

*Heading home.....  
Bewitching Besancon & Noble Nancy*



Above: It is perhaps fitting that **Besancon** is the home of time....or more accurately timepieces in all shapes and sizes....for it is a city where time seems to stand still...this was our second visit, so we concentrated on the town and wonderful walk along the riverbank admiring the unique UNESCO architecture of the Quai Vauban in what is known as the “Greenest City in France”, nestled in the Jura mountains, not far from the Swiss border. Home of the University of Franche Comte´ with 30,000 students , the old town has a real buzz to it, and today is a centre for microtechnology and biomedical engineering. High above the town are the fortifications and Citadel designed by Vauban. The city’s history is long and complicated...part of the Holy Roman Empire, at various times, independent, under the rule of France, Spain, the Dukes of Burgundy – but always an important trading & toll post on the river. Lovely paintings of the river in a local gallery by an 80+ yr. old artist – only 5 EUR for an affordable poster that now hangs on the wall at home! A fantastic day to remember in a small yet cosmopolitan city -and a great Indian meal!



Above.....You simply cannot fail to be impressed by **Nancy**, whose traditional French name means “favour” or “grace”. It is famed for its elegance, history and gastronomy, not to mention macarons and bergamots (candies flavoured with bergamot essential oils). The breathtaking Place Stanislas linked to the medieval quartier is full of 18<sup>th</sup> century UNESCO-listed architecture....palaces, cathedrals, a triumphal arch and on this Sunday was home to a garden exhibition. It was teeming. Surrounded by gentle hills, it is situated on the Marne –Rhine Canal, River Meurthe and confluence of the Moselle River, it is also one of the main centres in Europe for innovative surgical robotics, and home to a large university. It is also one of the centres of Art Nouveau, evident in the many small details of the buildings. The delicious waffles taste like chewy American buttermilk pancakes. I forgot to mention earlier that sometimes the people you meet en route are as surprising as the places...such as the fellow cruiser back in Dole...a woman... who turned out to be the penguin keeper at Zurich Zoo....