

Paris and Malta

April 23-May 11, 2008

Wednesday, April 23 - Our friend Tom Kennedy took us to the Portland Jetport and we arrived with of time to catch our flight at 14:10. After passing through security, we had a leisurely lunch at Shipyard.

The flight to Dulles airport was uneventful. We checked into the Red Carpet lounge and waited for our flight to Paris. Unfortunately, the flight didn't have the new lie-flat seats in business class, as United has been touting. Cindy and I were disappointed (next time). The flight was very pleasant. I passed the time reading Julia Child's "My Life in France," necessary read for Julia fans.

Thursday, April 24 - After arriving at Charles de Gaulle, passing through customs, and getting euros at the ATM, we caught a taxi to the apartment near the Louvre gardens. When we arrived, Clementine (our hostess) met us at the entry and took our luggage but said we'd have to wait until 10:30 (about an hour and a half) to gain entry. We walked down the street to a little café across from the Hotel du Louvre and had a croissant and a cup of coffee. When we got back and got a look at our home for the week, we were thrilled. Here's the view from the window into the garden.



Tom arrived and we discussed

restaurant finds he had made. We decided to go to a place nearby called A Casaluna where I had fillettes of anchovies and a special squid dish. Cindy and Tom had a salad and entrecôte. From there we went back to the apartment and took a little nap. For dinner we chose another nearby place called Le Fines Gueules (now closed). We shared a charcuterie plate as a starter. Cindy had a fish pâté and Tom and I had a fantastic lamb shoulder roast.

Friday, April 25 - Tom and I walked over to [L'Opera](#), which I've wanted to see for a while. Of course, there was the great chandelier from "Phantom of the Opera," but also the ceiling painted by Marc Chagall (pictures didn't come out very well).

Anyway, Here's a picture of the building itself. From there we walked to [Place Vendome](#) (Tom



thought Maxim's was there but found out later that it was in a different area) then back down rue Saint-Honoré to the apartment. We lunched on a great pâté from Monoprix then walked to the market on Rue Montorgueil and to [Les Halles](#). Since we were trying to save money on dining, we chose a restaurant called [Le Castiglione](#) on rue Saint-Honoré because it advertised a fairly priced menu. However, the food was not particularly great, just OK. Cindy had soupe à l'oignon and an omelette, Tom had another entrecôte, and I had escargots and steak tartare. We decided to start choosing places differently after that.

Saturday, April 26 - Tom and I walked to [Notre Dame](#) and into the [Latin Quarter](#). We wanted to go into [Sainte-Chappelle](#) but there was a lengthy line. We went back to get Cindy, walked around the area some more, and found a place called [Bistrot Vivienne](#) (in [Passage Vivienne](#)) where we decided to stop for lunch. There I discovered one of the best meals I had in Paris. It was called Salad Vivienne and consisted of salad, foie gras, Parma ham, shrimp, carrots, tomatoes, a poached egg, and crème petis-pois. Tom had a duck confit and Cindy had pot-au-feux. We walked past the Place des Victoires on the way home.

There was an intriguing little restaurant below our apartment called Le VillyLas (now closed) with tables in the Palais Garden. It was popular so we decided to have dinner there. Their specialty was tagines, so we each had one. They were delicious.

Sunday, April 27 - Tom walked up to their old neighborhood in the 16th arrondissement. Their apartment was at 5 rue Milleret de Brou. The picture to the right is a Rodin sculpture in a little square around the corner. Cindy and I took Metro 9 to Ranelagh station where we met him. We walked around a bit then stopped in at a little bistro (Village D'Auteuil) for lunch. Afterwards, we walked a little more and caught the Metro 10 at the Port d'Auteuil station where we discovered that the train only ran toward the end at Boulogne Pont de St-Cloud. So, we had to ride all the way to the end, then catch the train back to the Odéon station, where we decided to embark and walk back to the apartment. Cindy was really tired when we got there because it was further than she thought. We had a tough time deciding where to go to dinner. Tom had passed an Egyptian restaurant called Rendez-vous au Caire just a couple of blocks away and suggested we try it. We ordered a special meze plate that turned out to be really good.



Monday, April 28 - We had read about Poissonnerie du Bac and decided to go there to get scallops for lunch. It was on rue Bac and turned out to be a pretty long walk and, of course, was closed. We had a duck pâté from Monoprix for lunch instead. Meanwhile, it started raining pretty hard and we stayed inside for the day. By 20:00, it stopped raining and we decided to go to [Le Grand Colbert](#) for dinner but, with no reservation, we were told that a table wouldn't be available until 22:00 so we walked to Les Halles and had dinner at [Au Pied de Cochon](#).



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Wednesday, April 30 - Started the day with eggs for lunch. Tom prepared steak hache and eggs, Cincy had saucisson with her eggs, and I cooked an omelette aux fine herbes with the leftover tarragon, chives, and chervil from yesterday's lunch. We walked to Fauchon (near Madeleine) where I bought some camembert. It turned out to be a mistake because we went to the food mart at Galeries Lafayette and I discovered they had an époisses for even less than what I paid for the camembert. We also bought two Bresse chickens and some other goodies to take to Malta. We finally got into Le Grand Colbert for dinner, after making a reservation. Tom had escargots and a lamb entrecôte (which was disappointingly overcooked), Cindy had a passable soupe de poisson and chicken, and I had the soupe de poisson and veal. Tomorrow, we fly to Malta.

