



Terry's Travels

TT26-1 And so to Europe June 4th 2008

Mercie was waiting for us at Pam's near Torrevieja. We got into Spanish mode immediately by going out to have a pan of paella for dinner between the three of us. Our second night was to a busy bar to enjoy cheering Man U win, especially good fun amongst Chelsea supporters. Dinner followed at 11:40pm—only in Spain. We hit the motorway to visit my only boss' memorial in Calpe's lovely cemetery. We then continued into a windy France with blustery 40mph winds along the coast near Sete. We had hoped to meet our friends who live in France but when that didn't work out we headed for Monte Carlo. Our motorhome owning friends Robin & Norrie had been to the massive Harley Rally in St Tropez. We passed Cannes where the film festival was taking place, it was now raining heavily.

Using texts and a GPS we met up in a lay bye overlooking spectacular Monte Carlo with the musical sounds of the F1 racing cars sounding fantastic. I took Robin on my bike so we could ogle at the fast cars and even faster women that are drawn to this unlikely speed event. When you add a wet surface to the normal narrow roads you cannot imagine a race taking place.

It's the place to be seen and the place to be seen having obscene amounts of money. The cars were all something else and when you add the designer dresses, shoes belts, bags it's not at all hard to see people in tens of thousands of pounds of clothes. It was great to see it all. The race was announced to be a wet one and Robin and I scurried back to Robin's new Hymer where we could rough it by watching on TV (free) and staying out of the rain. We had a ball watching Lewis win on the narrow streets as we munched our delicious sandwiches.

We went separately across into Italy as the fast cars started to whizz past—Porches, Maseratis, Lambos, Ferraris, Bentleys, Jaguars and Mercs and some I couldn't put a name to.

Do have a good look at the last photo, this is a McClaren Mercedes (not common) and note the body language of the two posers casually looking at it. In this one small square alone there must have been several million pounds worth of cars. Whilst on the subject of money Europe is EXPENSIVE now...



Ron & Clare's Memorial, Calpe



40mph winds—Sete, France



Monte Carlo on F1 day



Flash cars and flash?

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April '09 UK via Tonga/Mexico/Cuba



Terry's Travels

TT26-2 The Italian Riviera June 7th 2008

Ceriane was our chosen site at the start of the Italian Riviera. Not a great setting but proved to be excellent value for a couple of nights. A bike ride down the coast confirmed that it just got better a little further S. Around the campsite was a huge number of green-houses packed with flowers but the coast looked a bit scruffy just here - despite this there was a Ferrari garage next to the Lidl (cheap supermarket) and I even saw a lap dance club sign. Perhaps that was the draw for our fellow campers—look at first photo carefully.

Our next chosen ACSI (discounted) site was full so we went to Camping Aranella on the Italian Riviera. We met back up with Robin & Norrie and squeezed into this site with a brook running through. It was a beautiful location near the village of Deiva Marina, itself a lovely coastal setting. The weather was perfect following the rain.

Portofino was almost 2 hours ride N, not a great distance but windy roads through long winding tunnels which were quite cool early in the morning. Clear sea, breathtaking views and time to chat as we waited for the lights to allow us through the tunnels. Parking in Portofino was a challenge even with my bike and Robin's scooter and we walked down into the village of Portofino. What a most scenic setting with the various coloured buildings surrounding the small harbour. A massive private yacht came in with pristine crew rushing to have it even better than shipshape and Bristol fashion. It had an on board swimming pool but we didn't get to see the grand daughters ride their Barbie bikes.

I made a beer last 50 minutes at 1 Euro per 10 minutes! in the stylish pavement cafe before we got a front table at the keyside restaurant. Yes we had chosen Michael Winner's favourite place and maybe "his" table. We had just three starters with water and the taste was simply fantastic, Robin and I had chosen a mild curry tasting Ravioli.

The ride back was even better in the scorching heat, we stopped to look at a new model Ducati 696 motorcycle, very stylish Italian, before having a beach cafe to ourselves to sip a Cappuchino coffee. The tunnels were a welcome cool going back - what a super day out. Di was ready to be taken to dinner at the surprisingly good camp restaurant, on the terrace.



5 likely lads in rented camper



Stylish Portofino



from "our" table—not Michael W's



They're lovely Grandpa!

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Terry's Travels

TT26-3 Muddy Mugello June 10th 2008

We headed next for Pisa in heavy rain to meet Gary at the airport. We were getting used to relying on our new GPS Sat Nav, a new model TomTom 730T. Di has christened her Sadie despite her BBC style voice. She got us there perfectly and the rental car was a new Alfa 147 Diesel - excellent. Europe feels expensive now with the pound only buying around 1.20 Euros, the diesel in Spain was around 1.30, in France 1.40 and Italy 1.50 and I'm told 1.60+ now in Holland. The rain was still falling as we parked at the circuit, we cooked in Mercie.

Rain fell very heavily for practice sessions for the motorcycle races. The racers were hero's in these appalling conditions. Many of the spectators are there for the laughs, letting off steam and fireworks, riding their scooters and bikes and of course drinking. One tent had a circle of inverted bottles pressed into the muddy grass as a garden. In fact the weather came very good and we had a wonderful Mugello, even dining at the Fattoria di Palagio restaurant where we saw Loris Capirossi one of the Italian stars.

Gary returned to the UK, Robin & Norrie headed for Rome and Di and I headed into the wonderful Tuscan hills, it was wonderful with the bright yellow broom on the hill tops. There were many bikers on these excellent small roads S65, S610 before we arrived near Ravenna at Camping Romea, it was manic being a bank holiday. I rode the bike into Ravenna and got a bit lost (no Sadie!) but it is a very interesting bit of coast with shipping and refineries.

After driving the excellent slow touring road S309 our next campsite was the very appropriately named resort of Malcontenta, we chose the Camping Fusina to get WiFi access, it was a joke. Being on the lagoon looking towards Venice seemed fantastic until the mossies started to bite. In fairness I was able to ride along the causeway into Venice which was a busy traffic jammed approach with multiple rail lines alongside, very different to approaching romantic Venice from the sea.

The SP42/SP59/SS14 gave great touring through lush flat farmland until heavy rain started we pulled into Camping Mare in Sistiana. In good weather this site would be good—but the promised internet was kaput and they had fresh baked stale bread.....



Carrara marble a la M. Angelo



Muddy Mugello Circuit



Typical new house



The big ships pass our site

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