaving industries.

The village now falls between its two medieval gates - the 'high gate' and the 'low gate'. It contains lots of interesting buildings, including a fortified church and the house of the Princes of Savoy with a recreation of a 13th century garden.

A tour of Perouges begins at the upper gate. This stone gateway is made of boulders and the wall is part of the church. The church is fortified as are many built at this time - the 15th century. The church was originally built before but during a siege of the village in 1468 the church was destroyed by the inhabitants of the village in order to repair and improve their ramparts. They managed to withstand the attack and one year later started rebuilding the church which was completed in 1479.

The main street of Perouges is the 'Rue des Rondes' and this runs in a circle around the center of the village. At one part there is a narrow strip, by the houses, which is higher than the rest and was reserved for the wealthy residents of the village. Below this is the lower part of the lane which would have been frequently covered in mud and rubbish and was for the poor people! The Rue des Rondes passes the 33 meter deep well and the Maison du Sergent de Justice with its round tower.

The Lower gate was largely destroyed by the 1468 siege and now bears a witty inscription telling how the Duchphiné scoundrels couldn't take the town but made off with the doors, hinges and locks - "let the devil take them"!

The Place du Tilleuls is the center of Pérouges, with its 200 year old tree of liberty planted soon after the French revolution. Around the square are some beautiful buildings, its a great place to sit and have a beer and watch the world go by. As well as the fabulous buildings look out for the sundial and also take a look in the Saint Georges church at the wooden Saint George on the altar."
Leaving the church we walked to the Place du Tilleuls where some of the group split off to go into the Ostellerie du View Pérougues, an inn which is in a restored group of 13th century timbered buildings. We were served the town’s famous dessert — galette pérougienne à la crème. These galettes are made from a brioche dough with yeast (and butter and sugar), that’s been completely flattened, baked in an extra hot oven and caramelized on top (with more butter and sugar). This comes from a century-old family recipe, and is accompanied by the local sparkling wine, Montagnieu.

Our half group decided to walk through the village and view an old wine press, craft shops, and other restaurants as we continued in a loop back to the town square. Then we also went to the Ostellerie du View Pérougues for our galette and sparkling wine sample.

Next Kyoko, Dominic, Liz and I walked back to the Auberge du Coq, which we had seen on our route back to the square. It was less crowded but equally inviting. We ordered small pottery pitchers of wine and relaxed for a half hour before meeting the rest of the group to re-board the buses and return to the ship.

At three o'clock our guide for the day, Christian Soulliaert, was called upon to give a lecture on France in the Peppermint Lounge. We enjoyed his tour in and particularly appreciated his dry sense of humor as he explained his culture and his appreciation of history as it affects French life today. Liz produced one of our Brown and Haley tip packets for him as we told him of our enjoyment at hearing him speak.

Pastry chef Teo was hosting tea time in the Peppermint Lounge. We found a table and joined Sue and Al Olsen and Kyoko and Dominic Yang. We were able to sample several pastries and one could join a line for ice cream if you wished. Tea time then blended into the cocktail hour.

**Sunday, June 19**

Today's excursion would take us 150 kilometers to Vienne. We bypasses the center of Lyon to continue to this Roman city on the Rhône River.

“Vienne is a commune in southeastern France, located 32 kilometres (20 mi) south of Lyon, on the river Rhône. It is only the fourth largest city in the Isère department, of which it is a subprefecture, but was a major center of the Roman empire.

Before the arrival of the Roman armies, Vienne was the capital city of the Allobroges, a Gallic people. Transformed into a Roman colony in 47 BCE under Julius Caesar, Vienne became a
Our first stop was at Gallo-Roman Museum of Saint-Romain-en-Gal. We were ushered into the theater where Gheorghe, the cruise director, translated a lecture concerning music and music instruments of Roman Gaul. Then we learned that the museum was built on a site planned for the construction of a school but diverted when Roman artifacts were discovered.

Before the arrival of the Roman armies, Vienne was the capital city of the Allobroges, a Gallic people. Transformed into a Roman colony in 47 BCE under Julius Caesar, Vienne became a major urban center, ideally located along the Rhône, then a major axis of communication. The town later became a Roman provincial capital. Numerous remains of Roman constructions are still visible in modern Vienne. The town was also an important early bishopric in Christian Gaul. Its most famous bishop was Avitus of Vienne. At the Council of Vienne, convened there in October 1311, Pope Clement V abolished the order of the Knights Templar. During the Middle Ages, Vienne was part of the kingdom of Provence, dependent on the Holy Roman Empire, while the opposite bank of the Rhône was French territory, thus making it a strategic position.

The archaeological site of Saint-Romain-en-Gal is one of the largest collections devoted to the Gallo-Roman civilization in France. The Museum is located in the heart of a cultural park of 7 hectares which revives the residential area of Vienna. It includes spas, shops, homes, shops updated since 1967. The museum is organized around four areas: the history of ancient Vienna, economy and crafts, mosaics and everyday life in the Roman house. The restoration workshop responsible for the conservation of mosaics is now recognized internationally for the quality of its work.

