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Sunday, November 28, 2010

Cruising with AmaWaterways: Day One in Paris!



by, Jan Ross

Technically, this was our second day in Paris but since our first day consisted of the spellbinding experience of driving into Paris (Paris! Paris! We're actually in Paris!) after leaving Trier, Germany in the morning and touring Luxemburg in the afternoon, checking into the lovely Le Meridien Etoile, ordering room service and then falling into bed, that didn't seem like a great introduction to Paris! Many of our traveling companions ventured out into the city since it really was very early but we decided to postpone our first real experience with the City of Lights until we had some rest.

AmaWaterways offered the Paris tour as an optional add-on to the wine



Who is Jan Ross?

Stay in touch!

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Posts about my wine-tasting
river cruise with
AmaWaterways in
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Welcome to the MS
AmaLegro Wine-
Tasting Cruise!

Cheese Tasting and
Dutch Waffles Make A
Delicious ...

Welkom in Amsterdam!

The Auberge Bonaparte
Hotel in Montreal

Nuances Restaurant at
the Casino de
Montreal

Archaeology Museum,
Notre Dame Basilica

tasting river cruise but, seriously? Who could pass up visiting Paris? Not us. They also offered a bus tour of Paris the first day as part of the package. We decided that we would get up when we woke up and, if that happened to coincide with the bus tour, we would hop aboard and, if not, we would make our own way. We made it downstairs by 9:00, just as everyone was bundling up to leave. Our wonderful tour guide, Sue, who had accompanied us to Paris, encourage us to grab a bite to eat, throw on our coats and join them. But we decided to have a more leisurely breakfast and make our own way.



We saw these little neighborhood markets all over Europe.

A wonderful buffet breakfast was included with our stay at Le Meridien Etoile so we took our time and enjoyed that, then bundled up to make our own way about the city. AmaWaterways had set up a desk in the lobby of the hotel and were very helpful with providing us with any information and support we needed. This was very reassuring and helpful in this big city that we had never visited.

One of the nicest things about staying at this hotel, which is the one AmaWaterways uses for their guests in Paris and is completely fabulous in every way, is that there is a mall right across the street. There are tons of shops, an ATM, and a huge grocery store in the basement. You should know that France has a unique way of numbering the floors in buildings. They start with 0, then -1, then 1. Truly unique. Anyway, that grocery store is fabulous. They have great, fresh sandwiches, a bakery, deli - it's the perfect place to get some snacks or even a meal to take back to your room. We got sandwiches, chips, bakery items and drinks one night and had a lovely (and very cheap) dinner in our room.

Le Meridien Etoile is very, very close to the **Champs-Elysees**, which of course you know is one of the most famous streets in Paris! We began our personal walking tour by strolling up this street, marveling at all the shops and sidewalk cafes, and ended up at the **Arc de Triomphe** which, let me tell you, is HUGE. We had no idea it was so big!

and Great ...

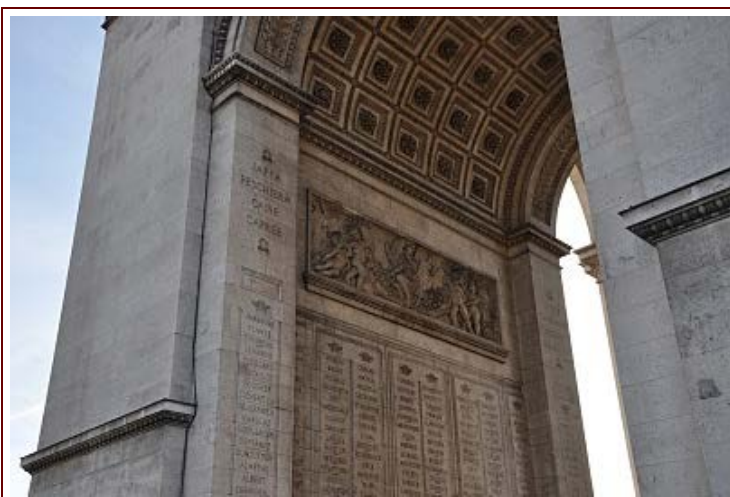
Montreal Tower,
Botanical Garden, and
Metro - Oh, ...

