

MILHARS, FRANCE – JULY 16



Just a couple of days after the Brexit vote we were met at Toulouse airport by Alan. It was lovely to leave the British rain and to be able to enjoy the sun whilst enjoying a delicious lunch in one of the squares. There was an obvious presence of increased armed security parading the streets. Despite being a "Remainer" Alan was on good form but a little absent minded, he said he couldn't concentrate. We must have driven him mad with our constant Brexit talk and news updates. The fallout from the referendum was moving on so fast that we could hardly keep up with it. Cameron resigning, the markets all over the place, Teresa May putting herself up for PM and Labour in utter chaos with their dissatisfaction with Corbyn and his Cabinet resignations happening by the hour.



Alan was an excellent host and invited Mo along to lunch with us in St Antonin Noble Val. We were really surprised how upset the Brits in France were about the referendum result. Mo said she cried all day and although we said we shouldn't talk about it, of course we couldn't help ourselves. To be honest we had been a little naive and hadn't really thought about the ex pats, we just assumed that they would be looked after. Mo was particularly concerned about her health care. You have to be paying tax in France for 5 years before you can join the French scheme. Mo cheered up when she told us that she had enrolled for a month long French speaking course in Nice. She also very kindly showed us around her house in one of the old, narrow cobbled streets in an area where they used to dye leather. She has worked hard and put a lot of money, time and flair into renovating her very old and interesting house - I loved it.



Nicki's beautiful garden

We spent another evening with Alan's friend Nicki who lost her husband just a few months after moving to France. Once again another fantastic house with panoramic views. She really is not sure what to do as she has only been living in France for such a short time. Her house and garden are quite a lot for her to manage on her own. It was a very drunken evening - her husband had an extensive record collection and had an amazing stylus that cost around £7500 ! Rick was in his element as she played Pink Floyd and Jimi.Hendrix very loudly.



Best I could do after so much wine!

We spent most of our few days with Alan keeping up to date with the fast changing news at home and ended the way we started with lunch in a Toulouse square.

Thank you Alan for looking after us so well.

P.S. Bastille Day, 14 July when 84 people were killed in a lorry attack. Thank goodness Mo hadn't started her course there yet. We did notice quite a security presence in Toulouse.