I found the layout of the model of ancient warehouses most fascinating. These gigantic warehouses stretched for at least 5 ha. They were made up of rows of large cells (32 m x 15 m), built on the banks of the Rhône. "For their size, they are among the largest in the Roman world. This would involve public buildings not intended for the city of Vienna, but the storage of goods for Rome, perhaps a
portion of the tax collected in kind by the administration in the provinces of Gaul conquered it suggesting very varied products: cereals, wine, metals, wood, skins...

The House of the Ocean Gods (3000 m² surface) has characteristics common to large urban dwellings of Gaul: besides its size (it fits into a long rectangle of 100 m), is first given to the part colonnades, these indoor gardens surrounded by colonnades: here they occupy more than 2/3 of the floor space. This "portion of nature" integrated in the domestic space is one of the most original features of architecture to be found all around the Mediterranean. Many ponds, fountains and water jets animate these gardens and even some parts covered. The size of the reception rooms (100 m²) attests to the wealth of the owner and his willingness to ostentation.”

Relocating to the center of the city, we joined a new guide, Jerome, who took us through the old city to view its treasures. He led us first to the largest church in the town, Saint-Maurice Cathedral, which was built in the 12th–15th century.

He told us “The Cathédrale Saint-Maurice de Vienne is a Roman Catholic cathedral, dedicated to Saint Maurice, and is a national monument of France. The Gothic church was built over a long period, between 1052 and 1533. It is a basilica, with three aisles, but no apse or transepts, 315 feet in length, 118 feet wide and 89 feet in height. The most striking portion is the west front, which rises majestically from a terrace overhanging the Rhône.”

Jerome pointed out a stained glass window and talked us through viewing the various components until we determined the subject was of the coronation of King Charles VII July 17, 1429, in the presence of Joan of Arc. Later “the sculptural decoration was badly damaged by the Protestants in 1562, during the French Wars of Religion. Sadly, modern pollution threatens the cathedral and efforts are underway to reverse the damage caused by acid rain and time."

We then walked to the Temple of Augustus and Livia Built around 20-10 BC, this temple dedicated to the worship of Rome and Augustus in the Gallo-Roman city, owes its survival to its church transformation since the end of antiquity late (fifth or sixth century).
“This temple in the Italic style, surrounded on three sides by columns, stood on a high podium. Two different styles are apparent in the Corinthian capitals, the modillons, and the cornice panels. These testify to two different construction periods. Stylistic criteria allow us to place the first period in the years 20 - 10 BC. From that time the temple was probably dedicated to the emperor. A few decades later, the facade and two thirds of the eastern side of the edifice were built or rather, rebuilt. The reasons remain a mystery today: perhaps the edifice was unfinished or had defects? At that time what is perhaps the original dedication was inscribed on the frieze: "ROMAE ET AUGUSTO - CAESARI DIVI F" ("to Rome and Caesar Augustus, son of the Deity", implying the son of the divine Julius Caesar). This is perhaps the original dedication. The dedication, ET DIVAE AUGUSTAE, was added to the architrave, no doubt on the heels of the first one. It refers to Livia, Augustus’ wife, who died in 29 AD and was deified at the beginning of Cladius’ reign. The big bronze letters that made up these dedications were torn off long ago. Nevertheless, thanks to the holes left where they were attached and the imprints which are legible under a low-angled light, they can be read fairly easily.

The Temple was turned into a church probably from the Vth Century, under the name of Sainte-Marie-la-Vieille or Notre-Dame-de-la-Vie. The existence if this church which became a parish church is confirmed by texts of the beginning of the XIth Century. The re-use of the building meant that the cella was destroyed and the archways walled up. Doors and windows were made in these walls in the course of the church’s history. At the time of the Revolution, the church was secularised and successively transformed into a Temple of Reason, a Commercial and Magistrates’ Court, then, from 1822, a Museum and Library.”

When we were on the road to Vienne the cruise director handed out 20€ to each person for our lunch. Now we had free time to take advantage of the offer. Kyoko, Dominic, Liz and I chose l'Octave Restaurant.

We were seated in the main dinning room and seemed to be ignored by any waitstaff so we signaled a waiter and learned they thought we were part of a larger group seated throughout the rest of the room and were waiting delivery of a pre-arranged menu.

Liz and I ordered Salade gourmande (gourmet salad) and Entrecôte grillée (Grilled rib steak). Kyoko and Dominic ordered a seafood platter with mussels, oysters, and shrimp. Delicious bread and wine was served immediately and a few minutes our order was delivered, even before the platters of chicken were sent out to the larger tour group in the room.

We assembled in the parking lot next to the tourist office and then boarded our buses for the ride back to the ship. We changed for the Captain’s Reception, followed by the daily briefing. Then we were
The evening entertainment was Live Music with Geraldine in the Peppermint Lounge. Kyoko and Dominic led the others on the dance floor. Once everyone else had a couple cocktails and were no longer intimidated by their performance, we all joined them. I enjoyed dancing with my lady, I don't do that often enough. It was great fun.

