

2003 SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

Friday October 10, 2003. My friend Lou Smith kindly gave me a ride to the airport. Check-in was very stressful. The airport was packed with people. The first wheelchair they brought was too wide for me to hold my wheel-on between my feet. We got into security. I put my computer in a separate box for screening, and then was told to stand on two painted footprints. That's when the bells and whistles started. I was told to take off my shoes and run them through the scanner. I had to walk barefoot through the x-ray. Barefoot on a slippery marble floor is not my idea of a good time. Half way through I reached out and touched the side to steady myself, causing even more bells and whistles. So I was pulled aside for more scanning by the wand. They even x-rayed my shoes again. I must have looked like a real terrorist.

Reached the Elite lounge before Martha who was coming in from Cincinnati. We boarded the plane for Barcelona, with a delayed departure for a large group coming in on a connection. I ate about half a dinner and put on my shades and went to sleep.

Saturday, October 11. Woke about a half hour before landing and managed a quick breakfast. It was 11:30 Barcelona time. The man who pushed my wheelchair seemed to be in charge of all the wheelchair pushers and spent most of his time on a cell phone. At last we got ourselves and our luggage packed into a tiny cab and went on to Le Meridien Barcelona. After a short wait we were sent to our room on the fifth floor overlooking the street and the building under construction across from us. Our room is nicely furnished but small. After a bath, we climbed into bed and slept. At three-thirty we woke and decided we had to get up or we would not sleep at night. Martha and I went out on Las Ramblas and strolled with half the population of Barcelona. Birds were for sale, and the shops ranged from souvenirs to art galleries. Mimes and street musicians were there to entertain us. Las Ramblas is a wide boulevard with a wide promenade down the middle. Once it was a river long since disappeared. In fact, the metro now runs beneath the promenade. Narrow streets branch away from it like ribs on a skeleton. The architecture was eclectic. Many of the older buildings are being gutted and rebuilt inside. When we got tired we stopped at a café and had Tapas, assorted little dishes. It was mandated that you had to eat while drinking so cheese was placed on top of a wine glass so you would have a snack with your drink. It also kept the flies out. We had artichokes, small crab fritters, paella and smoked salmon, all for about \$10.00. Walked some more finding Catalunya Square with its lovely fountains. Stopped at a grocery to buy some water. Then we found another Tapas place and had calamari, marinated baby clams, and aubergines (eggplant). I was ready to go back to the hotel by 8:30.

Sunday, October 12, 2003. Barcelona has been a major port since Roman Times. Toward the end of the nineteenth century many artists left their mark here. The city claims to have the most art nouveau buildings in Europe. The very air bristles with innovation.

We started with the Miró museum atop Montjuic hill. Juan Miró (1893-1983) was born in Barcelona but went to Paris after Franco came into power in 1919. He returned to Spain in 1940 and lived on Majorca, where he died. In the Museum are drawings from his childhood and they already show his great genius. He was very avant-garde and he dabbled in all forms of art. His humor is evident throughout his art and the museum is a very lighthearted place to tour.

We caught a taxi to the Picasso museum housed in some medieval palaces. Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga and came to Barcelona when he was fourteen. In his early twenties he moved to Paris to study. His opposition to Franco kept him there. The museum was opened in 1963 featuring the works of James Sabartes. Following Sabartes' death in 1968, Picasso donated many of his own paintings to the museum which now honors both artists. Like Miró, Picasso's genius starts to show in his childhood paintings. Some of the paintings from his blue and rose periods are also there.

After two museums back-to-back we came back to the hotel and slept for several hours. This night was our welcome cocktail party and dinner where we met Mary Owens our tour leader and the other 37 people in the tour! While there are far too many of them, they all seem very nice. There is another mother-daughter, even a father-daughter, combination. There is even another couple from Atlanta, Stanley and Alice Shapiro who live not far from me in Sandy Springs. They even lived for a time in Foxcroft. It will be several days until I sort them all out.

Monday, October 13. Many of the museums are closed on Monday so it is good we arrived a day early. The group was broken in two for our walking tour of the old part of the city. Our guide was Sonia and we walked down Las Ramblas as she pointed out the great variety of architecture. The Viceroy of Peru, at the age of eighty, married a sweet young thing and they built a baroque palace on Las Ramblas. He died

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after one year but she lived on for a long time and the building was called the palace of the Vice Queen of Peru, even though she never went to Peru. Nearby was a market originally a monastery dedicated to St Joseph. In 1835, the monastery was abandoned and the site became an open-air market. It is now covered and known as the market of St Joseph. We walked through admiring the tasteful displays of fruits and vegetables. In the meat department there were veal heads, which are considered a delicacy. Sonia said her brother particularly liked to eat the eyes, but she didn't like to watch him do so. I wouldn't like it either. There was a mosaic façade on an old building that started out as a pasta shop but is now a cake shop. One interesting building was decorated with umbrellas and a tiled Chinese dragonhead. This is the Baron Quadras House that opened in 1855. It now houses a bank. The opera house was originally built in 1848 but it burned. However, the façade was preserved for the rebuilt opera house.

Then we turned into the narrow streets of the old quarter. An old church, now called St Mary's of the Pine Tree, dates from the 14th century. It has the largest rose window in Barcelona. The square before it originally had pine trees but only one symbolically remains. Narrow streets branch out from the square and no cars are allowed in after 11:00 AM. We finally came to a large open square where you could see the old Roman city walls. The Wall had only 74 towers for Barcelona was a small town. The wall obscured the view of the cathedral so its façade was unimportant. In the 20th century part of the wall was removed and a new façade made, the one we now see. The difference between a church and a cathedral is that a cathedral holds a bishops seat. Inside we saw various chapels that had originally belonged to various guilds. Sonia ushered us into the choir, which was in the center of the basilica. All around were the coats of arms of the Counts of Barcelona that date from 1518. The pulpit was very beautifully carved. The crypt, with its large entrance was in front of it. Legend says the first Christian burial is said to have been a young girl who died in 303. In the cloister were 13 large well-fed white geese, the watchdogs of the place. If anyone came their honking would alert the monks. It looked like somebody was going to have a succulent goose dinner. Included in the complex is the palace of the House of Aragon. Catherine of Aragon, who married Henry VIII of England, was raised here. It was also here that Christopher Columbus came with news of his discovery for the Spanish rulers, Ferdinand and Isabella. The throne moved to Madrid and the Inquisition took over the palace. Later still it became a convent. Sonia tells us that 3 meters below the surface are the remains of the old Roman City. It is possible to go down and see the excavations.

