

Jim and Emmy's Travel Journal

The Country of Monaco

1979, 1980, 1983, and 1988

We have visited the Principality of Monaco on four different years. It is located on the Mediterranean Sea, on the French Riviera, just a few miles west of Italy. It is surrounded on one side by the Sea, and on the other three by the country of France. It is almost impossible to travel through this area without crossing and recrossing Monaco, and there is no formal border with France.

In 1980 we spent one night in a hotel in Monte Carlo, the night of our 29th wedding anniversary, and we have driven, and parked, and walked here on each of the four years, but since there is no campsite in the tiny country, except for the one night in a hotel, we spent the other nights in France, once to the east, but usually to the west of Monaco.

It would be redundant to repeat this information for each year, as we crossed the border more than once, each time we were here.

1979

F, Cannes, Nov 16, Fri - 52

Today we drove along the coast toward Monaco, and found ourselves on a road high above the town.

We drove down a steep switchback road (where Princess Grace died some years later), to look around the Casino and other places in the city. Monaco is on the side of a mountain, right on the coast. Most of the streets zigzag back and forth parallel to the Mediterranean Sea, while there are blocks of stair steps going up and down the Monte Carlo hillside. The yacht basin had a few visitors, but nothing too big and fancy.

We had a picnic lunch on the walkway along the beach near the Loews Hotel. The hotel is built along the coast and down the cliff toward the Mediterranean Sea, and a Monte Carlo street runs through a tunnel inside the hotel.

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F, Menton, Nov 17, Sat - 53 - 151 - 9,670

We left the campsite at 7:30 this morning and drove back to see the palace in Monaco.

At each street where we tried to drive up the hill, the police would stop us and indicate we are not allowed. We saw other trucks going up, but we had to find a parking place, then walk. When we got near to the palace, we found they

were setting up barricades for a ceremony of some kind. The Monte Carlo police didn't understand we were just going to drive through, and not park for the day, nor did they probably care.

1980

Drove on to Monaco to find a hotel room for our 29th anniversary. Tried the Hotel de Paris, but they have no rooms—would have been frightfully expensive if they had any. Went to the Hotel Mirabeau and checked into what they would call a nice room, which wasn't really bad. The floor was covered with what appeared to be indoor/outdoor carpet. There was no vanity area, and the hot water wasn't very. Hotel Mirabeau did have a king size bed, and on a Monaco TV station, we watched the televised version of the Pope's visit to Paris.

The Cokes in the small refrigerator were about \$2 each, and there was a complete supply of other things to drink—cost plenty for anything consumed, of course. The Hotel Mirabeau had a list of what was in the refrigerator to begin with, and would compare that to what was left when we left—and we left it all.

Jim walked around the city while Emmy rested, then washed her hair, etc. Jim bought some hair curlers that Emmy needed, and the heater from the camper worked great as a hair dryer. Emmy would have felt much better if she had used hair conditioner instead of “wash and spray!” She had put the conditioner in another bottle, and had neglected to label it!

About 8:00 PM we went out to dinner to celebrate our 29th anniversary. We had looked around and tried to select a good restaurant, and decided on the Loews Hotel. This hotel is built on the edge of a cliff overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. There are several floors above ground level, and it extends down the cliff for many floors. There's an expressway tunnel going through the Loews Hotel at what would be the top of the cliff, so traffic can get from here to there.

The restaurant is on the top floor, and overlooks the Mediterranean Sea on one side and the city on the other. The Mediterranean looks very glassy and green from here tonight, not brilliant blue as on other occasions. Monaco's Loews Hotel is filled with people from the Kimball Organ Company, from the US.

First we were served a small cold square of pizza, then some cold garlic bread with some olive paste on it, and Emmy had some fish chowder with garlic sauce. Emmy also had chicken and eggplant, and a tomato and cheese side dish. She said the chicken was maybe as good as she would get from the bar-b-que in a super market, but the other items were not too good. Jim had a sirloin steak that would have been returned if it had been served at Sambo's. The service was not only slow, but was not performed in a professional manner, either.

Later there was a plate of cheese, including goat cheese from Provence, then pistachio ice cream, a bowl of fruit, some cookies and candy. Total cost of the meal at Loews Monte-Carlo Hotel was an exorbitant (for what it was) \$53.

When we first came in the restaurant, Jim asked for one of the empty tables near the window overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, and was informed they were reserved. Of course no one ever came in for those tables, so we figured they were reserved for someone with a large tip. This is Wedding Anniversary Dinner #29, and on a scale of 1 to 29, the Hotel Loews Monte-Carlo, ranks 29th, and will rank 30, 31, 32, and on as the years pass! (1992—It's now 40th, but the Cask and Cleaver in Rancho Mirage in 1991, is ranked a close 39th!)

It stays light until after 9:00 PM and the city was very beautiful as the lights took effect and the sun set. At 11:00 PM there was a huge fireworks display, but perhaps the large explosion was an accident. It was as if a one hour fireworks show lasted a minute. It was spectacular, proving Monaco really does or does not, know how to put on a fireworks show!

MC, Monte-Carlo, Jun 3, Tue

As we checked out of the hotel, we found they had charged us for a phone call we had not made.

Seems when we asked if it was possible to place a call to Linda at a certain time, the operator called Linda to see if she would be at home, and charged us \$25 for the call. For some other reason, when we were ready to call her, the call never went through. Jim got a hold of management and after an argument they agreed to refund the \$25.

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We drove to Monaco to get our money back from the hotel. Now they found they had forgotten to charge us the "service charge" when they made out the bill, so we got nothing back after all, but a very dumb thing for them to make a call like that, then charge us for it. In most restaurants in Europe a service charge and the tip is added to the bill before the customer sees it. This hotel had a charge for the room, and an additional percentage for "service."

Really makes no sense to us. Why don't they just price their goods or services to include everything, and why don't they do that in the US also! We find it annoying on a cruise ship for example, they charge so many dollars for each day of the cruise before it starts, then "suggest" that we pay another so many dollars as a tip, when the cruise is over.

1983

Since we are going to arrive in Italy when the banks are closed, we went to the Bank of Roma in Monte-Carlo and obtained Italian Lire. At the bank we met some people from Palm Springs. Linda says the whole area reminds her of California. We went into the Monte Carlo Casino, lost about \$1. Linda discovered the marble-looking columns, aren't.

1988

We stopped for a picnic lunch, and spent some time talking to a very nice man we met at the sea-wall, just east of the Loews Hotel. Then went on to visit with Emmy's cousins and the friends they were visiting in Menton, France, just east of Monaco.