**Monday, June 20**

Unable to sail to Viviers as planned, the cruise director coordinated an excursion to Louhan. Located sixty kilometers north east, we would be driving on secondary roads through magnificent farmlands. As we left the pier Marie, our guide, informed us we would be traveling to one of the most famous market town in France and today, Monday, was market day.

But in keeping with a tour of French farmland, we first would stop at Ferme Musée de la Forêt, Courtes. Driving into a small parking area in the middle of a farm field, we walked 200 feet to a fence surrounding the property.
A Bresse house is a timber-framed house of post-and-beam construction, that is infilled with adobe bricks and is typical of the Bresse region of eastern France. A large hip roof protects the delicate masonry from rain and snow. The house is almost always oriented in a north–south direction, the roof on the north side often being lower. This configuration offers the optimum protection from the bise, a cold northerly wind typical of the region, which is deflected over the house by the low, sweeping roof on the northern gable end. The living rooms are on the south side, the main façade facing the morning sun. Usually each room has one or two outside doors, so that no space is sacrificed for passages.

The large cantilevered roof is supported on corbels or buttresses, the eaves being further supported on a second set of shorter rafters, resulting in a double-pitched roof. The eaves enable equipment or supplies to be stored around the outside of the house and kept dry. They also enable corn cobs to be hung from the rafters to dry out.

The countryside of the Bresse is characterized by agricultural buildings; the villages often suffer from overdevelopment.

Marie also took note of the Saracen chimney (square type pyramid-shaped Romanesque bell tower, topped by a wrought iron cross) at one end of the building. Typically this would be in the center of the structure but she suggested that over the centuries the house was modified and perhaps the north wing had been demolished or, at least, reduced. From her description, it would seem that people using this
chimney were “living” within the chimney base and smoke rose from the floor to and through this chimney.

A few minutes after we left the farm museum we arrived at a large parking lot near the city of Louhans. We joined our guide and walked two hundred meters to a memorial which would serve as our meeting place in three hours. Then we were released to tour the market on our own.

“In the 17C Louhans market was once one of the main markets in France. It attracted crowds of buyers from Switzerland. Fresh products - meat, grain, poultry, butter, eggs and vegetables - supplied the towns of Lyon, Dijon, Tournus, Chalons, Lons-le-Saulnier and Geneva.

Taking place every Monday morning, it is still a unique market. The market focus is the Bresse free-range chicken, the only chicken to be awarded an AOC classification. Buyers take them from live their crates to check their condition. Besides chickens, you can buy any type of animals: ducks, geese, rabbits, geese, goats, cows, pigs, sheep, goats, ferrets, small dogs and even the odd horse. A very good food market is held in place Général de Gaulle too.

Under the Arcades in the Grande Rue in Louhans - the longest arcade in France - clothes stalls are lined up on market day and and visitors can find craft work in the Place Saint-Jean and pans and cooking wares behind the church.”

The market has three distinct sections. There is a produce market, a live animal section, and a flea market area. The first vendor I saw was set up to demonstrate a new mop system. He would squirt an oily liquid on a section of flooring, throw dirt and grit on top and smear the dirt about. Then he would take his miraculous product and clean up the mess effortlessly. I have seen carnival barkers and state fair hawkers sell their wares like this all over the world.

The live animal section shows people still have a strong connection to food production. All kinds of live poultry, rabbits and the like were for sale. The variety of poultry is very diverse: chicken of all kinds, pigeons, turkeys, wild and domestic ducks, geese, guinea fowl, quail and more.

The cages are tight and close together. When a customer has selected hens, ducks or other foul, they are put in a cardboard box and slits are cut in. It becomes easier to carry them and provides air for the animals to breathe or stick out their neck.

The Bresse chicken is special. They have to be presented by the butcher as whole with the blue feet, white feathers, and the red comb. This way can it is assured that the customer gets the real thing (the Bresse chicken colors also represent the colors of the French flag). The butcher can dress the chicken
ready for cooking. I learned later that one of our shipmates bought a Bresse chicken and brought it back to the ship and the chef prepared it for his table.

Spread across the city, the market delivers daily cuisine: vegetables, fruit, artisan cheese, meat, sausages, oysters, nougat, herbs and much more. There were food vendors serving typical French dishes, cheeses, sausages, and even Spanish paella... which Dominic had been searching for but missed.

Liz and I looked through crafts, clothing, leather goods, and even pots and pans. We found a small shop and tasted cheese sample but bought a local Cote De Beaune to take back to the ship. Then we stepped into Café Louhans for a pint of beer and a chance to people watch those who came to the market.

After returning to our ship we had lunch. In the afternoon, people could take a tour of the galley with the chef. To control the flow of people we were assigned to groups based on which deck contained our stateroom. When it was our turn Executive Chef Jozef showed us through an empty, stainless steel facility while he described the complement, the hours they worked, and the equipment they used each day.