And so we came to Antoni Gaudi's (1852-1926) life work, the unfinished church of Sagrada Familia. Inspired by light and nature, Gaudi developed many architectural innovations such as the catenary arch that allowed for large open space below. The original architect for the church was let go after a financial crisis and Gaudi was hired to replace him. To this day, the cost of the church is raised through donations and entrance fees. Gaudi made his own plans for a modernist gothic church. The huge entrance showing the Passion façade has dramatic modern figures of Roman Guards and a naked Christ on the Cross. Sonia mentions that there were no underclothes at that time. Eight elaborate bell towers have been completed. There will be twelve to commemorate each Apostle. Gaudi designed them so that the music from the church will be heard all over the area. Still to come are the central towers, so tall, that the machinery to build them had to be invented. The original architect, Francisco de Paula Villar i Lozano, completed the crypt in 1882. Gaudi is entombed therein. Gaudi finished the apse above the crypt, but nothing else is complete. There will be five naves that will hold 5500-seated people. It is hoped that construction of the church will be completed within 20 years, but that may be optimistic. There is construction going on throughout the building. The columns of the naves have recently been put in place and are of different stone, granite, basalt, limestone and so forth. Their inspiration came from trees. There is still no roof or floor. The nativity façade I would describe as modern rococo gothic. Bordering the scene is an undulating cascade of stone that makes it look a bit like a wedding cake. Gaudi's color scheme is still not in place. The whole church is enchanting and must be seen in person to be fully appreciated.

We left in the bus to view two apartment buildings, more of Gaudi's masterpieces, and returned to the hotel to recharge our minds.

After a short rest we went out on Las Ramblas and found a Tapas bar. I pointed to what looked like a salade niccoise, with no lettuce, and was told it was an ensalada tuna! It was good and afterward Martha and I had some artichokes, but olive oil is not as good with them as butter would have been.

Then we caught a taxi to La Pedrera, Gaudi's most famous apartment house. People live in the building but the public can view the museum in the attic. We had radio guides and learned more than we really wanted to. There is not a straight line in the whole building. Everything is gracefully curved. Gaudi

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invented the parabolic arch that allowed the whole attic to be open and spacious. Some of the exhibits pointed out that Gaudi lived in the time of great innovation all over the world. The automobile, phonograph, airplane and so forth were being invented. His architectural inventions were equally innovative. Cone-like openings provided all the apartments with light. We climbed to the roof and had wonderful views of the city. All the chimney tops were embellished with some of his roman soldiers or other tiled shapes. We got to see one of the spacious apartments, furnished as it might have been in 1920. The whole design was of flowing space and light. I was ready to sign a lease immediately. It was all so beautifully done. Browsed the gift shops and returned to the hotel for R & R. I brought this journal up-to-date.

For dinner we went to the Set Portes (7 doors), a fish restaurant down near the harbor. It was an old established restaurant and the fish was delicious. My first course was spinach cooked with pine nuts, raisins and garlic. Delicious! Then I had steamed mussels. Martha had a gazpacho that was to die for and a fish platter that was more than she could eat. After dinner we walked a long way back along the waterfront to the Christopher Columbus statue at the end of Las Ramblas.

Tuesday, October 14. We were taken to the airport with its plump horse statue, carved by the Columbian artist, Boegaro. It was an hour-long flight to Granada. Once there we went to a tastefully decorated restaurant, La Ruta Del Veleta, for a pre-ordered lunch. After a salad I had a tasty fish, a bit more tasty than at least one of the guests wished.

We are here to tour the Alhambra, a magnificent Moorish fortress. Granada became the Moorish capital in 1222 and the Moors started to build the Alhambra in 1232. It took 100 years to complete. They sought to create their image of heaven on earth. Water played a large part in their paradise and the fortress has fountains and reflecting pools throughout. Wooden plaster molds created plaster decorations, many of Arab poems. There are elaborate wood ceilings and plazas lined with covered walkways adorned with Moorish archways. One ceiling contains 8000 wood pieces representing heaven. There is tile work and originally the windows were stained glass, but little of that remains. In 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella took over the palace, and they are buried in Granada. Charles V, the last Romanesque emperor used the palace. Later the palace fell into disrepair and has been restored, but the guide frequently pointed out that the tile or stuccowork, while original, might not all be in its original place.

We toured the Sultan's palace with its Fountain of Lions. In the harem, twelve stone lions surround a fountain. The guide said perhaps they represent the 12 tribes of Israel, but it also could be the 12 hours of the day. The Sultans Quarters were spacious, but across the courtyard were the even larger Sultana's Quarters. From here the Sultan's mother ruled the harem. It is all very impressive.

At the end we were ushered out into the large terraced modern garden. Sonia pointed out the many plants. The original palace had the gardens incorporated in the whole. Thee external gardens are lovely and many varieties of fruits and vegetables, as well as flowers are grown.

Then it was back on the bus for a two-hour drive to Ronda. We could see the snow-capped mountains of the Sierra Nevada. The countryside is rolling and semi-arid. The Moors, however, considered it very lush compared to the deserts from which they came. I was really stiff and sore when we arrived, in Ronda just before 7:00 PM

Ronda is built around a narrow and deep gorge and we are staying at the Parador de Ronda, a government run hotel, in the refurbished old City Hall. Our room has a small balcony. From it we can look directly down into the gorge, one hundred meters deep. The Nuevo Puerto (New Bridge) spans the gorge, replacing an older one. It was built in 1750. Part of the bridge was the old town jail. The Paradors are all known for their comfort and elegance and are housed in interesting abandoned buildings such as convents. When I was a travel agent, I sent many a client to these hotels and it was great to finally stay in one. Everyone on the tour wishes we could stay more days. Near the dining room is an interesting bronze of a headless pensioner counting his money. Headless so he could be any man, or perhaps he was old and had lost his mind. We had dinner and went to bed early.

Wednesday, October 15. Ronda held a strategic location on the frontier separating Christian from Moorish Spain. Later the town was popular with wealthy people who built summer places here. We were given a waking tour of the old citadel, which has clean white stucco buildings and narrow cobbled streets. It is mandated that the stucco be freshly whitewashed every year at Easter. There seems to be no leash law and various dogs escorted us. Miraculously there seems to be no dog residue. It has all been swept up around the trees. The town has three quarters, Jewish, Arab and Christian. (Someone wanted to

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know how three quarters could make a whole). Today there are 30000 Jews in the county. No one knows how many Moslems, since many of them are illegal (undocumented aliens as we are supposed to call them in the US) who come over from Morocco. The Arabs who were here when the Christians took over either fled or converted to Christianity. We looked into several entrances with their floral displays leading up to the door. We could see down the gorge an old bridge built by the Arabs. During times of siege there were 350 steps that led down through the fortifications to the river and bucket brigades brought the water up to the town. At a small square we found the Cathedral, built on the site of an old mosque, the minaret being incorporated into the steeple. There was a monastery for the Poor Clares on one side. An old soldier barracks, now the city hall, completes the square.

