

Wine and Cheese - Franche Comté et le Vin Jaune



Sometimes spontaneous days out are the best ... and bring the greatest surprises. Just 60 km. away lay a whole new area- the rolling hills and rocky outcrops of the Jura....rural, deeply traditional and just a little eccentric. A brief stop in Poligny – the lively regional capital....and centre of the Comté cheese industry where 450 L of milk is transformed into a 40 kg wheel of tangy fromage. Both weather and scenery were unbelievable...a day to remember, reminding you how lucky you are.



Nestled at the foot of limestone cliffs, greener than you could imagine, and wedged between three glacial valleys, sit the honey-coloured stone houses, abandoned Abbaye Imperiale and Grottes de Baume. Sitting in an outdoor café in tranquil Baume-les-Messieurs, sampling their famous cheese with gele´ made from their equally famous “vin jaune” (whose taste is hard to describe)... who could believe it was 1st October? Truly, this is a place where time stands still.



Having sampled the cheeses, but missed the lunch (why do we never learn that they close at 13:30 ...NO exceptions! and that ALL the diners sit there eating their way through 3 courses which takes two hours....and perhaps another dessert...and then perhaps a little aperitif...), we move on the equally as stunning and picture-perfect Chateau-Chalon – yet another “most beautiful village in France”, medieval cottages surrounded by ramparts, perched high above the surrounding vineyards (vin jeune) that stretch as far as the eye can see.



A gleaming, and enormously elegant veteran Mercedes Excalibur pulls up on the square to complete the picture of perfection. We try to pretend we haven't noticed. Another little pearl of a village...but they do these things so well here...not a tacky souvenir shop in sight...just a discreet wine boutique or local produce stand here or there. A relaxing caféa restaurant with white tablecloths and gleaming glasses....

And suddenly the season is almost over...our repair cannot be done before winter...we decide to pack up, lift Otter out for the winter and cover her up until the spring. But we saw places we never would have seen...we have had a good time anyway. We decide to make a trip of it home....up to Besancon and on to the Moselle Valley with stops en route in the still beautiful autumn sunshine.