

Meeting Dali – January, 2014

Figueres, Spain lies on the Mediterranean just south of the French border. It's the birthplace of Salvador Dali, and home of a major Dali museum.

Getting there is half the fun. Anzie, son Rowan and his beautiful girl friend, Kali, accompanied me on an overnight. After Perpignan we took the coastal road, parts of which reminded us of traveling Big Sur: narrow roads, hairpin switchbacks clinging to granite cliffs soaring above precipitous drops to the sea.

At the suggestion of Don Snyder, former PanAm pilot and regular guest at our B&B, we stopped for lunch in Collioure, France – located right on the border. We just happened upon a restaurant where we experienced a most memorable lunch. We ate fresh anchovies – totally different than the canned variety we're used to. Rowan raved about his pumpkin soup with a nice dollop of foie gras swimming in it.

We left the restaurant, and followed our bellies across the street to the beach. It was then we noticed a walkway that hugged rocky cliffs. We followed the walkway and came upon a scenic port nestled at the base of the cliffs. The charm of the village attracted a number of famous artists: Matisse, Derain, Braque and Picasso. A fun way to discover Collioure is to follow the "chemin du Fauvisme". It's a walk that is interspersed with twenty reproductions of paintings by Matisse and Derain, placed at the exact points where they were painted.

Figueres, Spain is a good-sized town. We always prefer to stay near the center of the old town. The old town is especially busy on a weekend night: buskers, musicians, a lively bar and restaurant crowd.

The Dali Museum is well worth the visit, both from the standpoint of the art and the architecture. Our two-hour tour gave us a renewed respect for Dali's imagination and talent. Sure we saw examples of his iconic wilted watches, but most of the pieces are unfamiliar. One extraordinary piece covers a space of about 10' x 10'. It's a series of foot-square pictures, some with images, some without. One is a portrait of Abraham Lincoln. It all seems a blur until you stand on the opposite side of the room. Suddenly you realize that the entire work is a large, pixellated portrait of Abraham Lincoln,

Dali was right-brain as well as left-brain gifted. Many of his pieces are mechanical: insert a euro and a mechanism will turn an agglomeration of fabric strips into a picture.

Another exhibit displays Dali's talent as a jeweler: a jeweled eyeball, for instance.

The exterior museum architecture expresses without a doubt that it is the house of Dali. What other building would be decorated with large eggs?

A la prochaine,

Chuck & Anne