We entered the Casa di Bosco, an old Moorish house now a retirement home for priests. We entered through a small courtyard and went on to enjoy the spectacular view over the countryside.

Many famous people liked to come here: John Singer Sergeant and Orson Welles among others. The latter is buried here. Hemingway wrote *For Whom the Bell Tolls* about a famous battle here.

We crossed back over the bridge and the guide took us to the pedestrian street of shops. He pointed out an interesting balcony overlooking the street called the Birdcage. The modern side of Ronda is an important commercial center for the surrounding county. Thus the town has hardware and drugstores, numerous shoe stores and even some tourist shops near the hotel and Bull Ring.

The big site in Ronda is the Bull Ring. This is an historic monument, for it was here that the oldest ring for cape and sword fighting was built in 1785. Originally bull fighting was done on horseback but Philip V in the 18th century outlawed it. Pedro Romero, a famous bullfighter wrote what is considered to be the manual for cape bull fighting today. His colors were red and yellow, the colors of the flag of Spain. Bulls are color-blind but the movement of the cape is what attracts them. You enter the ring, passing a small chapel and museum and find two-level seating around a 60 meter round ring. We walked onto the dirt floor and the guide pointed out where the bulls come in and location two where Orson Welles liked to sit. There is a small-protected area where the bullfighter can run for protection near location 5. Today fights are limited to 20 minutes so that fewer bullfighters are killed. However the bull is always killed. Originally the meat was given to the poor but now it is considered a delicacy and brings a high price. We were shown where the butchery occurs. There are only three bullfights each summer today, six bulls and three fighters at each. The persons who set the rules of combat are the Mayor, a veterinarian and a retired bullfighter. In the museum we saw some of the elaborate costumes the matadors wore.

We were given some time to shop and Martha found some electrical tape to repair the battery holder on her camera. Then we had lunch at the Parador and soon were back on the bus for a drive up into the hills.

We stopped to see an olive oil factory, El Vincula where the family has been processing the oil in the old-fashioned way for 1600 years. Juan the proprietor, likes to flirt with all the ladies, and gave an entertaining talk on how the olives are picked and how carefully they are handled. The olives are brought to the mill and washed with water. The mill grinds the olives, including the pits and presses the mixture into a paste. The paste goes into a mixer with water for 25 days. The oil rises to the top and can be skimmed off and bottled. This is called the "first press" and is the highest quality oil. He scoffs at the terms virgin or extra virgin (how can a virgin be extra virgin). The whole process is done as it has been done for centuries. He told us all the many benefits of olive oil and we were each given a bottle to take home. Unfortunately we could only see a model of the mill since the roof was being repaired over the real one.

Back on the bus, it was two hours to Seville and the four-star Hotel Melia Colon. The dining room opens at 9:00 PM. After a short rest we were at dinner at 9:00 sharp. So was the rest of the group. None of us is used to such late dining. I had a tomato salad with anchovies, which wasn't all that great. The tomatoes weren't really ripe and the whole thing was smothered in goat cheese. Then I had lamb chops, which were very good except that, because of the way they were butchered, presented me with a small piece of bone at every bite. Strawberry ice cream was my desert.

Thursday, October 16. Seville, the fourth largest city in Spain, and capital of Andalusia, the Province we have been discovering. We are only 57 miles from the Atlantic and Seville used to be the main Port of Spain. The early explorers, Columbus, Magellan and so forth all started their journeys here. In 1992 they had an exposition celebrating the five hundredth anniversary of Columbus discovery. It was held on an island in the middle of the river Guadalquivir, which means big river. The island used to have a monastery on it. Thirteen bridges had to be built to give access to the exposition, one in particular is

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suspended in such a way that it looks like a harp. Our bus drove us by the various buildings, identifying the different country's pavilions.

Hercules founded Seville and Julius Caesar built the walls in 45 BC. It fell to the Moors and was Moorish until Ferdinand III liberated it in 1492. Originally there were 166 towers but only 7 are left. In the 19th century much of the wall was torn down as Seville expanded in size. Many famous people have been born here including Roman emperors Trajan and Hadrian. Carmen is the most famous of the several operas whose site is Seville.

Bitter orange trees shade the streets, and the oranges are shipped to England to be made into marmalade. There was another expo held in 1915 and we were shown some of these as well. The University of Seville now uses some of the buildings.

We were off loaded for our group picture and then went, four to a carriage, on a great carriage ride passed the Pavilion of Spain with its long arched arms. Each arm represents one of the provinces of Spain. Then we plunged into the heavy vehicular traffic, which didn't seem to disturb the horses a bit. The ride ended at the Seville Cathedral.

Before seeing the cathedral we were taken for a walk through Santa Cruz, the old Jewish quarter, with its narrow streets. At one point there were a lot of police and we came upon a car with the royal standard on it. King Philip must have come to shop! He is 31 years old and there is pressure on him to settle down, marry and have a son to carry on the Bourbon line.

The Santa Maria Cathedral is the third largest in the world after St Peter's and St Paul's. When Seville was liberated from the Moors, the cathedral was constructed incorporating parts of the mosque that covered the site. The Hidalgo bell tower of the cathedral was built in the twelfth century as a minaret for a mosque. Construction of the cathedral took place over four centuries and there is one place where you can simultaneously see Gothic buttresses, Romanesque, Renaissance and Baroque styles. The Moors were all told to convert to Christianity or leave. The Jews were allowed to stay for five months since their expertise was needed in the rebuilding of the Cathedral. The interior is massive with five naves. The huge Corpus Christi silver altar near the door is paraded through the streets on special days. It is usually out-of-sight, but the cardinal has been in Rome for the beatification of Mother Teresa. The altar is waiting to celebrate his return. The main altar has twenty or more sections of woodcarvings, covered with 9000 pounds of gold leaf, depicting the life of Christ. The figures get larger on the higher levels so that standing before it, the illusion is that they are all the same size. The choir is in the middle of the cathedral as we saw in Barcelona. Some royal tombs are here.

