

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR YOUR GENERATION

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LIVING WELL *50 Plus*

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TAKES LW50+ EDITOR
HALFWAY AROUND
THE WORLD



TRAVEL

Cruising on the Rhone

Despite rising water, voyage still was wonderful experience



by Jan Ross,
Staff Writer

The beautiful Rhone River wanders right through

Southern France, so one of the best ways to see the area is on a river cruise. We had planned to do just that on a cruise with Viking River Cruises, but we were stymied because the Rhone River was uncooperative and just too filled with water to allow any cruising. Because the river cruise ships in Europe have to navigate low bridges and locks, high water means no cruising. No matter, Viking River Cruises stepped up and gave us a wonderful experience in Southern France even though we were not able to cruise the itinerary.

We spent the first two days at a lovely hotel in the medieval city of Avignon, where we had planned to begin our cruise journey anyway. Avignon is surrounded by an ancient stone wall that really makes

you appreciate the fortifications needed to defend a city in those days. We toured the huge Palais des Papes (Popes' Palace), one of the most visited monuments in France. Several popes lived there in the early 1300s and made Avignon the seat of the papacy rather than Rome.

We were thrilled to finally board the Viking Delling after a bus ride to Vienne, where we toured a remarkably well-preserved Roman amphitheater. The Viking Delling is a gorgeous "Viking longship" with open areas that have plenty of large windows and comfortable seating. It also features very nice staterooms. We were in a Verandah stateroom, which was like a comfortable hotel room complete with a flat-screen television and free movies. It had a perfect little verandah for watching the river and the scenery. One of the nicest areas on the ship and one that is unique in river cruising was the Aquavit Terrace, an open-air restaurant on the bow. It had plenty

of seating in either sun or shade. You can order a casual meal or partake of a buffet on the terrace.

From Vienne, we did the only true cruising of the week as we journeyed to Lyon, where we docked for the rest of the cruise. It was unfortunate we couldn't cruise more, but that was certainly not Viking's fault, and the cruise line was determined we would still have a wonderful vacation experience, which we did.

We had a great day in Arles, the site of some impressive Roman ruins, and also enjoyed a tour of Lyon with its Gothic cathedral and ancient Roman past. Since we were docked in Lyon, we were able to also explore the city in a leisurely manner on our own, which was nice.

As a special treat because we had been inconvenienced, we were taken to the town of Perouges, which was an interesting experi-

ence. Maintained as a medieval town, the cobblestone streets and ancient buildings were truly fascinating.

Although we didn't technically have a cruise with Viking River Cruises, we still enjoyed every minute of our trip and absolutely recommend this mode of travel for anyone who wants to visit the south of France.

Viking River Cruises stepped up and gave us a wonderful experience in Southern France.

