

**B15 OLD FRIENDS NEW FRIENDS**

**PROJECT: EUROPE 2011**

**SUBJECT: B15 OLD FRIENDS NEW FRIENDS SCRIPT**

**DATE: 16 JUNE 2011**

One of the fun parts of travel is dropping in on old friends and meeting new ones. We were able to do both during our short stay in Paris.



The old friend is Hervé Laurent, who lives in Paris. We met in Los Angeles when he lived there for five years. Hervé is talented inventor and we produced a short videotape promoting one of his inventions. It has been 10 years since we last saw him but he has been invaluable in our efforts to bring our MG back to France.

He invited us to his condo home in the 20th district of Paris. It was a lengthy metro ride but the evening was more than worth it. We met Hervé's friend and a couple who are friends living in his apartment building.



Hervé prepared a delicious meal of duck, rice, a great salad, cheese and a chocolate pudding dessert that made Louise beg for the recipe. We feel fortunate to have such a creative and supportive friend...and he lives in Paris.

## EUROPE 2011

## B15 Old Friends New Friends

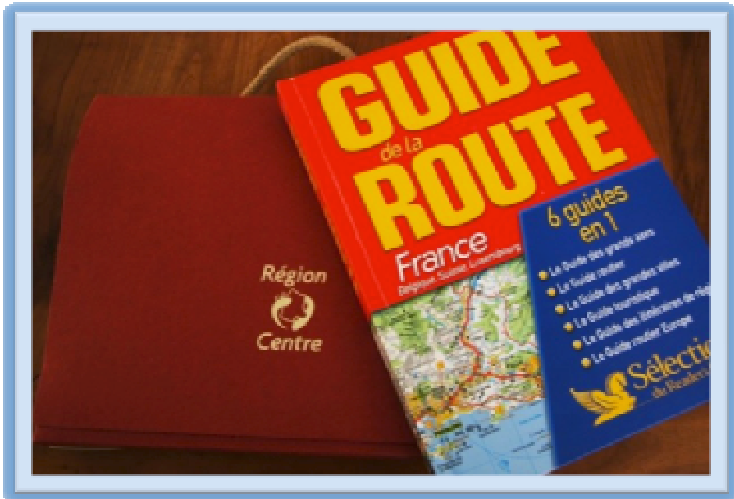
A new friend came to us through our MG. In preparation I sent a cold call e-mail to Philippe Aubry, the president of the MG Club de France, explaining our trip and its purpose and asked for some guidance in finding persons who have an interest in MG's. His response was timely and friendly and he guided me through their executive staff until we found our place with the "T Series" director.



We met at a basque restaurant in the 15th district somewhat near the Eiffel Tower. The real draw was the owner who had a lifetime love with motorsports and had pictures of the former racing greats around the restaurant.

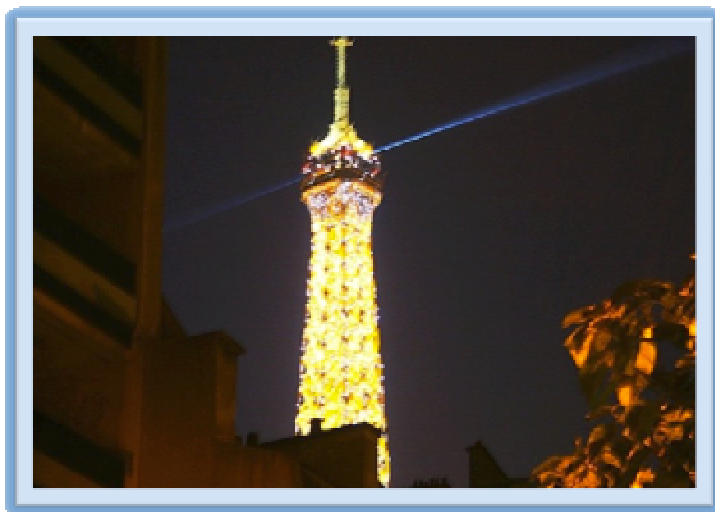
We found that Philippe was a complete car nut and not just about MG's. He is owned by an MG TD and MG B. In addition, he has a 1934 Woolsey purchased from the original owner plus a Citroen for daily, reliable use.





Philippe is a marketing manager for Reader's Digest and gifted us with a very complete book with maps of every inch of France. It was produced by Reader's Digest, naturalment.

He also provided some of the MG Club de France's magazines including one that gives information on garages and club members that live in the areas where we are traveling. Just in case.



On our way to the Metro our grandson, Kade, insisted we see the nightly "frizzing" of the Eiffel Tower. Nightly, on the hour, there is a light show and it becomes "fizzy" for several minutes. Kade tried to get us to a good vantage point but forgot his grandparents move at a more leisurely pace than he. We had to settle for viewing only the top portion but it was still impressive.

Knowing that we'd be in the Loire Valley, Philippe arranged for us to meet a good friend of his and multiple MG owner as well. Jean René Crête came to our hotel along the Loire River to make sure we enjoyed the full benefits of tasting the wines of Vouvray (one of our favorite wines).



We were joined by his friend, Jean Francois Valleé, another car nut who showed up in an original Cooper Mini Minor. Jean René was driving his prized MG B with a Rover V8 engine and 6 speed gearbox. I jumped in with him and, because it is right hand drive, it was a bit unnerving to ride on the driver's side without a steering wheel. Louise rode with Jean Francois in the Mini to the wine tasting.



We tasted the full range of the Vouvray whites and had the supreme pleasure of sipping great wine and talking in depth about cars. Jean Francois, a lawyer for the World Trade Organization, has 14 cars of Triumph manufacture as well as the two Mini's. It appears he specializes not only in world trade problems but in those created by another British car builder.



We drove to Jean René's home for aperitifs and met his lovely wife, Claudine. They live in a bucolic atmosphere not far from the French village of Rochecorbon on the Loire River. He proudly showed his own stash of cars. Aside from the Rover powered MG, he has an MG C GT with a factory original automatic gearbox and large sunroof. It is from the 70's but still sports its original

paint and leather. Hidden away in his barn is a Citroen 2CV and a Mini Minor still waiting to be restored after 30 years in storage. His daily drivers are a VW Polo and a Touareg. In case none of them are running, he has a horse waiting to go. What impressed me a lot is the lift he installed for putting his cars in the air so he doesn't have to crawl on his back to work on them. What heaven.

We went to one of those fashionably late French dinners at a very nice restaurant. By the time 10 O'clock rolled around the dessert had yet to come and Louise had a difficult time staying awake. It was especially trying since the bulk of the conversation was in French with Jean Francois becoming so involved in politics that he forgot he was to be the interpreter. For these situations



Louise has devised a way to fall asleep while sitting bolt upright with her eyes open. She looks like a carnival kewpie doll with those big, wide-open eyes and a fixed smile. If someone suddenly speaks to her, she has a prepared comment about the weather. No one seems to notice or care. It was after 11 when we finished the final course and brought an end to a wonderful evening with new friends. We've always had fond memories of the Loire Valley and Vouvray in particular. Now we have even more.

Tomorrow we're on our way to the south of France.