There is a tomb for Christopher Columbus, a casket on the shoulders of figures representing Castile, Leon, Aragon and Navarre. There is some controversy if the real body of Columbus is here. He died in 1506 and was buried on Santo Domingo. When Spain lost that island to the French, he was moved to Havana, and when Spain lost Havana, poor Chris got moved again to Seville. His bones have been taken to Granada for DNA study so the answer may be known next spring. There seems to be no doubt that one of his sons is buried in the cathedral and it may be the remains turn out to be his other son. Another controversy is that there is no record of his being born in Genoa, Italy. There is another Genoa on the island of Mallorca that could also be his birthplace. His first wife was Portuguese. When she died and he then had a mistress who was Jewish. Each of his sons was born to a different woman. There are records dating back to Columbus stored in the archives building near the cathedral.

Martha climbed the tower, I went back to study the altar more carefully. I also noticed that there was no burning of candles before the various chapels. Mary, our tour manager, says this is true all over Spain.

We ate at the Paellador Dona Francisquita eating individual paellas of course.

Then we went to the Alcazar Palace, the palace of the kings. In 1364, Pedro 1 ordered a royal palace to be built within the palaces used by the Moorish leaders. It backs into the wall that is adorned with medieval turrets. We toured with handheld radio accounts of what we were looking at. We came in through the Lion's gate and then toured the receiving hall for the ambassadors. Magnificent plaster mosaics adorned the walls. There were Horseshoe arches and intricate ceilings. The apartments of Charles V, from the 16th century had portraits. At last there was a garden. We took a taxi the small Museo des Belles Artes near the hotel and found some wonderful Murillo paintings.

Back at the hotel we had room service sandwiches and at 7:00 PM had a ten-minute walk to see an exhibition of Flamenco dancing. I have been getting sorer and sorer from all the walking and busing and would have liked a taxi home but there were none to be seen. Since all but one pair in the tour went, and since Enrique, the bus driver, went with us to be sure we didn't get lost, I didn't understand why they didn't arrange a bus. I can't be the only one who is hurting all over from all the walking and busing we

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have done. The theater was cramped and we didn't have the best seats but it was a nice change of pace. Flamenco is more than a dance but a forceful artistic expression of the joys and sorrows of life.

Friday, October 17, 2003. Bags had to be ready for pickup at 7:00 and by 8:15 we were on the bus headed for Cordoba. The main sight there is a huge building that started as a mosque and was converted in 1718 to a cathedral. Cathedrals are in the shape of a cross, unlike the rectangular mosque. The arches that had let in light were converted into chapels. The whole effect is a mishmash of styles and the conversion has not really worked well. Now they are removing some of the side chapels to let the light back in. When the Moslem plasterers were asked to embellish the walls they included things like, "Only Allah is the real God" written in Arabic which the Spaniards thought was just part of the decoration. There were originally 1056 columns but some have been lost in the conversion to a church. Old Roman columns hold up some of the walls, and some are from the Visigoth period. The ceilings were originally Lebanese Cedar. The lovely mihrab is still there and beautifully decorated with Byzantine mosaics. The ceiling of its small alcove has a shell shape to enhance the acoustics. New ceilings in the cathedral are made of Canadian cedar. There is a handsome gold Monstrance (which carries the host), which is carried in a parade on Corpus Christi, 60 days after Easter. It is embellished in baroque style.

After the cathedral we had a walking tour of the old Jewish sector. A ruin of a 14th century synagogue is preserved as a world heritage site. The synagogue has balconies for the ladies. It became a church in the 14th century, when the Christians drove all the Jews out. There is no Jewish Congregation in Seville today, although the Jews have been invited to form one, but none have come back to Spain to do so. Near the synagogue is a statue of Maimonides, the great Jewish philosopher.

One piece of trivia: On New Years Eve, you should eat twelve grapes, one with each bong of the clock.

We shopped a bit and had some ice cream. Then the bus took us to the train station and we boarded the AVE express train to Madrid. Mary couldn't get enough first class tickets and asked for volunteers to ride in second. We did and received 50 euros for our inconvenience. 2nd class was quite comfortable. We had a table that we shared with a facing Spanish couple. Martha went up to the cafeteria car and got us some tuna and chicken salad sandwiches. I slept for perhaps half of the hour and a half ride. It was so smooth. No vibration or bumps like on the bus!

Enrique met us in Madrid and we were bused to the 5-star Westin Palace Hotel, the largest in Madrid. Madrid is the highest capitol in Europe, 2000 feet above sea level. It was built in the center of the country when Portugal was a part of Spain. Madrid was a planned city, designed to provide protection to nearby Toledo.

We worked on our journals for a while and then went looking for some food, but nothing opens until 9:00 PM. We finally ended up in the hotel bar and I had a hamburger and French fries with my wine. A lady from across the room came and told us she envied our sandwiches. She was with A & K and had to wait for the restaurant to open at 9:00. Getting back to our room was tricky since the hotel had a bad water problem. A pipe had burst and the ceiling of the lobby was pouring buckets of water. They had barricades and rugs rolled up. We hear that one tourist asked where the pool was. "It's here in the lobby was the reply". We finally found a working service elevator back by the kitchen and got back to our 6th floor room! They sent us up a pitcher of water but have no idea when the problem will be solved. So much for Five Stars! Some of our group even had limited electricity.

Saturday, October 18. We walked to the Prado Museum and they wouldn't let me bring my cane in with the foldout seat. I asked for a wheelchair (and so did Mimi, another of our group) and, with Martha pushing, had an easy time of it. Inez our guide was wonderful. I learned so much about what we were looking at. The building is an eighteenth century building built for Charles 111 to have a national science school. In 1808 Napoleon turned it into a stable. Later it became a museum for the royal collections.

We started with El Greco who was born on Crete. He went to Venice and learned how to do intense colors from Tintoretto. He studied in Rome and came to Toledo in Spain where he spent the rest of his life. His paintings are in two parts, heaven and earth. To make his paintings sell, his portraits were of a different style and tried to make the subject more attractive.

Next we toured the Velasquez collection. Velasquez was born in Seville in 1599. He spent his life in Madrid. His earliest painting, done when he was 19, of the Virgin with the Magi is interesting. Mary's face is his wife's. The baby has his daughter's face. His own face is on the man to the right. Joseph has the face of his master painter. He learned perspective in Italy. His famous Las Meninas, which means beautiful young lady is here. It was the Court of Philippe IV. Velasquez painted himself as the painter in

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the picture (younger than he actually was). The king and queen appear in a mirror, for the painting represents how they would have seen it. You must stand back from the painting to get the perspective view. One of horses shows the front legs disproportionately short for it was designed to hang over a door. Velasquez left his students to do the details of the clothing.

