

## Fall in Paris 2010

September 10 – our first day in Paris. We arrived at Charles DeGaulle airport nearly half an hour early due to a 60-80 mph tailwind across the Atlantic and much of Europe.

Everything went very smoothly - all the flights were early, our luggage arrived safely, security wasn't a hassle, Ernie changed the SIM card so he had a French portable phone, the taxi arrived at the airport to pick us up and bring us to the apartment. The apartment is great! The location is incredible. It is on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor (7<sup>th</sup> the way floors are counted in the U.S.) overlooking a very busy corner with restaurants on all the corners. It is an intersection of Raspail, Delambre, rue de la Grand Chaumière, Vavin, and Montparnasse - 6 points.

The only problem is that there is no place to put things. It is about 450 sq ft. There is a small place in the bedroom that will accommodate a desk and an indentation where there was once a fireplace in the kitchen/dining/foyer area where we can put a small chest or shelf.

We are unpacking and trying to figure out how to organize our lives. I can't get over how bright and cheery the place is. The wireless works flawlessly for both of our laptops. There is a nice flat-screen TV. The kitchen is spanking new and the oven will not be a problem like it was at the apartment on Rue Bertholet where we stayed in the spring. I'll get a bunch of pictures in the next day or so. I do intend to continue my Paris Journal. I'll call it my *Fall in Paris* Journal.

The location couldn't be beat. We are on the 6th floor so although the streets are very busy, we don't mind the noise. The Vavin metro station is on the corner and the 91 bus that runs to the train station and to the neighborhood where we were last winter.

We walked to the train station to visit the Monoprix supermarket across the street from it. We bought wine and napkins and other household things to get started and then struggled to carry everything back. It became clear to us that we need to buy a shopping cart. (like everyone else has). Monoprix had carts that were for carrying home frozen foods but none of the regular ones. I saw that they are called a pousette. We will buy most of our food at the outdoor market on Saturday morning.

I think the excitement will keep us awake until after dinner so we can begin to adjust to the time change. We went to re-charge our Navigo cards for the rest of the month. No problem. Now we can begin to travel around the city.

We are caddy corner from the famous Le Dome restaurant. Here is a picture of it at night from our window.



We managed to stay awake until late afternoon and then both of us took a short nap just to revive ourselves. Then we started to walk around the streets of our new neighborhood. We didn't really understand where we were and what streets the sights were on as we walked around. It was getting toward the end of the day, people were getting off from work and walking to pick up their baguette for dinner or to stand in line at the various food establishments that offer prepared food.

We passed restaurant after restaurant preparing for dinner. On our street, rue de la Grand Chaumière, we saw about 4 restaurants and it is only a block long.

Finally it was getting to be dinner time and we tried to select a restaurant. After agonizing over this or that restaurant we decided, what the hey, it's our first night in Paris, let's do it up right. So we chose the Bar à Huîtres which is across the street from our apartment and visible from our windows.



We were asked to wait briefly and they gave us a glass of rosé wine to sip as we waited. Sweet. We were seated in the eastern end, which is enclosed in glass that can be opened on a warm evening or summer afternoons. We were away from the main dining room so it was quiet.

Ernie started with cooked mussels and I had half a dozen oysters with white wine. These are north Atlantic oysters (huîtres) and were different from the Tomales Bay oysters we ate very recently. It was interesting to compare them. The Hog Island oysters in Tomales Bay were smaller but creamier in texture and less briny than these. I had Medallions of Lotte (a firm white fish) and Ernie had some type of scallops. We both had spinach that came in a little pot and was seasoned with tiny onions. The spinach was fresh and lightly cooked in butter. We followed it with a plate of cheese and a half bottle of a very nice red.

As we ate, we watched the parade of people passing by and about 9 p.m. we heard a racket outside. It was about one hundred in-line skaters skating right down the middle of the street. We asked the waiter if this was unusual. He wasn't fazed at all. He answered that this happens about 9 p.m. every Friday night. It seemed amazing to us, even though it was clear that the traffic was practically gone and they were perfectly safe. They were traveling in the middle where the bus lanes and bicycles lanes are.

We were thrilled to be back in Paris.