

B55 SEEKING REFUGE IN ROMONT, SWITZERLAND

PROJECT: EUROPE 2011

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The last miles to Romont, Switzerland are through rolling hillsides and richly green pastureland. This isn't the Switzerland of high Alpen mountains but of meadows whose grass ultimately ends up in cheeses that are world renown.

Romont's origins weren't anywhere near the peaceful, bucolic scene we're seeing today. It's a medieval town perched on the highest rock it could find. To make things even more secure, Romont surrounded itself with steep battlements and walkways on top to easily move defenses where they'd be needed. On the very top of the rock are towers that look out over great



distances. Perfect for spotting trouble on its way. If it came, they were ready for it. These ramparts would be the MG's final challenge. It had to get up the hill without boiling over. It made it...just.

But history isn't the reason we've driven all this distance. Romont is also the birthplace, and now retirement home, of long time friend and affable competitor Charly Page. After completing university in



nearby Fribourg, Charly moved to Lausanne and began his long career in advertising and film/ videotape production. He formed his own production company and we met in 1984 while working on a combined project for Lausanne based Philip Morris.

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We've maintained a friendship over the years that included a visit to our home by Charly and his son, Jonathan. He took the profit from the production company and his Lausanne home and wisely invested it in an apartment building designed by his architect brother. Many times he has asked us to visit so today was payback time and we were at his door.



He graciously turned his apartment in this building over to us, even going so far as to stock it with food and drink that would last us two weeks. Even better, he had complete cable television connections (we hadn't seen the news in weeks) and direct connection to WiFi (called WeeFee here in French-speaking Romont) so we could check our e-mail.



We've had wonderful accommodations in the past but this ranked right up near the top. Louise's nesting instincts popped out and she immediately began a wash and then planned tomorrow's breakfast. I was pleased to learn she still had those skills. My assignment was to fetch croissants first thing tomorrow.



(No, that's not a picture on the oven. It's a reflection of our view.)



Charly's apartment sits in the shadow of the home where he was born and raised. It's a beautiful example of what we consider Swiss chalet architecture and looks like it would have been a kick to live there as a child. It is currently occupied by Charly's brother, a retired priest and his older sister. At one time Charly must have had a wild streak and they think they still need to keep an eye on him.



It had been a long, hard day but there were still some things to do. We put the iPad2 to work downloading e-mail while Charly got on the phone with a trusted mechanic who agreed to squeeze the MG in if we got it there early the next day. We had one encouraging e-mail from a man in Bordeaux who claimed strong interest in the car but wanted to see it first. "Can you run it by?" was his question. After computing the mileage I decided to write one last e-mail to the German family we met in England in the Aston Martin parking lot. I just had a hunch. But now it was time to enjoy Switzerland. Tomorrow Charly promised to take us to the village of Gruyere. "There," he said, "You'll taste the real stuff."

Louise and Ray, currently in cheese heaven.