The Hapsburgs intermarried and the dynasty ended because they could not reproduce.

We continued to the Goya collection but our time was almost over. Tours have limits to the time they can spend in the museum. Goya was born in Spain in 1746 and came to Madrid and Italy to study. He returned to Madrid to paint but at the end went to France where he died aged 82. His first job was in a tapestry factory. He did many royal portraits. Inez showed us Goya's painting of the Family of Charles IV. He painted himself in the back. The Queen dominates the picture and the King and children are around her. Later Goya had a dark and gloomy period. I must admit those paintings did not appeal to me.

We were led back to the bus and had our city tour. There are many beautiful squares and boulevards in Madrid. The Plaza Mayor is the main square, with shops and restaurants all around and above them some of the city's most expensive apartments costing up to 80000 Euro or almost a million dollars. In the past there were bullfights here fought by men on horseback. The architecture is also outstanding. The post office looks a palace.

Back at the hotel, Martha and I went across the street to the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza. After lunch in the cafeteria we toured the museum with audio guides. And they let me bring my sit-upon cane in too! The collection was a private collection belonging to Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza. It is supposed to be the largest collection after that of Queen Elizabeth. It spans the years 1290 to the 1980s. There are even some North American painters represented like John Singer Sargeant, but the audio guide had nothing to say about them. There were few huge works, the paintings being more the size you could visualize in a private home.

Then it was time for some R & R and we prepared for the farewell banquet. I set my computer up to give a slideshow of Martha's pictures. Then I had a massage. The massage therapist kept finding knots in my legs and feet. I wonder why? I was going to have my hair done after the massage but I did not realize the hairdresser was so far from the health club. I arrived 15 minutes late and was told it was too late, so I will have to wear my dirty head to the party tonight.

The banquet was held in a private room of the Palace and there was an open bar and hors d'oeuvres before a three course dinner. All very good except for my filet which had been heavily larded with Roquefort cheese. I never have learned to like Roquefort cheese! Mary said goodbye before dinner for she was flying to Barcelona to meet the next group coming in. She had arranged for some troubadours to come and entertain us, college student who come in costume and sing famous Spanish songs. So it was all very festive. It has been a nice group, but I never got to know any of them well because of the size of the group and the shortness of the tour.

Sunday, October 19, 2003. On our own! We started out by sleeping until 11:00 AM. Then we went to the Prado to finish seeing the Goyas.

Crowds of people were there for the museum is free on Sunday. Again I rode in a wheelchair and Martha managed to get through the crowds. Only one problem was the Manet exhibit that was in town. The end of the second floor had been closed for it and thus to take the elevator we had to go down a flight then take another flight to the third floor. It was slow since the elevator only held six people and other people were trying to do it with us. But we finally made it up and at last I saw what I had come for: The Maja Nude and the Maja Clad. Both figures have the same pose, but the nude figure has a sensuous feel to her. The clad figure is more harshly drawn. No one is sure who the lady was, but it was thought that she was the Duchess of Alba and perhaps Goya's mistress. The painting was a sensation at the time since nude figures were never seen. Also delightful in these galleries were the cartoon figures he had done of people picnicking in the woods. Children were playing games and everyone was relaxed. These were to be used as patterns for the tapestries for the royal palace.

We left the Prado and hurried to the Museo de Reina Sophia, the modern art museum. We only had a little time before it closed but it was time to see Picasso's La Guernache, a troubling piece depicting a massacre during Spain's Civil War. Nearby were two galleries of Miró's work.

We had lunch at a restaurant near the museum. I had potato salad that was awful, ninety percent mayonnaise. Then I had fried calamari, which was okay, but I have had better. Martha had white asparagus and a peppery octopus salad. We went home and slept before going out to eat. There is a famous restaurant The Casa Botin, the oldest one in continuous operation in the country (500 years). It

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was impossible to get reservations but the concierge told us that if we went at 8:00 we might be served. And so we were seated in the bar. This was fun since we saw everyone else come in. It was like a neighborhood restaurant since everyone was talking between the tables and sharing wine and water. Some of the remnants of our tour came and it was nice to see them again. They had gone to Toledo but been disappointed. The couple across from us was old friends since we had stood in line together. I had delicious white asparagus; so tender it must have been fresh and not canned. Then I had the specialty of the house roast sucking pig. Martha had roast-suckling lamb. Both were very good. Desert was raspberries and cream. Real whipped cream so thick you could stand a spoon up in it! We checked out the rest of the restaurant. Upstairs the walls were tiled. In the bar they were painted like choir seats. The basement is brick and stone and if I come again I will try to get a reservation in this, the oldest part. Near the bar you could look into the roasting room where they had laid out many pigs and lamb for turning on the spit.

We were near the Plaza Mayor and walked there enjoying the shops and restaurants along the way. Then we caught a cab back to the hotel.

Monday, October 20, 2003. Caught a cab to the airport and flew to Santiago de Compostello. Compostella means a field of stars. Manuel from "In Quest of the Classics" met us and drove us to the wonderful Parador de los Reyes Catolicos in the heart of town. It was once a Hospital and has always been a hospice for pilgrims for 500 years. The government has restored it. There are courtyards and cloisters and fountains and the place is furnished in 15th century décor. It is a National Monument.

The first thing I did was seek out the hairdresser in the Parador. She was overjoyed to see me. I was probably her first (and only) customer for the day. It feels wonderful to have clean hair.

After lunch we rented a car and drove north to A Coruna on the Atlantic coast. The drive was through rolling rural scenery. The divided highway is decorated with Pampas grass in full bloom.

When my father sailed his schooner, Malabar 11, to Spain almost fifty years ago, he came to A Coruna. We found the Royal Coruna Yacht Club with its big square red brick building. We also went to the Tower of Hercules, A Coruna's most famous sight. The Romans built the tower for a lighthouse, on an even older site used by the Celts. The Roman tower still exists within the shell of the new tower, built by Charles 111. We learned that a ramp, rather than stairs, leads to the top so the ox-carts could bring up the wood for the fires. We were too late to climb it but did walk up to it to see the view. Unfortunately it was misting rain and it was fairly cold so we did not linger long. We then drove by the Castle of St Anton, once a prison. And then we got lost. We could not figure out how to get back to the highway out of town. Round and round we went on the one-way streets with no left turns, and the roundabouts. We went through one tunnel twice, once in each direction. We were very happy when the road to Santiago appeared and we came back to the Parador. Martha had left her camera in the lobby so we were very happy to find it on our return. However, it means our only pictures of A Coruna were made on a throwaway camera we bought at a kiosk.

