

## **MANCA 2015 PARIS IN MARCH**

The Chunnel train ride on the Eurostar from St. Pancras to Garde du Nord is quiet, fast, comfortable and if you pick your time of departure it is quite cheap. If you leave London at say 0700 you can be in Paris for a late breakfast. It's a great relaxing way to go compared to the hassles of planes and airports.

My main purpose in visiting Paris was to complete the application for a one year French Temporary Resident Visa. This would allow me lots of time (beyond the 90 day Schengen Visa) for sailing. I thought I was 95% done when I left Vancouver after presenting 28 original documents, 28 copies of the same and a big fistful of dollars after navigating a confusing website and showing up at the correct appointment time; all done without the ability to talk to anyone to ask questions. However after leaving my passport and all the documents including a prepaid registered envelope, the postie dropped off my passport within 10 days with a pretty full-page French Visa pasted inside. It seemed there were more steps on arrival. This almost undid me!

## **IT IS QUITE A HASSLE FOR FOREIGN SAILORS IN THE MED TO SAIL FOR MORE THAN A FEW MONTHS**

With the help of my Hotel I was able to find an Immigration Office near Bastille. I fronted up to the office, joined a long queue hoping it would all be over and on my way to Manca in Malaga. Not so fast! I was first "greeted" by a big African bouncer who seemed to assume I was some kind of a criminal. "Stand there! Don't touch a thing!". After a long wait he allowed me to approach the front desk. Here "Attilinia the Ferocious Hen", without eye contact, handed me four documents to be completed and ask me when I wanted my appointment in April! I hesitated and she said I had 10 more seconds to respond, pointed at a calendar and added if I did not decide right "NOW" don't bother coming back! She also pointed out I need another 439 Euros to pay. I had no chance to think and just pointed to the middle of the month. The costs, hauling Manca, booking return flights from Malaga and hotel expenses threw my plans into total expensive chaos!

Completely dejected I shuffled back to my hotel and crashed. What a morning! After a coffee I found a very nice young man at the front desk of my hotel. He was the son of the owner/manager, from a new generation of kind French citizens and very keen to help me. He sorted through the four extra documents helping me to form a plan. We booked a room for mid April. He would ask his father to sign one of the crucial documents for me. Now I just needed flights and hope that Manca lifting would not run into time delays in the middle of April. Happy we had I plan I was now able to spend a few days exploring Paris and Versailles.

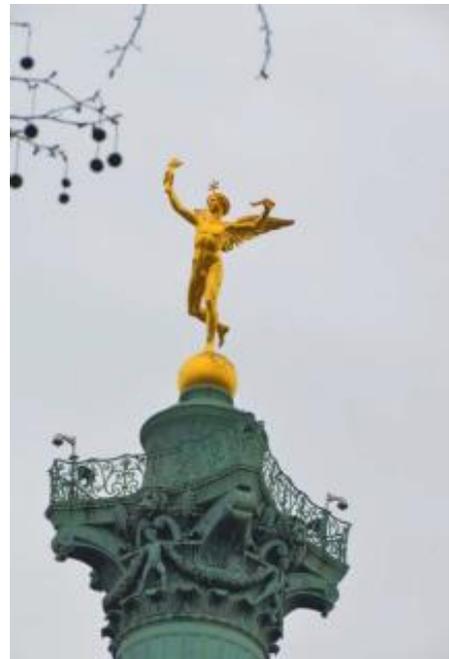
## **EXPLORING PARIS, EVEN IN THE COLD SPRING, CAN BE FUN**

It was fun to revisit some of the main sights. This time it is a treat as I had a good Nikon camera.



Canal boats with view to Bastille. The one in the foreground has a lawn on top!

Paris Bastille Paris. Colone de Juliette.



The Seine and Notre Dame

Centre de la Ville and Charlie Hebdo.



Easter Rabbits and the Eiffel Tower

Spring Cherry Blossom and Eiffel Tower





Eiffel tower a mass of steel and rivets.

The worn steel cables on the lift up the Eiffel Tower. In Victoria Falls I took a photo of the bungee close up. When fully extended there were many broken strands. Next year a Kiwi girl fell into the river when it broke! Hope the mechanics are watching The Tower!



Stunning life -sized ceramic in Montmartre for a very large price.

