



Enchanting Detours

Time plays tricks in France with the regularity of an accomplished mischief-maker – perhaps, it's the mere footsteps from 5th to 18th century artifacts and architecture. A special friend, Olivier, invited our Parisienne friends and us for a weekend visit at his country home in the Loire Valley. He treated us to a quiet hospitality that seemed to expand our weekend by several days.

Olivier launched our arrival with a late afternoon lunch at his 200-year-old farmhouse. Roasted chicken, potatoes, warmed goat cheese salad and wine spread before us on the long wood table by the window. Our host dismissed thoughts of a nap with his well-planned itinerary.



We begin with a short drive to wander the lanes of La Borne for an enchanting tour of the quaint pottery village. Known for imaginative designs and wood kilns, Borne has gained its international reputation for the “fired clay” process used by the potters. Well over a dozen artisans ply their trade in this tiny hamlet. We walk from one small studio to another to admire the art and enjoy the artists.



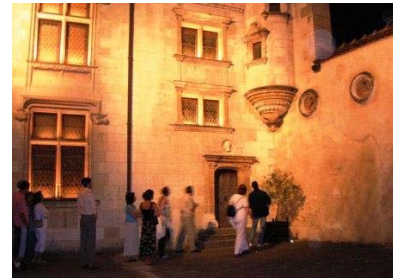
The ville, lanes and people call to mind the pioneer village attractions in the States that are devoted to remembering past traditions and trades. The difference? This is a living, authentic community with little need to resurrect the history they seem to be creating.



Next a tour of Olivier's dream in progress – a video and sound production facility for accomplished musicians and artists. In the Thoreau-like setting of the Western Loire Valley, Olivier shares his passionate vision for the professional artists who will produce their work here with state-of-the-art facilities and comfortable surroundings.

Still more on the agenda -- time to 'caravan' to Bourges for 'the light show'. We hail from the world's renowned attraction centre – Orlando. What IS a light show in Bourges, France, in the Loire Valley? We would soon learn that some shows don't require the Hollywood touch.

Bourges is well practiced and prepared. The city maps our route with blue streetlights. "Turn here," they suggest. "Stop there." The cathedral casts Gothic shadows over cobbled streets, and delicate tissue hearts spill down the steps from a wedding that had taken place that morning.



We hear music and see people turn ahead. We

follow and find ourselves in ancient courtyards where lights cast Medieval stories on courtyard walls. Sixty people (more?) share this medieval moment. The minstrel music is but a backdrop to the light show. With friends and strangers, we are at once together and alone to imagine those who lived along these ancient Streets. It is the magic of French festivals of summer.

VISIT BOURGE ON LINE

Each summer The Cultural Agency of Bourges organizes a "genuine Summer Season Show to which the City of Bourges invites us to discover the hidden charms of its medieval and pastoral architecture." <http://www.bourges.fr/>

Our last day, Olivier reserved a special trek to Sancerre and dinner under the stars, but that story deserves a special 'Chapter' of its own – stay tuned!

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