The restaurant is in the vaulted ceiling basement room that was once used to keep horses and later was a prison. Had raw oysters followed by steamed clams, mussels and cockles. Then for desert fruit with whipped cream (but not as good as at Casa de Butin).

Tuesday, October 21. Met our guide, Gelsea, at ten and she took us on a wonderful walk through the cathedral and the many ancient buildings around it. She fed us so much information it was difficult to digest it all.

The apostles all went to different places after Christ's death and St James came to Spain and walked to Finisterre in Galicia to preach the gospel. At age 42 he returned to Palestine and Herod apprehended him and had him beheaded. His followers gathered his bones and brought them here to Galicia for burial. Two Galician Saints, St Antonias and St Theodore were also buried in the crypt with him. The tomb was lost for many years. When the moors came to Spain they demanded 100 virgins and the King prayed for a miracle to help him. St James appeared on a white horse and vanquished the moors. In the ninth century the first of three churches was built on the site. The site became the most visited shrine in the world after Jerusalem and Rome. The exterior of the church is in Baroque style built in the 18th century. 33 steps lead up to the door, one for each year of Christ's life.

Inside the door you find the Romanesque façade with its many figures telling biblical stories. Gelsea is full of stories about what we are seeing. Daniel was laughing at the buxom effigy of Queen Esther, across from him. This upset the bishop and he had her breasts cut off to make her more modest. Today there is

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a local cheese made in the shape of a woman's breast. Our guide identified the many figures. In the background were 24 figures playing ancient musical instruments. Martha bought a CD of Gregorian chants accompanied by these instruments. Below the figure of Christ was a marble pillar showing his genealogy. Everyone has stopped to touch the pillar and make a prayer before going into the cathedral. So much touching has worn the stone away into five fingerprints. In back of the column was a place where you bent your head to touch it. I didn't quite get the significance of this but felt it didn't hurt to try it.

The church was built mostly of the local granite. It was not high enough for the entire organ so some pipes jut into the nave at right angles. The cupola, 200 meters high, represents the eye of God and illuminates the earth. There is no stain glass since that came at a later period. The baroque altar is made of Mexican silver, with the wood parts covered with gold. Under the altar is the crypt with the bones of St James.

Pilgrims come from all over and to make a pilgrimage you should walk on foot for 30 days on one of the pilgrimage routes. When the ancient pilgrims arrived they burned their filthy clothes (on the roof of the cathedral) and were given new robes. After confession and mass, they were pardoned for their sins. Incense was burned to rid the cathedral of their smell. Today they don't have to burn their clothes and are given a certificate to attest to their pilgrimage. We attended part of the noon mass and watched as 8 monks, like bell-ringers, pulled ropes to make the huge incense burner swing through the nave showering all with incense. It seemed to me there was a huge crowd of pilgrims but our guide said it wasn't too bad today. None of us smelled of anything but incense after the mass!

There is a door that is only open during the Holy Year. This occurs every year that St James' Saints day falls in July. Next year is a holy year so on December 31, the door will be replaced with some stones and the priest will ceremoniously knock the stone barrier down. One year the crew helping from the other side pulled the stones away just before the priest was able to hit them with his hammer. If you come during the Holy Year you can enter through the door and do not have to do the long pilgrimage.

Gelsea showed me that now they have electric candles since the tallow ones put out too much dirt.

Behind the church is a small chapel, all that is left of an earlier church.

We went outdoors and were shown the Monastery of St Martin, now a high Seminary. The big bronze bell in the bell tower was made by a computer to copy an earlier one that cracked. Gelsea says it does not sound the same. There is a convent. All three orders of monks are represented here.

Everything was clean and lovely. Charles 111 in the 18th century made people shut up their pigs and stop throwing the liquid garbage out in the street. When he would go out among his subjects he found many of them had bad breath so he ordered them to have something to eat with their beer and wine so Tapas was born.

Our heads were spinning from so much information and we declined the museum in favor of shopping. I found a lovely pair of jet earrings, and a jet pendant. Jet is petrified coal and comes from this region. Then I bought a wonderful woodcarving of St James on his White Horse tramping on the Moors.

Gelsea led us to the Casaelisa restaurant for lunch and we had all sorts of seafood. The barnacles were really interesting, tasted a bit like little neck clams. Gelsea also told us how to cook octopus in the Galician way. This was all washed down with albarino wine, a white wine of Galicia.

At last we met Manuel and headed south. The road was lovely with every house having a grape arbor and a small granary up on four legs. Four round stones, like millstones, cap the top of the legs to keep the rats from getting the grain. Many of these granaries are national monuments. We stopped for refreshments in Cambados, the center of the wine industry. No one has a large farm, for the land is divided among the children, the girls inherit the houses.

As we drove we were following a river or estuary with wonderful views. Floating hatcheries were growing mussels and other shellfish. It takes a year to grow a mussel.

We came to Toja Island, which is about 10 kilometers from the ocean. You are supposed to make a wish and then hold your breath while you drive over the bridge to the island. Legend says a sick donkey was left on the island but he drank the mineral waters and when they came back, he was well again. Thus the place became a spa and the Latoka factory started making soaps and lotions out of the healing salt marsh. They make an unusual black soap among others. Since the end of Franco's regime, the island has become a stylish resort with a casino and lovely homes. There was an interesting chapel covered with scallop shells. Inside was the virgin of Carmen who protects sailors.

We drove on and at one beach we were told that women came here to bathe to become fertile. There were even convenient beds in the nearby church where you could try right away to get pregnant.

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Finally we came to Combarro Village which is a fisherman's village perched on a ledge of granite. Narrow little streets make cars impossible. There were really unique granaries here and they are protected by law so cannot be torn down.

It had been a long and wonderful day but we were happy when Manuel got on the Motor Way and we returned to our lovely hotel.

Wednesday, October 22. This was a day when everything seemed to go wrong. We left for the airport at 7:00 with no breakfast. We got in line to check our bags and they weighed them in. My bags passed, Martha's roll-on was pronounced to be too heavy for cabin luggage. So we shifted her computer and other things to my bag and told them to check it to Lisbon. Then it seemed we were overweight and would have to pay a fee. However, they then gave permission for us to take both roll-ons as hand luggage. I don't know why the weight shift made a difference. It was the same stuff just rearranged. A day later we were still trying to sort out the two bags.

