

B19 LIMOGES: BEAUTY AND THE BEAST ALL IN ONE PLACE

PROJECT: EUROPE 2011

SUBJECT: B19 LIMOGES: BEAUTY AND THE BEAST ALL IN ONE PLACE SCRIPT

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The terrain changed from gently rolling fields to hilly, forested landscape as we headed south. The city of Limoges is known for its beautiful china that graces tables world wide but scarcely sixteen miles away stands a crumbling reminder of man's inhumanity to man...a remnant of World War Two.



The event occurred on 10 June, 1944, just four days after the Allies' successful invasion of Europe on the beaches of Normandy. The German army, in a panic to control the conquered French population, decided something dramatic was needed to keep the French from assisting the Allies.

The SS troops went to the small town of Oradour on the pretext of searching for hidden weapons. The villagers, knowing they didn't have any, were compliant. The Nazis rounded up 200 men in the village, placed them in five different garages and herded all the women and children into the church. There were



400 in there.



At a pre-determined time they opened fire on the men with machine guns at all five locations, methodically killing them all and then burning their bodies.

The women and children in the church were not spared.



The SS troops set off poison chemical canisters in the church followed by hand grenades and machine-gunned those that survived. They then torched the church causing it to collapse. The end result was the bodies were so charred they could not be identified.

The Germans returned the next day to scoop up the remains and buried them in mass graves so their awful deed could not be traced. They then set fire to the village completely destroying it.





Fortunately, five men and a woman managed to escape and were the sole witnesses at the Nuremberg trials of Germans accused of crimes against humanity.



The French government determined this atrocity should never be forgotten so the site of the original village has been preserved as it was on that long-ago June day in 1944. A new village was built only a half mile away but the residents are never far away from the one word that has been chosen to represent the monument. **REMEMBER**



With sober thoughts we went in search of our next place to spend the night. Our daughter, Chrise, used booking.com to locate many of our accommodations during this trip and she uncovered another gem.



Château de la Chabroulie, just outside of Limoges, is a fairy-type chateau situated in the countryside. It isn't one of those musty, don't sit on the furniture type of castles but a daily home for the family that lives there.



Benedicte and Philippe de Le Selle are the 10th generation to live in this chateau. They raised their children here and their grandchildren are now running up and down the staircase and riding their trikes in the driveway.



After lugging your suitcases up the grand stairs there is a small sitting area where you can read or check e-mail. While they have WiFi, as in many cases, it doesn't make it into your room. Something to do with the thickness of medieval walls.



You can, however, set up your iPad in the petite salon.



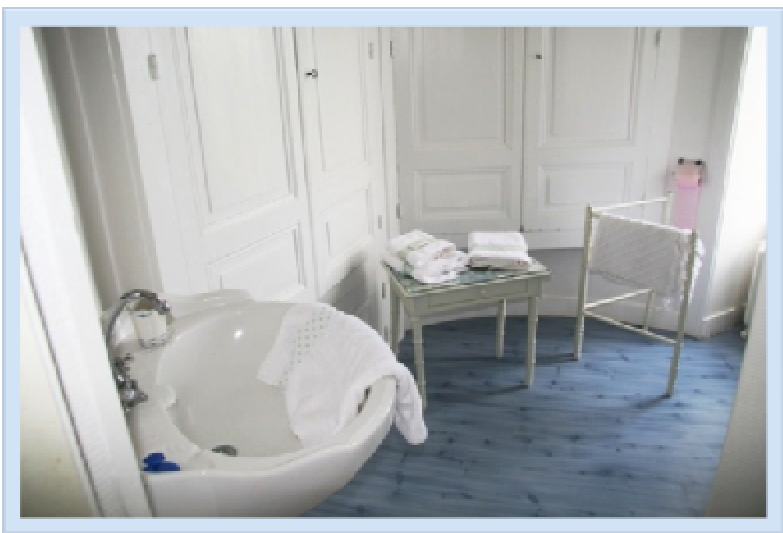
Adjacent is the Grand salon but we're not sure whether guests have access or not. We spied kids toys in one corner of this room so it may be family private.



It is a working chateau and Philippe has the soiled pants of a farmer to show for it. He said that he doesn't mind running a chateau but he would rather be playing golf.



Our room was out of a storybook and immediately influenced Louise who began ordering me around and putting on royal airs. We had more than enough room for our never ending baggage; a sitting area and a completely functional desk. The large windows opened to scenes of cows grazing the landscape.



The bathroom was fashioned out of a conical tower and it was possible to perform your daily functions while looking out a large window but still with a sense of privacy.

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A traditional French breakfast was served in the family area. We met a Dutch couple who have traveled the world. He's in charge of internet functions for Mercedes in Holland and we shared tips about photography and the capabilities of Photoshop. I was really sorry when breakfast was over.

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We had another of those wistful goodbyes. Hating to leave but needing to get on the road. Benedicte and Philippe were there to help us with the luggage and instructions on the best way to get out of town. The surprise of this trip, so far, is the people we have met. One great difference between 52 years ago and today is that we prefer being than seeing. It isn't as important to see the sights as it is to enjoy the fellowship. (I dislike that word because it sounds so "churchy" but don't have a better one. Supply another if you can.) Once again, one night was too little. Would we stay here again? In a New York minute...but longer next time. Next stop is Sarlat in the Dordogne region.

Louise & Ray

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