Later we went to the lounge for a Bread, Cheese, and Wine presentation with Cruise Director Gheorghe Bihoi and Concierge Maya Pashpouova. The cheese offerings were Brie de Meaux, Roquefort, Comté, and Époisses de Bourgogne. The Époisses was new to Liz and me but we both thought it was the best of the choices.

Our dinner selections tonight were rack of lamb and sea bass. Both of these were the best prepared dishes of the cruise in our opinion.

**Tuesday, June 21**

This morning we began packing our luggage to set out clean clothes in packing cubes for the next four days in France. The old clothes were separated and filled the rest of out suitcases. We would be setting these bags outside the room for collection before tomorrow's breakfast.

Then we assembled in the Peppermint Lounge for our Disembarkation briefing. We will depart the ship in the morning for a long bus ride to Avignon and then continue onto Marseilles. George then gave a briefing on European Union for those who wished. We continued our packing until we departed for a local wine tasting at Château de la Greffière.

"Château de la Greffière, Mâcon La Roche-Vineuse Vieilles Vignes 2010. Husband and wife Vincent and Isabelle Greuzard represent the fourth generation of his family to run this small estate. This cuvée draws on three-different parcels of 50-year-old vine planted on a mix of clay and limestone. Uneven weather during flowering in 2010 reduced yields; warm weather in September allowed the remaining grapes to fully ripen, resulting in concentrated wines. Fermented and aged in small oaks." *(The Wine Spectator, Dec. 31, 2012-Jan. 15, 2012)*

"At Le Château de la Greffière, you can visit a museum and a winery to discover wine growing from the last Century to nowadays. Then, a wine tasting in our vault cellar will cheer up your visit.

Our vineyard and wine museum is the result of our passion for the country life during the XXth Century. You will discover tools of old professions, from the carpenter to the blacksmith or the barrel maker and obviously, the winemaker. The visit will be follow by a look at the actual winery."
You'll see the equipment for bottling and labeling. To end up the visit, you will taste our wine in a buried cellar from the XVIIIth Century.

We were met by the son of the owners and he graciously welcomed us and then briefed us of the history of the Château. Then he described the wine we would be tasting and, enlisting the service of an assistant, served us each of the tasting samples in turn. Those were:

**White**
- Mâcon La Roche-Vineuse
- Saint-Véran

**Red**
- Bourgogne
- Mâcon Serrières La Croix

We toured the wine museum for twenty minutes. It nicely presented the history of wine making but could not compete with the elaborate displays of Hameau Duboeuf that we visited on Thursday. However, the museum did reinforce what we had learned earlier. Before we left the grounds we purchased a bottle each of the two red wines we sampled.

After lunch back at the ship Liz and I took another walk in Mâcon. Musicians were setting up numerous stages for different groups to play throughout the town during a music festival. We could hear sound checks being made as we walked and wondered if all the venues would be playing at the same time. Our thought was that the close proximity would drown out nearby performances.

Our walk was primarily to stretch out our legs but we decided to go a little deeper into the town and came upon Saint Vincent, the old cathedral of Mâcon. Built in the 11th century - 14th century, is the principal highlight, although much of the original structure is no longer standing. The remaining octagonal towers and the imposing entrance give a clue as to what the cathedral was once like, while inside there are models to help us visualize the original structure.

The captain, the hotel director, and the cruise director hosted a Farewell Reception in the Peppermint Lounge. This will be our last day on the ship as we will be leaving tomorrow morning.

**Wednesday, June 22**

Today will be a logistics exercise for Gheorghe and Maya. As requested, luggage was placed outside the rooms at 07:30 and the crew began carrying the suitcases through the construction zone to the area where the buses would park. Overall the trip would take nearly 400 kilometers to Marseilles. Gheorghe
rode in our bus and distributed 20€ to each person for lunch. Then, at a rest stop, he went to another bus to pass out funds to them. Maya did the same for the other two buses.

About an hour after the rest stop we then got off the buses at Mornas Village on the A7 Motorway north of Avignon for lunch. We could select lunches from a cold or hot line and then our charges would be totaled at a single cashier. We stopped for forty-five minutes and used up all of that time as this became a choke point when our four buses offloaded our group.

Our initial schedule called for a two day visit in Avignon. Because the high river prevented our movement, our group would have three hours to visit the city. Our optional tour to the Pont du Gard, a three-tiered Roman aqueduct that has been designated UNESCO World Heritage Site, was canceled.

Instead, our buses parked right outside the walls of the city, near remaining arches of the Avignon bridge - which once crossed over the Rhône River - which has been immortalized in a popular French folk song, "Sur le Pont d'Avignon" (On the Bridge of Avignon). There we met guides who led us through the narrow streets up to the Palais des Papes (Popes’ Palace) as they described the history of the city.

"Avignon is a commune in south-eastern France in the department of Vaucluse on the left bank of the Rhône river. Of the 90,194 inhabitants of the city (2011), about 12,000 live in the ancient town centre enclosed by its medieval ramparts.