At the airport there was little to eat except pastries. I had a glazed donut and some orange juice. Then we went through security and boarded the plane to Madrid. We left the gate and then they told us our nose wheel was not working and we would return to the gate. Much noise of rasping followed but apparently had no effect so the flight was cancelled. Some two hundred passengers had to be rebooked. Martha stood in line for hours. It couldn't really be called a line since the Spanish haven't the faintest idea of how to queue. They just barge in and push their way up. The first time Martha got to an agent, the woman didn't speak English. The next time she was told nothing could happen until she had reclaimed our bags. We went back to where you check in...another long line. I finally went to the business class line and after what seemed like hours got to the front of the line. I told the woman I was handicapped and couldn't take any more and would she please get us to Lisbon and I referred Business Class. Our tickets were coach. She poked some buttons and out came boarding passes: Coach to Madrid, Business to Lisbon. No extra money was asked for. However, we still had to go back and retrieve our ticket at another window. I cannot begin to tell you how stressful this all was. I wished we had been on Spanair, which is part of the Star alliance, instead of Iberia.

They had a wheelchair for me in Madrid and we were taken to the soothing business class lounge. Then they came back and took us to a special handicapped bus to go to the plane. We got there before the crew and were the first passengers on board. Business gave us a lovely supper on the one-hour flight. I had booked coach because there is usually no difference in Europe between coach and business except they don't fill the middle seat. But an international flight is different with wide comfortable seats.

We were met in Lisbon by limousine and carried to the wonderful Lapa Palace Hotel that was once a private palace. It's the only hotel I have ever stayed at that offered a choice of seven different kinds of pillows! The lobby is on the fourth floor and the hotel is built down a hillside. From our first floor room we look out into the garden and the artificial waterfall feeding the small lake full of goldfish.

We ordered a wonderful omelet and a steak tartare, that we shared, from room service and decided the complimentary bottle of Port was too much like sherry for our taste. Portugal is on London time so we have gained an hour and are on London time.

Thursday, October 23, 2003. John, the limousine driver picked us up and took us to the Coach Museum. He waited outside while we went in. The coaches were magnificent. The main room was where the court used to watch the Lipizzaners perform.

Then he took us to the church built in 1501, commissioned by Manuel 1, and sent us in alone again. The church was part of a monastery but had no bishop, hence was not a cathedral. Inside the Romanesque facade was a tomb for Vasco de Gama embellished with ships. There was also one for a famous 15th century poet named Luis de Camoes. 1524/5-1580. Vasco da Gama lived from 1468-1524. Neither man is in their tomb having died in India. We walked round trying to figure out what we were looking at.

The chancel behind the altar is of more recent origin, commissioned in 1572. A chapel of the Blessed Sacrament contains an imposing tomb mounted on two elephants. This is for King Sebastian but he isn't here. He went to inspect his African possessions and apparently died there, but the Portuguese never admitted he was dead so, like Elvis, he may return at any time.

By this time I was getting really annoyed at no guide. We could have taken a bus tour and learned more, so I complained to the driver.

He took us to the old monastery, now a maritime museum. It was really great with models of old ships and old navigation instruments. As we were walking through it Sandra joined us and announced that

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John had called for her! Why no guide without my complaining? I do not know. The voucher clearly called for a guided city tour.

In any event Sandra was delightful and most knowledgeable.

Built in 1501, the monastery was abandoned in 1834, when the government declared the monks should leave. Nuns in their cloister could not take any new members but they could stay in their cloister until the last nun died. While all the various orders are represented in Lisbon they live much more modestly than before.

Sandra made sure we saw the most important exhibits. During the day, the sailors would roll up their hammocks and hang them on the rail to act as shields. The cross appears on many sails, the emblem of the Knight's Templar.

Some of the maps showed the paths of the old explorers. The entrance hall is lined with statues of the early explorers. Capetto and Ivins crossed Africa in 1884, like our Lewis and Clark crossed North America, to try and find a way to India. Going around the horn was very dangerous. Camoes wrote a poem about a monster, Adamaster, who lurked in the storms off the Cape of Good Hope. Sailors had no pockets in their clothes because it was believed the monster would get in them. The sailor's wives often wore short skirts so they could help their husbands pull the boats up on the beach. Some of the fishing boats had eyes painted on their bows for good luck. This tradition came from the Phoenicians who founded the city of Lisbon. The private quarters of the royal family were reconstructed. In the more modern part of the collection was a 420, a snipe and even a racing boat built in Finland that resembled the Haj Boats that I raced as a teen-ager. The Royal barges were as opulent as the royal coaches that we had seen.

We drove from the Museum to view the Tower of Belem that used to sit on an island before the Tagus River silted it in. Belem means Bethlehem. It is a square tower in Manueline style (not Romanesque, not renaissance). I climbed the tower on a former visit, but we did not climb it today. My Mother stood on the tower to wave farewell to my Father as he started his return voyage to Maine.

Nearby was a modern monument to the Portuguese explorers. It was erected in 1960 on the 500th anniversary of the death of Henry the Navigator. He stands on the prow of the suggested ship and following him are statues representing De Gama and other explorers, scientists, monks and poets. The explorers were trying to find a route to India, not just for spices but a spiritual pilgrimage as well. Leopoldo de Almieda was the sculptor of this impressive monument. Nearby was a compass rose donated by South Africa with a map of the world showing when the major discoveries were made. Vasco de Gama's expedition had three ships, his own, his brother Paulo's and the third was Coelho. Vasco died in India and Paulo stayed to bury him so Coelho was the one who brought the news back to Portugal.

In 1494 the Tordesillas Treaty was made in Spain that divided the world between Spain and Portugal. Thus Portugal was not allowed further exploration in the new world beyond Brazil and instead went after trading partners in Africa.

Across the river Tagus we can see a replica of Corcovada in Rio de Janeiro. After this we had a lunch at the Restaurant Rosa dos Marces.

I had a delicious chicken salad.

John, the driver, had said that the cloister of the monastery was not worth the price of admission but Sandra disagreed. After lunch we went back to the convent and entered the beautiful cloister built in Manueline style. The stone was just cleaned last year so the appearance is lovely and light. One of the confession boxes was open and we could see where the priest sat. In the cathedral, all the boxes were closed but, of course, when open the penitent could come and consult anonymously with his confessor. A lovely marble lion fed a fountain in the cloister. The old refectory was beautifully tiled, and at one end there was a portrait of St Jerome who first translated the Bible from Hebrew. There is one burial in the cloister, that of a famous poet Fernando Pessia (1888-1935). We climbed to the upper choir where we could see down into the cathedral. This was a contemplative order so the monks did not mix with the public. There were paintings of the Apostles and a beautiful crucifix.

