

## B8 LOUISE REVISITS THE MADELAINE CHURCH

PROJECT: EUROPE 2011

SUBJECT: B8 LOUISE REVISITS THE MADELAINE CHURCH

DATE: 5 JUNE 2011

This was another day for revisiting the past in Paris. It began by catching quick shots of automotive history that cruised right past my lens. The first was spying a car that was almost underfoot when we lived in France some 52 years ago but now virtually extinct.



The Citroën 2 CV or Deux Chevaux...so named to reflect its French taxable horsepower of two horses. It was the lowest tax for a car so it sold like hot crepes even though ugly as sin. They are now used as tourist taxis



Also saw an original Mini Minor with the Monte Carlo Rallye logo on the hood. This car, with its transverse mounted engine, won no beauty prizes but did secure a knighthood for its inventor, Sir Alec Issigonis of Great Britain.



Another product of England was spied cutting through Paris traffic. You don't see many Lotus 7s on the streets today. This car was popular in England because you could buy it as a kit and assemble it at your own speed thus reducing the license fee. It is a basic "wind in your hair, bugs in your teeth" car and, with the proper engine, goes like a scalded cat.



Louise's memory trip was to the Madeleine Church, not far from the Place de la Concorde. It was fashioned after a Roman temple in Nimes and built as part of Napoleon's beautification of Paris campaign. It is a Catholic church with regular services and is often used for the marriages and burials of highly placed French gentry.



Louise's attachment goes back to 1988 when, as a member of the Angeles Chorale, she sang the Brahms's Requiem in this very building. We saw a poster advertising a performance of Mozart's Requiem for this evening with tickets on sale inside.



On entering the church we heard a choir singing Mozartian music. "Oh good, we're in time for rehearsal," Louise said. We listened to the beautiful sounds but, when finished, a priest in full vestments went to the altar and spoke words that I know to be from Catholic liturgy. "We've stumbled into a high mass," I said reverently while catching a few photos. As we watched, a bride and groom approached the altar and began reciting their vows. It was a wedding...one of those high-powered ones...and I wasn't even wearing my best T shirt.



Well, no one noticed as they gathered on the steps of the Madeleine to greet the couple.



There were lots of flower petals thrown and lots of kisses for the bride and groom and we slowly crept away clutching our tickets for tonight's performance.



That evening the Madeleine was almost full for the concert and we found seats about half way down under one of the three circular domes in the ceiling. I remember this church because the sound goes up to those domes, gets swirled around and then comes down again like very confusing surround sound. Almost like sitting in an echo chamber.





It was a beautiful performance though and, when over we went out into the Paris evening. It was past 10 o'clock but, surprisingly, still somewhat light.



It was a perfect way to spend a memory.

Bonne nuit from Paris.