In 1309 the city, still part of the Kingdom of Arles, was chosen by Pope Clement V as his residence at the time of the Council of Vienne and, from 9 March 1309 until 13 January 1377, Avignon rather than Rome was the seat of the Papacy. At the time the city and its surroundings
(the Comtat Venaissin) were ruled by the kings of Sicily of the House of Anjou. The French King Philip the Fair, who had inherited from his father all the rights of Alphonse de Poitiers (the last Count of Toulouse), made them over to Charles II, King of Naples and Count of Provence (1290). Nonetheless, Philip was a shrewd ruler. Inasmuch as the eastern banks of the Rhone marked the edge of his kingdom, when the river flooded up into the city of Avignon, Philip taxed the city since during periods of flood, the city technically lay within his domain.

Avignon became the Pontifical residence under Pope Clement V in 1309. His successor, John XXII, a former bishop of the diocese, made it the capital of Christianity and transformed his former episcopal palace into the primary Palace of the Popes. It was Benedict XII who built the Old Palace and his successor Clement VI the New Palace. He bought the town on 9 June 1348 from Joanna I of Naples, the Queen of Naples and Countess of Provence for 80,000 florins. Innocent VI endowed the ramparts.

The historic centre, which includes the Palais des Papes, the cathedral, and the Pont d'Avignon, became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995. The medieval monuments and the annual Festival d'Avignon have helped to make the town a major centre for tourism.

Our guide spoke for an hour and when we reached the Papal Palace we could continue on our own or take a tour of the palace itself. We chose to walk through the shops. We found salt, pepper, and Provence Herb mills and table cloths to bring home. Near the Place de l'Horloge (Clock Square) we found La Pause Gourmande and ordered espresso and a pastry to celebrate our afternoon in Avignon.

It was time to get back to the bus however two people could not find where they were. Since the buses were parked next to Pont d'Avignon, and there were signs everywhere directing people to the bridge, I found that hard to believe how anyone could get lost. After 45 minutes Gheorghe found one of he lost souls. He left Maya to search for the other and hew rest of us boarded the buses for the 125 kilometers drive on to Marseillaises.

All of us would be dropped off at the Pullman Marseille Palm Beach for dinner and most would be going from that hotel to the airport the next morning to fly home. Our bus had 22 people who opted for the Marseilles extension and after dinner we would be taken to the InterContinental Marseille - Hotel Dieu. We would not fly out for three more days.

At dinner we met Florence Parizot, our host in Marseilles. She sent our driver on to our hotel to offload the luggage and when dinner was finished we continued on by way of taxis to the InterContinental Marseille. Everything was all set up. Our luggage was in our room and we were exhausted.

**Thursday, June 23**

We went down to breakfast on the terrace and discovered a
magnificent view across the city to Notre-Dame de la Garde. While we enjoyed the view and as we were drinking coffee Florence came by to chat. She informed us that our planned excursion to Cassis & the Route des Crêtes had been canceled because not enough people had signed up. This could be partially duplicated with a three hour cruise along the coast but that did not appeal to us.

At breakfast we mentioned to Kyoko and Dominic that Marseilles was famous for a seafood stew called bouillabaisse. We planned to find a restaurant that served this specialty. Since seafood is their first culinary choice, they offered to join us. Liz then mentioned that we also would try to find a Pub Crawl or a Food Tour if we could. We then went to talk to the concierge to see if that were possible. He said that he thought it was and he would check it our while we were on our bus tour this morning.

Florence had organized a panoramic city tour encompassing historic sections of the city and the hilltop Notre Dame de la Garde basilica. We would be able to board a bus with Olivier, our local guide for the day. As we set out from the hotel our guide related some of the history of the city.

“Marseille (Marseilles in English) is the capital of the Bouches-du-Rhône department and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, Marseille, on France's south coast. It is the country's second largest city, after Paris, with a population of 852,516 (2012).

Known to the ancient Greeks and Romans as Massalia, Marseille was the most important trading centre in the region and the main commercial port of the French Empire. Massalia became one of the major trading ports of the ancient world. At its height, in the 4th century BC, it had a population of about 6000 inhabitants on about fifty hectares surrounded by a wall. It was governed as an aristocratic republic, with an assembly formed by the 600 wealthiest citizens. It had a large temple of the cult of Apollo of Delphi on a hilltop overlooking the port and a temple of the cult of Artemis of Ephesus at the other end of the city. The drachmas minted in Massalia were found in all parts of Ligurian-Celtic Gaul. Traders from Massalia ventured into France on the rivers Durance and Rhône and established overland trade routes to Switzerland and Burgundy, reaching as far north as the Baltic Sea. They exported their own products: local wine, salted pork and fish, aromatic and medicinal plants, coral, and cork.

The city thrived by acting as a link between inland Gaul, hungry for Roman goods and wine (which Massalia was steadily exporting by 500 BC), and Rome's insatiable need for new products and slaves. During the Punic Wars, Hannibal crossed the Alps north of the city. In 123 BC, Massilia was faced by an invasion of the Allobroges and Arverni under Bituitus; it entered into an alliance with Rome, receiving protection.”

