



Ontario Coroners Association International Education Program for Coroners,
Pathologists and Interested Friends

The 20th OCA tour, from October 1 to 13, 2014, marks the last of my tours as Tour Director. As usual it was fully booked mostly by returning travelers. Peter Cameron pcameron@csolve.net has taken over as OCA Tour Director.



Our outbound travel by British Air went smoothly when the transfer between terminals was guided by a BA attendant. I wish the same could be said about the homebound leg when our group became mired in a lengthy hold up in Terminal 5 long before the security check, without an explanation by BA. Fortunately everyone was boarded.

AMA Waterways excelled as usual in the efficient transfer to MS Amadagio at Lyon. There was ample time for a guided walking tour of this lovely and ancient city. The following day was a coach tour of the old town and the unusual covered walkways (traboules) and the Basilica Notre-Dame de Fourviere. The World Heritage title was well deserved.

Our river cruise took us to Beaujolais wine region and the hilltop medieval village of Oingt. On Sunday, October 5th our excursion took us to Vienne where our ship

had sailed overnight. Our group photo was taken in front of the Roman temple built in honour of Caesar Augustus, son of Julius.

Our first CME day took place that afternoon under the baton of Peter Cameron, our Associate Tour Director. Peter enlisted eight excellent speakers for two sessions and some stimulating discussions took place at each.

Since we were deep in wine country we were treated to a pairing of chocolate and wine tasting next morning at Le Chateau de Tournon. The second CME was while the ship sailed to Viviers and Avignon. We were treated to a detailed spirited lesson on one of the region's specialties, truffles, which have a revered place in French gastronomy. Our host demonstrated how his dog was the key to locating the delicacy in his acorn wood.

The magnificent town of Grignon with its red tiled roofs, typical of Provence, and its winding streets was the highlight of this day. Our ship moved during this time to Avignon, site of the early Papal Palace. Everyone knows the song, Sur le Pont and that evening we were taken for a view from the river when the bridge was floodlit and the popular song was on everyone's lips.

To me the highlight of the tour was the visit next day to Van Gogh territory at Arles, the asylum where he spent twelve months during which he painted Starry Night and many other masterpieces. To see the location of some of his best known paintings we had a walking tour of Arles. It was interesting to hear that during his lifetime he sold only one of his paintings.

The very special Carrieres de Lumieres cave galleries at Les Baux was a thrill not to be missed by anyone making the pilgrimage to Provence. It shows works by Klimt in a sound and light production that covers the walls, ceiling and floors of the vast smooth caves several stories in height. The production was designed in Italy and the theme changes each year.

Our transfer by coach to Barcelona on Day 9 took us over the Pyrenees, stopping for a tour of the Dali Museum at Figueres.

Anyone who has been to Barcelona will know that it is where Antoni Gaudi began the construction of the Sagrada Familia in the 1880s. It is still under construction 160 years later. Other works by Gaudi are to be seen in tours of the city. A "hop on, hop off" tour by open-top coach is highly recommended.

Our final night culminated in A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Barcelona, a light-hearted revisit to the counties toured since the inception of the program in 1997, using some material stolen from the Internet as well as some scenes captured by myself.

The formal handing over to Peter Cameron as the new Tour Director took place following some nice things said by my friends.

It has been a pleasure and an honour helping so many people to see so much of this wonderful world we live in. It could not have been done without the Senior Manager for Ellison Travel & Tours, Suzanne Smith, so many guides and of course our loyal following.

Kevin Flynn

October 31, 2014