

## Through the great locks of the Saone and Rhone - vineyards, walled cities, chateaux, and cathedrals!

(via Verdun-sur-le-Doubs, Tournus, Macon, Trevoux, Lyons, Les Roches de Condieu,  
Valence, Viviers, Ardoise...)

May- June 2007



In total the Saone and Rhone Rivers took us 537 km. south from St. Jean de Losne towards the Mediterranean. The locks are huge but surprisingly easy to negotiate as the mooring pylons move down with you. A total of 17 locks (sluices) dropped us (but very gently!) 90.15 metres. (the largest 23 metres in one go!). It was easier than we had expected with manageable currents and very peaceful riverside stops along the way. Most days we sailed around 40-50 km, no rush, and arrived around 15:00 with time to explore the lovely, ancient towns- each one having a huge cathedral, often a chateau or fort and winding narrow streets. Some were picturesque, some were dusty and shabby but each was charming in its own way. Each had wonderful bakeries and affordable local wines. We spent many pleasant and relaxing evenings with the crew of “Baronesse”, lovely people . Pictured here with us at the



One of the most memorable and enjoyable things is when you stumble upon a local event like this fishing competition in Macon. Angling (river fishing) is a big here and everyone turns out to see who will land the biggest catch... haven't found the translation yet but this monster weighed in at 34.5 kg. and 1.78 mt. long! I don't hang my feet out over the boat any more....apparently they have been known to take ducks for dinner...

The local markets are also great...packed with beautiful fruit and vegetables, locally made dried pork sausages (also donkey, goat, bull), loads of cheeses, the irresistible bread, roast chickens, olives and more.



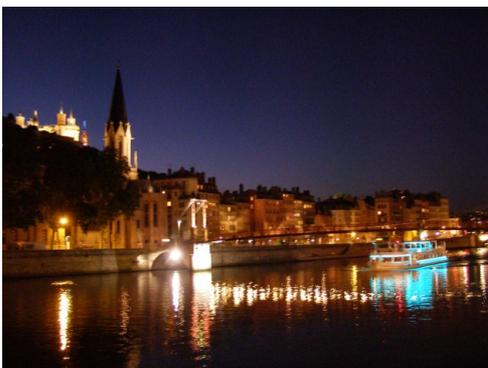
Peaceful scenes along the river. Vineyards, private chateaux, vineyards, and later low mountains and rocky cliffs. Lots of bridges, walled towns dating back to the Romans, not much river traffic- a few sail boats carrying their masts, a few motorcruisers and a few commercial barges....



A very pleasant surprise was Lyon- France's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city and much more beautiful than we had expected. We take the funicular to the top of the town for spectacular views of the city. It has a more southern air with its red roofs, pastel buildings and wide boulevards. The old town, formerly the home of the silk trade which made the city prosperous centuries ago, is now an area of bustling cafés, restaurants and gourmet boutiques. We visit the immense Basilica de Fourviere, its walls lined with ancient and priceless tapestries, its chapels decorated lavishly with gold. Down here you can really feel the former power of the Catholic Church. Everything is centuries old, each town fought over by kings, barons, feudal lords.



Jan is suffering from Cathedral overload.... We're moored right in the heart of the city below the Basilica- could never afford a hotel in this area! Good old Havana! Jan's enjoying his new toy...



It's hot....we're gradually getting south, you can feel it in the air, it's softer, the light is very clear, you can smell the flowers and fruit...at night thunderstorms close in and we watch the lightening from the cockpit.

South to Avignon and Arles....Provence at last!