Both Florence and Olivier were on the bus but he actually conducted the tour. We left the hotel and drove through part of the old town to the
Cathédrale de la Major. He spoke proudly of the new Museum of European and Mediterranean civilizations and Villa Mediterranea and then we worked our way to Fort Saint-Jean, The City Hall, old Marseille, and Vieux Port. We understood this was a quick tour of the city and it was designed to give us suggestions of places we might wish to explore further.

As we drove along the shore Olivier spoke of the Chateau d'If, the island fortress located off the coast of Marseille France. It became famous as a result of the publication of a book, The Count of Monte Cristo, by the French writer Alexandre Dumas.

We then got out of the bus at the Monument aux Morts de l'Armée d'Orient et des Terres Lointaines (War memorial of the army of the East and distant lands). At the base of the statue with upraised arms was a plaque depicting the years of sacrifice in Indochine. It was poignant to me, I too spent a couple of years in Vietnam.

As we drove through winding roads which steadily climbed upward Olivier said, "we are going to the Notre Dame de la Garde Basilica, the beautiful Catholic church that overlooks Marseille. Perched on a hilltop south of the Vieux Port (Old Port), it features a panoramic view of Marseille, the mountains, the Mediterranean Sea and nearby islands."

"Notre-Dame de la Garde (Our Lady of the Guard), is a Catholic basilica in Marseille, France. This Neo-Byzantine church was built by the architect Henri-Jacques Espérandieu on the foundations of an ancient fort. The fort was located at the highest natural elevation in Marseille, a 149 m (490 ft) limestone outcrop on the south side of the Old Port of Marseille. It is an important local landmark and the site of a popular annual pilgrimage every year on Assumption Day, August 15.

The present basilica was built on the foundations of a 16th-century fort erected by Francis I of France to resist the 1536 siege of Marseille by the Emperor Charles V. It consists of a lower church or crypt in the Romanesque style, carved from the rock, and an upper church of Neo-Byzantine style decorated with mosaics. A square 41 m (135 ft) bell tower topped by a 12.5 m (41 ft) belfry supports a monumental 11.2 m (37 ft) statue of the Madonna and Child made of copper gilded with gold leaf.

A Mediterranean-style religiosity is expressed here with numerous votive candles and ex-votos offered to the Virgin to thank her for spiritual or temporal favours and to proclaim and recall the grace received.
One of the oldest documents about this practice is a deed of 11 August 1425 in which a certain Jean Aymar paid five guilders for the purchase for wax images offered in gratitude to the Virgin. During his travels in the South of France at the beginning of the 19th century, Aubin-Louis Millin de Grandmaison was struck by the number of ex-voto at Notre-Dame de la Garde: "The path that leads to the oratory is stiff and difficult. The chapel is small and narrow, but decorated everywhere with tributes from pious mariners: on the ceiling small vessels are suspended with their rigs and have their name registered on the stern; they represent those that the mother of Christ has saved from cruel shipwreck or from the fury of pirates and corsairs.\(^8\) The ceiling of the upper church still features many scale models of recently restored boats and planes.

The walls of the side vaults of the two sanctuaries, the crypt and upper church, are covered with a first level of marble slabs. The upper walls of these side vaults are occupied by painted ex-votos hung in several rows above; the most recent are on the walls of the terraces of the basilica. Most of these ex-votos date only from the second half of the 19th century; earlier ones disappeared during the Revolution. Most depict shipwrecks and storms, but there are also very different scenes: fire, car and railway accidents, bedridden patients, and political and social events."

There is an elevator between the crypt level and the basilica but there are over 150 steps between the parking area and the lower level of the basilica. This obstacle was beyond the ability of eight people from our group so they waited below, near the bus, until we returned. After we toured the sanctuary we descended the steps to the crypt. Parish offices are at this level and a priest was speaking with a young man as he was getting ready to enter the chapel and say mass. Once this was underway people were dis-invited to take pictures.

As we descended the hill we made our way back through the city to the Palais Longchamp. Olivier said there was no place to park but he asked the driver to stop a few minutes. We could then look at the grounds for a photo stop before we returned to our hotel.

He said, "The palace houses the city's musée des beaux-arts and natural history museum. It was created to celebrate the construction of the Canal de Marseille, which was built to bring water from the Durance River to Marseille. Although the foundation stone was laid by the Duke of Orleans on 15 November 1839, the building took 30 years to complete, partly because of the enormous expense and partly because of difficulties with local regulations. Designed by the architect Henry Esperandieu, the building was centered on the structure and elaborate fountain known as the chateau d'eau (water castle)."

We returned to the hotel and as we got off the bus I asked Olivier if he could recommend a restaurant that served bouillabaisse. He suggested the Miramar and we decided to have dinner there. I passed this on to Dominic and we made plans to walk down to Vieux Port later. We said we would meet them at the front desk and then we went to check with concierge about our earlier request for a Food Tour tomorrow. He found one and we set up meeting with that guide tomorrow morning.

