

September 13

This morning, I got up very early and after Ernie wakened, I went out to the nearest bakery and bought fresh croissants and a baguette. Nice.

Here is the outside of our building. In the shade in the corner of the building is the Café La Veronese where we went later for an apéro and a planche of charcuterie (a variety of sliced deli meats on a wooden platter.)



As we were walking yesterday and came home from a different direction; we discovered a pilates/yoga/dance studio exactly next door to our building at 18 rue de la Grande Chaumière. Amazing!

So after breakfast this morning we unsealed the printer box, the file box and the plastic bag holding two plastic wastebaskets containing the "miscellany."

There were office supplies - stapler, pen, binder clips, paper clips, paper, file folders, stuff like that. In another batch there was a coffee strainer, a wine opener, black and brown shoe polish, etc. The waste baskets were the real treasure.

We haven't yet figured out what to do with the garbage and recycling we accumulate. We were told to put it out on the street in the waste containers. But we don't see any waste containers until late at night when the restaurants put out their garbage. We aren't sure we should put our household garbage in their waste containers. We have emailed the rental agency to clarify just where we are supposed to put it. In the last apartment building there was an area for the garbage and the concierge put it out on the street for pick up on the correct day. But here, the building operates differently.

The apartment is lovely, fully restored and painted, very neat. But the hallways are dusty and dirty, the paint is peeling, the floor creaks and is unwashed. The entry way is not attractive. We think it is the equivalent of a homeowners association who make the decisions jointly on what is to be painted and repaired. They must not be willing to spend the money. There is a person who is charged with sweeping floors and cleaning out the elevator. But the elevator works, which we appreciate.

note added October 14. The elevator broke the night of October 12 and is still broken although it has been reported. There are 114 steps to climb. The risers vary from about 15 to 16.5 cm (around 6-inches, less than the OSHA standard of 7-inches and uniform). That makes the climb about 18 meters (60 feet).

We are on the 6th floor (really the 7th as counted in the US). This is good because we rise above the bulk of the street noise and can open our windows and catch the breezes. There are no screens on the windows but there don't seem to be any flies to speak of or mosquitoes.

Note added: mosquitoes did make their appearance a few days later.

After unwrapping our useful items and learning what was there, we went to the Pilates studio next door to check it out. It is adorable and tomorrow when I go for a mat class to try it out, I'll get a picture of the courtyard where it is. They also offer something called Gyrotonic that is described as a fusion of yoga, dance and Pilates. There is also a Pilates Yoga Fusion. Of course, they spoke English to me as soon as I started speaking in French.

Note added: we had lunch at La Sieste October 13. It is next door to our apartment and adjoins the courtyard of the Pilates studio. We learned that Catherine Deneuve works out in this studio!

About half a block away there is a larger general fitness center that also offers Pilates. I decided to stay with this one. The rates are about the same as at CORE.

I didn't work up my nerve to call the cello teacher yet.

We went to Franprix to look for a peppermill, a cleaner for the stainless steel appliances, a spray spot cleaner for my clothes and bottles of mineral water. Mostly we were exploring the store. It was Monday morning and several clerks were re-stocking from stacks of boxes along the aisles making it

very hard to get through with our rolling cart (from the store.) Our pousette was left at the front. Ernie really didn't like it because we were constantly squeezing by people or clerks. It was very tight.

We came home for a lunch of paté sandwiches with greens and tomato.

After lunch we set off to the Gare Montparnasse to shop for a jacket for Ernie. We started at Monoprix but were disappointed at the selection. Then to the Galeries Lafayette at the Gare. We went from shop to shop and finally at Celio we found a faux leather jacket that looked very good. Then we went to C&A and found a couple of jackets in about the same price range that fit and would do the job. Ernie wants to think about them so we'll be back.

Along the way I was noticing the many different types of trench coats for me and price ranges.

We were out until about 6:45 when we stopped at the bakery around the corner where I bought croissants, a baguette for our dinner of cheese. They were sold out! Disaster! We needed the bread for our dinner. So we quickly walked to another bakery we had discovered that morning next to the small Franprix. This bakery is on a quieter street so she still had baguettes and we picked up a couple of tarts for dessert. We have to watch out about that. The bakeries generally close about 7 and there is a run on them when people get out of work. By closing time, the shelves are bare.

By this time we were hungry and tired from shopping, so we stopped at the corner cafe La Veronese for an aperitif. They are called apéros, slang for apéritifs.

We settled down to rest our tootsies and ordered a plate of charcuterie to go with the wine. The plate came back piled with cut meats - salami, prosciutto, ham, a chunk of pate, and another thickly sliced sausage - enough for dinner and a full bottle of wine. So we ate half and wrapped the rest in a napkin and stuck it in my big black purse and resolved to carry plastic bags in the future. Here there is no such thing as a doggy bag and I don't see people taking food home. It is enough for lunch tomorrow or part of dinner so I couldn't leave it.

Dinner was a variety of cheeses we bought at Saturday's market – a blue from Auvergne, a very creamy small goat cheese and a chunk of Swiss Gruyère. I concluded that the Gruyère suffered in comparison with the goat cheese. Gruyère has been my favorite cheese for years! Sliced tomatoes with dressing drizzled on it, olives and radishes and then a mixed greens salad with dressing.

We were too full to eat the dessert so it got refrigerated.