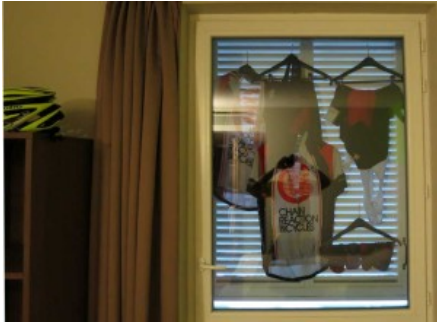


Trophy case with Star Trek-quality lens flare?



Chain Reaction's Trophy Case at Arena Hotel near Grenoble

So what sort of person who's traveled to France, what, 11 times now?, discovers that he forgot to pack his cycling jerseys and shorts? Actually, at the last second said person did toss in one pair of shorts & jersey, for good measure. Thankfully. But what type of person does/doesn't do that? Apparently one who wants to do laundry each night! Thankfully it's been quite warm here in France, so things do dry overnight if left out (in this case, the window opens up to a shutter, which has become the hanging device for the clothes to dry on). The lens flare reference is to the two recent Star Trek movies, where the director, JJ Abrams, believes that a scene without lens flare is like a hot dog without mustard.



Apparently Cesar's had his problems with pigeons too!

It was the 'Tours rest day and a travel day for us, leaving Avignon and heading first to Orange, to finally see the Roman Amphitheater that we rode to but couldn't enter on Saturday (no place to leave our bikes since we didn't have locks). No real drama once we figured out the ultimate travel tool was the latest & greatest Google Maps that gives directions by talking to you! What a difference that makes when driving around France, where road layout can often be incredibly confusing. And it gets even-worse when you can't take the direct route because it's a toll road and you're not sure it's going to accept your credit card (which you don't find out until you try to exit, causing some real problems for me last year when I visited the Loire Valley with my wife). From Orange we took a slightly-goofy route to Grenoble where we're staying in a pretty oddly-placed hotel 3 miles out of town.



If asked how you'd like your meat cooked in France, I suggest "incinÃ©rÃ©" and you might get the American equivalent of medium-rare.

Curiously, we had our first issue with "French" food today, at a place called "Flunch", a kind of low-rent Chilis found in some shopping centers. The mistake we made was ordering hamburgers, which unfortunately are cooked fresh for you. Unfortunate because if it had sat around for a while it might have been a bit less raw. I've had milkshakes that took more effort to drink than this hamburger took to eat; it was difficult to tell where the meat ended and the bun began. I never considered that a well-done burger or steak (as I generally like them) requires more effort to eat.

Tomorrow we do our second "free" ride, no stage to see. We'll find some hills, of course, but not yet sure if we're going to do one of the cool cliff-hugging roads like we found two years ago, or something a bit closer by (that we could ride to). It's really unfortunate that local train service has been shut down this year so the line can be modernized... that means a lot of extra driving! But thank goodness for Google Maps, as mentioned previously.



Truly, this Coke's for You (Kevin)!



Panorama shot of Roman amphitheater in Orange, France



I have never seen such HUGE meringue before, chocolate at that!