Later we met Kyoko and Dominic and walked down to the city hall and then along the old port. We read menus and checked our restaurants as we continued on to the Miramar, Restaurant Gastronomique. When we arrived there were four other tables seated and we were ushered to our place. The waiters were in tuxedos and our waiter came by for a drink order as he presented the menu.
We all wanted to try the featured bouillabaisse which was listed at 126€. Should we wish to add lobster it would be additionally charged at the current rate per kilo. We decided to forgo that option... we had no idea what the going rate was... and I didn't want to ask.

The chef, Christian Buffa, was trained by Paul Bocuse. I had no idea there was a ritual to eating bouillabaisse but we were coached by the head waiter as the meal was served. Originally, it was a fishermen dish. The latter, by sorting the fish for sale, put aside certain parts they prepared for themselves and their families. It is served in two different dishes: one for fish, one for the stock. But a mandatory rule is cutting the fish before the guests.

Our serving was delightfully hot and initially looked like a thick, rust colored tomato soup. We were offered toasted baguette slices and were invited to rub a garlic clove over the toast and add “rust” (saffron mayonnaise) and float it in the bowl. When we finished this dish the head waiter came to the table with a large copper pan filled with the cooked fish used to prepare the stock.

4 Vivid
4 gallinettes (mullet gurnard)
2 capons
2 kilos of small fish

2 st pierre
1 monkfish (anglerfish)
1 fielas (conger eel)
Salt, pepper, onions, garlic, saffron, olive oil, fennel branches and grains, parsley, potatoes, tomatoes, and 2 glasses of pastis.

This dish was then taken to another table in the center of the restaurant where a young woman filet the fish and assembled a new bowl with the fish and potatoes in the stock and served as the second serving of our dinner. It was delicious, very filling, and the experience made the evening special.

When we returned to the hotel I discovered I had left my voice recorder at the restaurant. I asked the concierge to ask them if they had
found it as I would return for it. The concierge later checked, located the recorder, and sent a bell hop to
the restaurant to recover it for me. It was delivered to my room at nine o'clock.

**Friday, June 24**

At breakfast Kyoko informed us that she had been on the Japanese Trip Adviser web site and had read
some of the reviews. People had said it was very good but expensive. And if one decided to include the
lobster it doubled the price. We all were glad we went to the Miramar but we also were glad we did not
order the extra option. It was expensive but we are unlikely to find the real bouillabaisse outside of
Marseilles.

At nine o'clock we met with Florence and attempted to obtain a boarding pass for tomorrow's flight. Florence noted that the flight information only listed the Marseilles to Paris leg and did not contain our
following connections. She also said the flight code was changed from my original instruction.

After confirming with the concierge that our walking tour would take place as scheduled, Liz and I walked to Vieux Port. After crossing in front of all the restaurants we passed yesterday, we walked to the end of water and the daily fish market.

There were a dozen boats offloading their catch. There were unfamiliar fish I did not recognize. In fact, except for mussels, an eel, and an octopus, I did not know what was being sold. But the Marseillais do recognize and buy them so that is the important part. I would think all those restaurants
along the quay buy their daily fish here.

We returned to the hotel in time to meet Kyoko and Dominic. We stepped outside the door of the hotel
and discovered Laurianne Collange, our young guide, was already waiting for us. She introduced herself and said her service was called **TocToc (Knock Knock) Marseille**, Laurianne conducts tailored, small group tours of Marseilles and is fluent in French, English and German.

We began with a description of the hotel where we were staying.
“The InterContinental Marseille Hotel Dieu is a five-star luxury hotel in the Vieux-Port region of Marseille. Housed in the Hotel-Dieu, which served as the city’s primary hospital for over eight hundred years. Though the Hotel-Dieu’s predecessor was founded in 1188, the Hotel-Dieu in its previous incarnation was founded when the Hospial Saint-Jacques de Galice and the Hospial Saint-Espirit merged in 1593, thus becoming Marseille’s largest and foremost hospital. Both hospitals had previously served Marseille in the Black Death epidemic of Bubonic Plague, which first reached Marseille in January 1348.

The next six centuries saw the hospital undergo considerable expansion, and the current building was inaugurated by Napoleon III in 1866. In 1963, the hotel was listed as a registered national monument on the ISMH, or the Inventaire Supplémentaire des Monuments Historiques. The last patients left in 1993, and in 2003, the hospital was acquired in preparation for development. The property is owned by Paris-based AXA Real Estate.

172 Rooms and 22 Suites are housed in the hotel, with prices up to $6,600 for the Presidential Suite. In addition, the hotel hosts two restaurants - the ‘Les Fenêtres Brasserie’ and ‘Alcyone Restaurant’, the latter of which is one of four restaurants in Marseille to hold at least one Michelin Star.”