Bienvenue a Montreal

It's Not Too Late For An
AmaWaterways Wine
Tasting...

G'day, Mate!

- October (9)
- September (3)
- August (4)
- July (5)
- June (4)
- May (11)
- April (5)
- March (9)
- February (8)
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Also, we were almost killed here. OK, that's possibly an exaggeration, but we didn't know that you are supposed to use the underground entrance to the Arc, so we crossed the road that circles around it. This road has no lanes and the French drivers are slightly insane, so we were lucky to make it across. It wasn't until we got ready to leave that we noticed the underground entrance. So, if you visit the Arc de Triomphe? Use the underground entrance. We were very impressed with this incredible and beautiful monument.

Next, we decided to walk to the **Eiffel Tower**. We could SEE it, so how far away could it be really? Yeah. Pretty far. Luckily, we are both in pretty good shape and made it in surprisingly good health, considering it was about a mile from the Arc de Triomphe. Adding on the mile or we walked from the hotel, we did a lot of walking! But it was walking through Paris, so how can you complain!



Sidewalk cafe - you know you are in Paris now!

We walked across this gorgeous bridge which I later discovered was the **Pont de Alexandre III** which, seriously, was the most beautiful bridge I have ever seen IN MY LIFE.



Pont de Alexandre III.

From there, we just wandered along the Seine, keeping the Eiffel Tower in our view until we realized that finding a restroom was a priority. By this time, we had left the cafes behind and there seemed to be no restrooms in sight. Luckily, we stumbled upon the **American Church in Paris** where they not only kindly let us use their restrooms, but were also having probably the most charming little Christmas market I have ever seen. They had beautiful, handmade items, lovely baked goods and a whole room full of books. We managed to add a few things to our European purchases collection and then headed on to the Eiffel Tower.



View from our little sidewalk cafe.

We were meeting some friends we had made on the MS Amalegro for dinner at a cafe by their little hotel near the Eiffel Tower, so we killed a little time by having some drinks at a darling little cafe where we could actually SEE the Eiffel Tower as we had our orange presse, a tart and lovely drink I had for the first time here. It's time like this, sitting in a sidewalk cafe in Paris looking at the Eiffel Tower, that I find it hard to believe I am actually having this experience. But I was. And it was wonderful.



Sidewalk cafe one block from the Eiffel Tower.

Next, we wandered around a little park by the Eiffel Tower, taking pictures and trying to avoid the dozens of vendors who were selling cheap little replicas of the Tower and scarves with the Tower on them and little, automated dogs that bounced all over the sidewalks and then we headed to their hotel to wait for our friends in the lobby. We met up with no problem and headed to another sidewalk cafe where we had probably the best meal of our lives and I realize I keep saying that we had the best meal of our lives but honestly. Each one was better than the last.

We had no intention of making that long walk again so we summoned a taxi and headed back to our hotel for a well-deserved rest. Taxi fare was surprisingly reasonable in Paris; we only paid about \$15 Euro for that ride.

Our next day in Paris we took advantage of one of the optional tours offered by AmaWaterways and I'll tell you all about that in my last post about our trip.

When you are ready to travel with AmaWaterways, [The Travel Authority](#) is ready to help you plan that trip. You can call 1-877-AXP-1515 for information and details about these cruises. Be sure to print out this post or mention the code BLAMA to get the best deal on your trip. I would love to hear your suggestions for future blog posts. You can comment below or contact me by email at jan.ross@thetravelauthority.com. Thanks for reading - I truly appreciate it!
Safe travel!



POSTED BY KYLE WINKLER AT 3:30 PM

REACTIONS: ☐ funny () ☐ interesting () ☐ helpful ()



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