

1-28-09



We met Ernie's Paris cousin Louise Vincent for lunch. We met her at her apartment, which across the street from the Montparnasse Train Station and the Galeries Lafayette (the second one, not the main one), so it is very convenient. We ate at one of several restaurants on her street. It was decadent.

I am a little surprised at the portions. In previous visits to France, the portions served have been smaller. This was a place that specialized in grilling and cooking in a wood oven. We each had a grilled pork dish, different cuts of ham, basically. I don't know the difference in the names. The cuts of meat are different than in the states. Mine was about the size of 2-3 portions with fries and sauerkraut. It is an Alsatian restaurant and one specialty is Choucroute, which is a pile of sauerkraut with sausage and ham and bacon, potatoes, carrots, onions etc. and is enough for a small army. It is a seasonal dish but we didn't order it because it is too much food. Little did we know.

I meant to get a picture of Ernie and Louise but we were too busy talking and I forgot. I need to do that. We will try to see her at least once a week during this sojourn

After leaving her, we walked to the train station and bought our tickets to Marseille in March when we will visit Christian Morel and his wife Emmanuelle and their 18 year old daughter Alexanne. They will put us up in their apartment.

When we went to Spain a couple of years ago we went to see them in Marseille and on our last day there, they took us with them to see their just purchased apartment. On that day they received the keys and the apartment was theirs. They were like kids in a candy store, so thrilled. They were going to do this and change that. Now we will see what they have done with that spacious apartment. It came with a parking space, a real plus in that city.

Christian is a professor at the university and worked on his doctoral thesis under Ernie's direction when

we were in Lausanne in 1985-6. He has done very well and landed an excellent position doing work he enjoys.

Leslie met Christian when she visited us in Switzerland the year we were there.

After the train station we stopped in a discount store called Monoprix, (One Price) looking for a few items - a corkscrew of the type Ernie likes (used universally by waiters in restaurants), some cloth napkins for our guests when we have them and a table cloth. We were able to find some but not all of our items. Later on Blvd Montparnasse we passed another fancier kitchen and bath store so we went in and learned the words for the items we wanted. The table cloth is a nappe and a runner is a vis a vis. They were linen and were way too expensive, although very fine looking. The table cloth is something we will likely leave behind so we don't want to spend a lot for it.

By this time I was dying of thirst from all the ham at lunch so we stopped for something to drink. As we came out of the restaurant the lights were just coming on and I stopped to take a photo.



It is a very lively corner with 2 famous restaurants, La Rotund (I think - the name is blocked) and Le Dome. They are ones with the large lighted signs on the corners. They are quite large restaurants. People are hurrying home. It started to rain shortly after that. You can see a bike chained in front of the restaurant. Bikes are a common form of transportation as well as motos and smaller motorcycles.

The taxi driver who brought us from the airport explained that Paris has outlawed parking on the sidewalk and has put up steel posts to keep the cars off. I have seen cars being cited for parking on the sidewalk where there were no posts. The taxi driver said that this has made parking impossible so people are beginning to stop using their cars. That and the cost of gas and the economic hard times are reducing the number of cars. Still looks like a lot of cars to me. It used to be funny to us to see cars parked on the sidewalk.

We both are still full from lunch and likely will skip dinner.