

## Fall in Paris Journal

September 19, 2010 - Hippodrome at Parc Vincennes

Today we spent a lovely, balmy and sunny summer day (maybe very early autumn) at the racetrack. Barbara gave us a flier with free entrance for two. It was a long ride out on the outskirts of the city and there was a free shuttle bus from the station to the racetrack. They were trotters. We stayed for 5 of the 8 races so we could be back for our video call to Ava and Leslie. Ava is now walking like a champ.

At the Hippodrome there are grassy areas for sitting and picnicking, which many families did. I was surprised to see that there was no alcohol on sale. Therefore, no drunks, which made it a nice place to take a family. There is an entire area for families to picnic on the grass in clear view of the track.



We were there well before the races began so we explored the building and the picnic area. We also planned to have lunch there and were exploring the possibilities. They sell box lunches so we eventually bought one each and a bottle of water and sat on a bench to eat.

The place is set up for families. You can see a small carousel near the building. There were stables to visit and we saw a man washing a very large horse, certainly was not one of the racehorses.



Finally the races began. I missed the trumpet call we hear at racetracks in the states. The trotters hauling their buggies sort of mill around and finally get into their places and at some point the race begins. Here they come!



There were pom pom girls, ala the Dallas Cowboys - belly buttons and all. They danced after the winning horse and rider and owners were congratulated and left the area.



Just before we left (about half time) a very good marching band came on in full uniform. It was quite a show. We made a mistake not to bet. The next time I go to a racetrack I will make bets on every one of the races.

There were some interesting touches at this racetrack. In the picture of the band, on the top left is a little knob. It is a camera on a cable that slides to the finish line and captures the image of the winner. It makes a whirring sound as it passes by. There was one race we saw that was a photo finish.

Also, there is a pavilion in the center of the track where one can buy seats. Of course, there is a restaurant at the top of the big building where one can dine and watch the races from there and there are box seats behind glass but we have that in the states.

There is a road inside the track and two vehicles driving around following the race. One has the announcer and a bunch of other people. I assume they are journalists or functionaries of the racetrack. The second vehicle is a small bus carrying people who have paid to be that close to the action.



It was a great way to spend a sunny, warm afternoon.