

B25 "I DO" ...AGAIN

PROJECT: EUROPE 2011
SUBJECT: B25 "I DO"...AGAIN SCRIPT
DATE: 3 JULY 2011

We left Le Mans with a changed attitude. Till now we assiduously avoided the autoroutes (freeways) not just because most of them are toll roads. We wanted to smell the new mown hay, experience the romance of the French towns and listen to the sound of our muffler as it echoed off the village walls, etc. etc.



Well, it doesn't take too many small towns before they all look the same and the muffler echoes begin sounding alike. In addition, the roundabouts are numerous and all require at least two downshifts followed by two up shifts. My right hand was beginning to callous and my feet were tired of clutching and braking. Louise was, in turn, weary of the bumpy pavements in the small towns and her arm was tired of waving at old and young alike who, apparently, had never seen an MG. For that reason we jumped on the nearest autoroute, paid our fare by credit card and sailed into Paris for our big day.



We were preceded by our oldest daughter Lisa, her twins Remy and Alec and accompanied by Lourdes Bosch. In addition, we were delighted that our good friends Margi and Bob Koenigs and their son, John Paul, made the trip from San Diego to be present for the renewal of our wedding vows.



On Saturday, 25 June, we assembled at Chrise's house and boarded Paris city bus #58 for the short trip to the Luxembourg Gardens for our informal ceremony.



You may recall we did a sort of scouting trip several weeks ago and thought the gardens would be a perfect place to hold a brief ceremony. It was large enough to be semi-private and, the best part, absolutely free.

I spent evenings poring over suggested renewal vows on the Internet while Louise made suggested changes to make them more personal. One she made had to do with the word "obey." She felt she had no more of that left in her. I offered no objection but we'll see. Bob Koenigs accepted the role of presenter to our small group acting as a virtual representative of the clergy and the State but without their Civil/Godly power or a sermon.



Our good friend, Herve Laurent, was drafted to be the video cameraman. It was only after the ceremony that he thanked me for giving him his first opportunity to operate a video camera. I forgot to ask his experience level first. Fortunately he has a steady hand and stayed in focus.

We asked our grandchildren to lead us in vow renewal beginning with John Paul who is not our natural grandchild. When he lost his grandparents early in life we were asked to act in their stead and he is now one of us. He lead off with the following vows for Ray.



In sickness, I will nurse you back to health.

In health, I will encourage you on your way

In sadness, I will help you remember.

In happiness, I will be there to make memories with you.

In poverty, I will continue to do all I can to make our love rich.

And in wealth, I will never let our love grow poor.

Remy Louise tried to be serious in guiding her grandmother Louise through the following.



When you need encouragement, I still want it to come from me.

When you need a helping hand, it will be mine.

When you long for someone to smile at, always turn to me.

When you have something to share, continue to share it with me.

About the end of the second line Louise began to giggle. There was a ripple effect and the harder our granddaughter tried to be serious the more Louise giggled. Only by Remy's reading at a faster pace was outright laughter avoided.

It was up to Alec to bring sobriety back to the fore. He asked Ray to repeat after him,



I vow to always keep my love as pure as it is today.

I promise to continue being there for you in your laughter and your tears.

In your sickness and health.

In your comfort and fears

and in your poverty and wealth.

I promise to be there for you all your life, come what may.

With the poverty line, Louise tried to choke back a giggle and it almost broke my composure. After all, I had tried mightily to avoid that condition during our marriage and, for the most part, succeeded.

Apparently my job isn't over.

Kade, the youngest of the grandchildren, was the anchor man and had the tough job of keeping Louise on message.



I believe God has been preparing us for this moment.
I promise to keep the good memories alive.
and let the bad ones die.
I vow not to let the sun go down on our anger
and to treat each morning as a new day to love you.
I will not forsake you or these vows
but will strive to show you my love for the rest of our lives.



This is my promise to you. (In unison).



Predictably, when she reached the repeat about the sun going down on anger, Louise lost all control and brought down the curtain on the repetition of our vows. In so doing she tried to carry on the old show business tradition of leaving 'em laughing...and she did.



The boys decided to establish a new tradition for vow renewals by hoisting their grandmother in the air and carrying her around the gardens. It is a wonder we weren't thrown out.

As a re-wedding gift, Lisa and Lourdes treated the whole group to a bus and boat tour of Paris that included places we visited 50 + years ago such as Fouquets on the Champs d'Elysee where we used to sip wine and watch the crowds pass by.



A new dimension was added with the boat trip down the Seine that took us past familiar landmarks at a leisurely pace.

We topped it off (bad pun) by taking the ascenseur (elevator) to the second level of the Eiffel Tower for a bird's eye view of Paris.



Sacre Coeur church on Montemarte was still there. Nothing much had changed except the erection of the eyesore Montparnasse tower and the well planned high-rise development area called La Defense in the northern part of the city.



Because Paris is a relatively flat city, it is here the crowds discover there is nothing much to photograph except the tower they are standing on. As a result, there is as big a rush to get off as there was to get on.





At 9 PM we all gathered at the La Cantine de Troquet in the 14th arrondissement for our post wedding dinner. Chrise describes this as her favorite neighborhood restaurant and arranged for us to occupy their private dining room for the evening. We had our personal waitress and she delivered the following feast to us.

White asparagus with sauce a la vierge; beets with octopus; smoked salmon with leeks; "caviar" de aubergine (eggplant) which is an eggplant spread.

The main course was: Cabillaud (cod) with piquillos peppers; green salad and thick cut french fries. Our desserts were berry crumble and chocolate mousse.

The wines in this room are served only by the magnum and we had a very nice, dry Rose from Bandol for the appetizer course and a dry, white Sancerre for the entree. Not surprisingly, there was none left at the end of the meal.



The entertaining part of the evening was the waitress. Apparently there was no direct connection between this room and the kitchen so she would bolt into the street and return, arms laden, with the next course. I have this image of the chef handing the latest creation to her through the kitchen window. Glad it wasn't raining. Not too many pictures taken by me this evening but the evening was ablaze with flashes from the many point-

and-shoot cameras in the room. Unfortunately, those pictures have already scattered to Miami, Paris and elsewhere in the world. It was wonderful to have family and friends there and could only have been better if Andrea, Flora and Kurt were there with us.



As much fun as the day was it was also tiring. We could hardly wait to get back to our room at the Apollon Hotel. The hotel was recently renovated so had the latest conveniences such as an elevator (we were on the 5th floor), air conditioning, modern bathroom and is conveniently located just a half block from Chrise's house. When Louise mentioned to the desk clerk that the room was rather petite we received a quick lecture on what to expect from a two star hotel. Large rooms and a place to put your luggage are not in the specifications. If Louise needed to move from one side of the bed to the other, I had to go into the bathroom and close the door till she passed.



Since we were on the top floor, the French mansard roof created another problem. That's the one that tilts back and looks so great from the street. Our room was a corner one so we had six walls instead of the usual four and one of them tilted dramatically forcing us to walk in an articulated position going around the

bed. Not usually a problem in daylight but another matter heading for the bathroom in the dark.

All in all, we enjoyed our stay at the Apollon but the focus is on that memorable day in Paris when we renewed our promises and our love. Next adventure is the second honeymoon. Louise and Ray