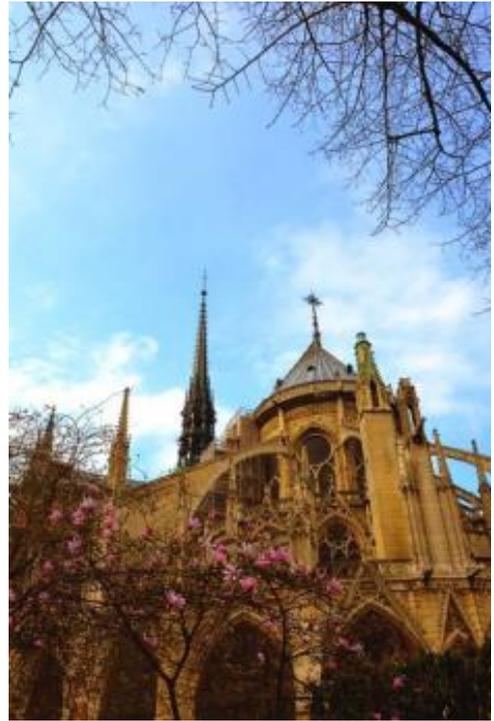
Very expensive stockings. Perhaps the price of an expensive car!



Lovers' locks and Notre Dame...see the story below.

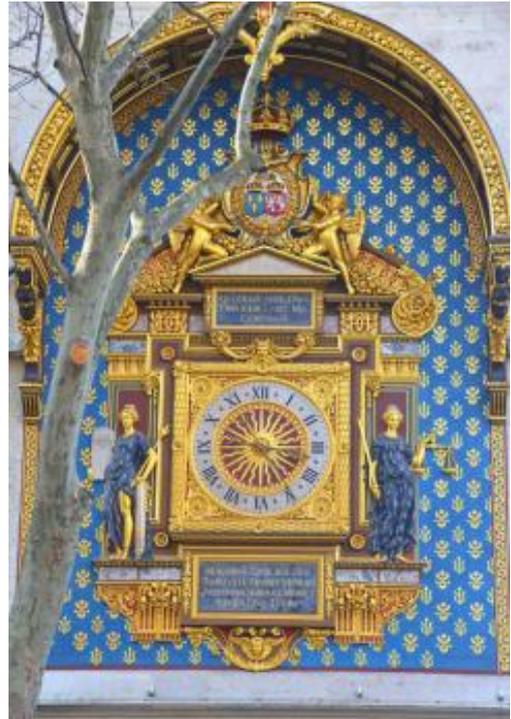
I recently read that the city has decided to remove them all. So much for the Romantic City of Paris!

Notre Dame and Spring Magnolias



The Seine and the lovers' locks now only a memory.

Beautiful Clock on old king's place used by the royals before the move to Versailles.



Louvre reduction of Louis XIV by Girardon 1693. It is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  size.

Winged Samothrace is a stunning tribute the protector of sailors. We sailed by Samothrace in 2010 on the way to Istanbul.



With so many people bumping your elbows it is so hard to get close or get a good photo. Well just for the record and hope she enjoys life behind glass!

The Louvre has a great collection of Egyptian treasures. This stunning fellow is called "The Scribe".



Flambert Henrik Suster Venus.

King Terry The First at Versailles!





The stunning gates to Versailles did not stop the Rebellion but it now stops the tourists before they get their little tickets after lining up for a long time.

Versailles Hall of Mirrors and many candles too!



Louis XIV bedroom. Chairs are for those waiting for an "interview"!

Queens bed. The side door was used to escape the rif raf at least for a while.



One of many fountains in Versailles gardens

Versailles garden gnomes on urn.





Golden maid and boy plays in the fountain!

Sculpture in garden of a Remouleur Versailles.



Paris Metro is fantastic way to get around!

## Metro Saint Michele



Saint Michele Fountain a popular rendezvous.

A grim reminder of the Nazis and the deportation of Jewish school boys to the death camps with the cooperation of the Vichy Government.





Fun to be in Paris in early spring!

Paris continues to amaze. It always pulls you back for another visit!

March 30 I must jump the Easyjet and run to Manca. She is waiting for her spring clean up and re-launch for the season!

Morocco June 18 2015