



GS Road Trip Europe-Casablanca.

(Tarifa 25th April)

Friends, it's been only two weeks since we left Brisbane and only 11 days since we left London. The GS keeps a great pace. We've travelled London-Paris-Nantes-San Sebastian (Espana), Porto and Lisbon, then across Gibraltar strait to Tangier in Morocco.

We'll do London when using up our end margin in August. Paris is familiar ground with this our fourth visit now. We stayed at the same camping ground cabin in the Central Park of Paris, Bois De Boulogne. Still, we spent a couple of hours touring Champs Elysses and getting some great iconic photos. Further down in France, Ann had picked some special roads and attractions to visit, giving a zig zag course for good reasons. Every night accommodation was a surprise. We managed one camping at San Sebastian, that we can recommend and some awesome places to visit. In San Sebastian, "pick pockets" stole some items off the bike, but only stuff of little or no value, the rest were at the camp site. Amazing that they bothered, but beware.

You need a swag of notes for all the toll roads. None of the Toll Roads we've found so far accepted the Australian Credit Card (note). Once we were in country-side Portugal, the automated tolls based on the registration plate were of course free for us, which were at least 80% of a lot of Toll roads.

The toll roads were great for navigational ease, fast miles (120kph, but many go faster), great high up un-impeded views and safe travel without hassles from the temperamental activities of some local traffic. You still want to turn off the highway now and then for great bargains in restaurants, fuel, shopping and most of all accommodation. Prices and value in Portugal and Spain were great.

Crossing over to Africa, we recommend Tarifa-Tangier, which was totally trouble free and quick. (at least in that direction). Then for safe and easy access down the coast, there's awesome 120kph highway all the way to Casablanca. In Tangier we found our Honeymoon Hotel from 39 years ago, still going strong. Tangier had grown a lot since then. Pollution was irritating and we didn't stay long.

Casablanca was impressive in many ways. Most road rules appear to be more like guidelines. When traffic slowed to 5 kph or less in the CBD, elderly, children, business people just mixed with traffic, crossing any which way. Oh, and very fast between it all, motor scooters trikes and motorbikes. Cars also lane filtered. There were really no lanes. In short, chaos. There was a layer of exhaust covering it all from old worn out vehicles, 4 stroke, 2 stroke and black smoke diesels. It was quite intense and dangerous. You could not stop for a mother with two kids in the traffic in the middle of an intersection or roundabout, cause you would cause an accident, possibly involving the mother. Safest for all was to keep pressing on at the same rhythm as everyone else. We parked at our hotel's underground car park with resident old man watching our bike all night and walked for over 2 hours instead. The huge Mosque in Casablanca was very impressive, the Medina markets were also fun.

Next day, we rode right back 460 k north for Spain via ferry. The landscapes, country peoples chores and much interesting scenery still making the trip all worthwhile. To return, we chose Ceuta (Sebta) a Spanish enclave. The very high crossing over mountain tops was an euphoric ride. If you go, don't take the Ceuta crossing, as the Passport control appeared quite corrupt.

There's drug running, a wave of refugees and one refugee rushing the gate (mother of 4) shot dead by police the day before. Traffic was jammed in very long queues. Often erupting in a cacophony of car horns in desperation.

We gave in after multiple requests for "tips" by a middle-man in the mafia style setup (in civilian clothes), we were waved through three major "controls" very quickly (passing everyone else), totalling 150 Euro in "tips". I can only assume the loot was eventually split by the various roles in the setup. Instead, if you go, then go back to Tangier (or Tangier ME which we can't speak for) and do your passports control on the other side of Gibraltar straight, in mainland Spain.

Next is East coast Spain, South France and on to Italy.

And we've had less than 2 weeks riding 5,647 k and as always, lovin it.

Regards Michael and Ann and our GS (Violet)