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of condiments) we loaded the taxi that Clementine had ordered for us and headed for Orly. Forty euros later, we arrived only to learn that our flight was one and a half hours late. Good old Air Malta! Anyway, we got to Malta, picked up our rental car (Swansea finally got us a decent one), and drove to Mellieha. We were greeted by Angelique, Alexander, Olivia, and Aaron in the great new room of their house. Genevieve had gone to England with Joe and Mary for a dental appointment. We unloaded all our contraband and gave the kids their presents and relaxed for a while. Angelique prepared a spicy curry dish for dinner that was excellent.



Friday, May 2 - With the kids in school and Angelique at work, it was an uneventful day. We did some grocery shopping. Tom prepared pasta with a good meat sauce for dinner.

Saturday, May 3 - We began preparing the beef roast (the recipe takes twenty-seven hours) for tomorrow's party. Then we prepared the Bresse chicken for dinner tonight.

Sunday, May 4 - I began the day preparing scalloped potatoes to go with the roast beef for the lunch party. One of the guests, Vielja, brought a salad as well. When



the guests arrived, we served the duck pâté, saucissons, and olive tapenade from Paris along with a salmon dip and hummus (from Scott's market) at the table by the pool. After a few drinks and starters, the beef, potatoes, salad, and courgettes were served inside, followed by a dessert of Angelique's wonderful chocolate cake, ice cream, and strawberries.

Finally, we finished off the meal with the cheeses brought from Paris. That lunch was the highlight of the day.

Monday, May 5 - Another uneventful day, but very relaxing. We prepared the duck confit for dinner, along with some pommes frites and a salad.

Tuesday, May 6 - We went to [Rabat](#) with Tom and had lunch at the [Grotto Tavern](#).

Afterward, Tom had to leave to pick up the kids from school, so Cindy and I went to [Palazzo Falson](#), the second oldest building still standing in [Mdina](#), parts of which date back to the 13th century. In the early 16th century, it was inherited by Vice Admiral Michele Falsone, who was the Head of the Town Council. In 1927, the Palazzo was bought by Captain Olof Fredercik



Gollcher who was a researcher, artist, and philanthropist and concerned with the conservation of the cultural heritage of the Maltese Islands. The museum has a collection of objets d'art and historical items including silver, furniture, jewelry, Oriental rugs, armoury, books, and paintings.

Wednesday, May 7 - Genevieve arrived from London today and we were incredibly happy to see her. We gave her all the gifts we brought from Paris and Maine. Joe and Mary brought gifts for Olivia, which made her happy. Genevieve and Olivia finally cleaned the rabbit cage (I forgot to mention that they each got a rabbit last Easter).

I tried making my braised pork chops and cous-cous for dinner but it didn't come out as well as it does at home. The difficulty was finding all the same ingredients.



Thursday, May 8 - I started the day by making a base (leeks, potatoes, and chicken broth) to use in vichyssoise for dinner. About midday, Cindy and I took a nice walk toward [Selmun palace](#) (see below) then back toward the eastern roundabout in

[Mellieha](#) and back to the house. For dinner, we had the vichyssoise and Tom grilled the squid.



Friday, May 9 - The highlight of the day was dinner at Trattoria Fiorino D'Oro (now closed) in [Naxxar](#). We started with calamari, roasted vegetables, escargots, and mussels (which mostly went to Genevieve and Alexander). For our entrées, Angelique had roasted sea bass, Cindy had a lamb shank, Tom had lamb chops, and I had saltimbocca. It was terrific. Tomorrow, off to Paris.

Saturday, May 10 - Tom and I went into [St. Paul's](#) to get fish for lunch but some guy from a restaurant bought all the good fish (sardines, baby swordfish) before we got our turn. We settled for a nice piece of beef from Charlie (the butcher) which turned out particularly good for lunch with a nice salad of mozzarella, tomatoes, and fresh mint (made by Angelique). Right after lunch, Cindy and I left for the airport where we caught our Air Malta flight to Paris.

When we arrived in Paris, we took a taxi to the Holiday Inn near Charles De Gaulle airport. The first room they gave us was hot as hell because the air conditioning was broken and, typically for France, they couldn't get someone to come fix it. So, they gave us a different room in another part of the hotel, but it was non-smoking, so Cindy had to go outside the building to smoke. The good thing about it was that they gave us a free pass to their buffet, which turned out to be surprisingly good, especially for a Holiday Inn. Interestingly, I watched the (live) third round of the Player's tournament. It was in French on Canal Sport! Pretty funny.

Sunday, May 11 - Before we checked out, I discovered that Holiday Inn had added two eighteen euro breakfast charges to our bill. I spoke with the manager and he removed it immediately. It's a good thing I was paying attention. We took the hotel shuttle to the airport, checked in for our flight, and went to the Red Carpet club, where we made breakfast for ourselves. The flight home was uneventful, except for having to go through both customs and another security check in Washington. What a pain that was. Anyway, the car from Maine Limousine Service met us at Portland Jetport and we were home. Au revoir!