With that introduction we began walking toward the Vieux-Port and, as we crossed the street into a plaza she pointed out La Maison Diamantée on our right. She said, “It was built between 1590 and 1620. It is the second-oldest civic building in Marseille. According to oral tradition this was the Palace of the ‘Good King Rene’ of Anjou, Count of Provence. It is not really open to the public but we may go in and walk up the circular, wooden staircase to see the workmanship. It is called the Diamond Building because of the shape of the blocks of masonry.”
We next came to the Hôtel de Ville and turned left to walk in front of the restaurants and look at the boats in the harbor. Laurianne said, “the shortest ferry ride in the world goes from here (Town Hall) to the other side of the port. It takes about two minutes.”

We continued to the end of the port and came to Église Saint-Ferréol les Augustins, "The original building on site was owned by the Knights Templar. However, in 1369, it was given to a community of Augustinian hermits.

Pope Clement VII (1478–1534) married his niece, Catherine de' Medici (1519–1589), to Henry II of France (1519–1559), in this church on October 28, 1533."

Back tracking, we turned up the street and stopped at At Sard'in, canning is in the spotlight, as the mood. Sardines, tuna belly, Cantabrian anchovies, mackerel, cockles, cod with olive oil extra, knives ... The shelves are full of canned seafood rigorously selected with the only criterion: quality. Apparently there is a play on words with the name. It can mean someone who is resourceful or the fish itself.

We enjoyed a sample of sardines out of the tin on fresh bread. Then we were served breaded full size sardines and white wine. It was a delicious beginning.

Then we continued one block closer to our hotel and our guide said, "This corner building, the Hôtel de Cabre, is the oldest existing house in Marseille. In 1943, following the raid of Marseille, the Germans destroyed nearly all of the streets bordering the north side of the Old Port. Some historical value are preserved buildings which house Diamantée and Hotel de Cabre. During the reconstruction of the district, in 1954 , the house was moved a block and turned 90° to return to the alignment of the Grand-Rue."

We continued past the InterContinental Hot-Dieu and climbed the streets past the Old Clock (Vieux Clocher). We climbed the steps into Marseille’s oldest neighborhood, where the Greeks began the foundation of the city, Le Panier. We walked the small small alleys and stopped in a small square. There we sampled panisse (fried chickpea flour cake) and pastis (anise-flavoured spirit and apératif).

Refreshed we continued walking through the narrow streets and came to La Boule Bleue, a small shop that supports Pétanque. We were able to test our skill in tossing the steel balls on a pitch set up for that purpose. Laurianne was much more skilled than any of us but we tried to toss, and stop, a steel ball as close as we could to the piglet (jack).
Rounding the corner we were directed to Les navettes des Accoules, a bakery which made Les Navettes de Saint Victor, boat-shaped, orange-blossom-scented sugar cookies, which are a signature Marseillais treat. We continued another block and finished our tour at Vanille Noire. “This is the best ice cream in town,” said our guide. We sampled black vanilla ice cream, which was very good, and an almond ice cream which did not match the smooth texture of the vanilla.

This was the end of the tour and Laurianne asked if we knew where we were. With the clock tower in sight I knew we were two blocks from our hotel. We thanked her and told her how much we enjoyed our visit to her city. Then we walked back to the InterContinental Hotel. I had time to go onto the internet to check boarding pass data.

I used my trip code data and it was automatically changed to the code Florence had said she had been given this morning. But now the information included the follow-on data. Our flight had been changed from going through Minneapolis to routing us to Atlanta and then on to Seattle. At least I now had a full explanation of the trip. I called down to the front desk and they allowed me to forward the boarding pass to their printer.

Liz and I went to the front desk to pick up the paperwork and then joined the rest of our group in the lounge to meet with Florence for a farewell cocktail. She gave each of us a gift of Savons de Marseille (Marseille Soaps) which are blocks of olive oil soaps crafted in France’s oldest city since the Middle Ages. A law, decreed in 1688, stipulated strict methods had to be employed before the soap could be classed as Savon de Marseille.

As we had wine with our group, Florence outlined the procedures for going to the airport tomorrow morning. The entire group would leave the hotel at eight o’clock. All but one of us would fly to Paris on the same flight. One of us was routed through Frankfurt for his connection to an onward flight.

**Saturday, June 25**

We had an early morning wake-up followed by last minute packing before setting our luggage into the hall for a 07:00 pickup. Then we went downstairs for breakfast. The view of the city, the port, and Notre-Dame de la Garde across to the hills will be a lasting memory of Marseilles.

Once we finished breakfast we returned to our room to finish packing our backpacks before checking out at the front desk. Florence Parizot, the Vantage representative, met us and requested we re-identify our luggage before it was placed on the bus. Then, once all the passengers and luggage were in place, she introduced another representative who would accompany us to and through the airport.

At the airport we walked to a kiosk, where we checked in and printed luggage tags. I was not sure how this process would work but the bags were tagged all the way to Seattle. We knew we would have to recover these in Atlanta but now we were confident they would be recollected for the onward flight after we went through customs.

We had sufficient time at both Paris’ Charles de Gaulle Airport and Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport to actually catch our breath before continuing on to the next stop toward home. We actually arrived back to our house at midnight. Leaving everything in the garage, we went inside
and sat down for a few minutes to relax before going to bed.