Lisbon was originally built on seven hills, but because the city has grown there are now fourteen. In 1755 a terrible earthquake hit the city and thousands were killed. Many were killed by the tidal wave that accompanied it. Parts of the city had to be completely rebuilt and many buildings had to be repaired. At the big Trade Square, where most of the ministries were, King Mauuel 1's palace was destroyed. When the city was rebuilt it was built on a grid of streets, so different from the other old cities we have visited. We climbed up to the old castle of Saint George. Sandra explained why the raven is the symbol of Lisbon. When the remains of St Vincent of Saragossa, who had been killed by the Romans, returned to Lisbon a

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raven guarded them. St James he is called St George in Portugal. After admiring the view, we walked down the twisting cobbled street, some mere staircases, to find John waiting at the bottom.

We drove back to the Lapa Palace along a lovely boulevard that I remember from my last visit here 10 or so years ago. Tomorrow we will have another guide since Sandra must go see her doctor. She is two months pregnant!

I went down to the business office to try and send some e-mails, but after several aborted tries to get into Earthlink, I decided to open an account with Yahoo. Couldn't do this either! A man from the reception came down to help and after he tried several times, he offered to let me use his own account! And so I sent my e-mails but will never get a reply. The Portuguese keyboard is different from ours. For instance, to get an @ you must use the alternate key. I wasn't even charged for the use of the Internet.

Friday, October 24, 2003. We asked the concierge to reconfirm our flights and also to find if we could upgrade to business going back to Lisbon. Good old Iberia said we could not upgrade and even worse had sent Delta an e-mail confirming us in coach class! I was very upset, but the concierge called Delta in Madrid and found we were still in business class. Good for Delta!

John had brought our guide to the hotel to transfer us to the airport to pick up a rental car. She was not the one originally scheduled. Her name was Odette and she normally does bus trips, and not even English speaking ones. She was not geared to guiding just two people and she made us very nervous by her repetitive explanations. She also concluded that I was a hopeless cripple because I carried a cane.

It took quite awhile to claim our Europcar. Hertz, Avis etc had practically no lines by comparison. But the car was a Peugeot station wagon. Because "Americans don't drive stick shift cars" it was semi automatic. Martha had a time getting used to it. It was like a manual shift without a clutch! But it was nice and roomy with lots of room for our luggage. When we got to Sintra, Odette decided we should tour the National Palace instead of the Pena Palace to save me some stairs. The Pina Palace is on a mountain with wonderful views. It was used as a summer palace. Meanwhile the National Palace in the city is very interesting, since it was the residence of the last Portuguese King. I had seen it on a former visit. The palace was built on the site of an old Moorish palace. The oldest part dates from the ninth to the 15th centuries. In the 16th century Manuel 1 added to it in the Manueline style we now recognize, a sort of early baroque style but not so elaborate. The palace is still used by the Prime Minister and is used for political banquets and receptions. There is much use of square Arab tiles, made in a process that has been lost. The colors weren't mixed, but pressed into them.

The Swan Room, used for official banquets has 27 swans painted on the ceiling, commemorating the age of the 15th century Isabel when she married the Count of Flanders.

The Magpie room has 156 magpies in the ceiling. John 1 was caught kissing someone other than the queen and the magpies represent the gossip of the court ladies.

The Julius Caesar Room gets its name from the 16C tapestry hanging there. All through the palace are beautiful furnishings. I particularly admired the ornate chests.

The most impressive room is the Blazons Hall, lavishly decorated in the blue tile which seems to be everywhere in Portugal. On the ceiling are the coats of arms of 6 sons and 2 daughters of Manuel 1. There were also coats of arms of the nobility, however, the Coelho family has been removed because the family conspired against King John 11. The entire family was massacred and erased from the ranks of nobility.

There was a Chinese room with an ornate ivory model of a Chinese temple preserved in a mercury cabinet so it won't change color. The Arab room still retained its central fountain.

Most interesting were the palace kitchens, with two unique cone-like chimneys to take out the smoke and not let the damp in. There were many small ovens and 16th century copper pots.

Odette then walked us up through the narrow streets to show us an old hotel where Lord Byron stayed, but it wasn't very interesting. Then we stopped for some pastry and it was time to take Odette to her train. Martha and I independently had decided we just wanted to get rid of her! She knew her stuff but not how to deliver it in a meaningful way.

We managed to get out of town without making many wrong turns and at last found ourselves on the motor way back toward Lisbon which connected with the A1 heading north which took us to the A 8 or maybe it was the A9 and the direction of Coimbra, our next destination.

About 3 PM we found ourselves in Obidos. Obidos was freed from the moors in 1148 and they rebuilt their walls and refurbished their white washed houses. When Dom (King) Dinis and his wife Queen Isabel visited here in 1282, they found it so attractive that the king gave it to his wife for a present.

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It was getting colder and somewhat drizzly but we decided to stop for lunch. I was here with Scotti and Jim many years ago and remembered it as a most attractive walled town. We found a restaurant and Martha had wild boar and I sampled the cod, which is the staple dish of Portugal. We checked out a small church and then did some window-shopping. In one we found a lady hand-painting some of the ceramics we see everywhere. Since it is all individually made, no two pieces are the same. At one shop that carried Museum replicas, I found a lovely enamel and gold ring for me. We also found a handmade gold feather pin that looks lovely on Martha.

Back in the car we headed north to Coimbra once more. It started to rain fairly hard and the temperature dropped precipitously. Managed to cross the river, although we had been told the hotel was south of it. When bridge came upon us we did not see a turnoff. As a result we were caught in a huge traffic jam, even worse than Atlanta's traffic, and after some time found our hotel. Even that was a problem as the long drive into the property could only hold one car at a time and one was coming out when we entered. Martha skillfully backed out. She has been getting a lot of practice changing directions. When we finally arrived at the Quinta das Lagrimas a bellman appeared with a large umbrella and welcomed us.

Coimbra is home to the oldest University in Portugal. It has a quaint old town and a cathedral but we were not to see any of it.

Our hotel is full of atmosphere. Originally it belonged to a religious order and then to the University. The present owner's family has owned it since 1730. In 1879 a fire destroyed part of the house but an extensive reconstruction restored it. Many famous people have stayed here, including the Duke of Wellington who defeated Napoleon at Waterloo.

The poet Camoes wrote a poem telling the story of Dom Pedro, heir to the throne of King Dom Alfonso IV, who was married to the Infanta Constanza. He fell in love with Inez, a lady in waiting at her court. Pedro continued his affair with Inez even after Constanza died, and they had four children together. This angered King Alfonso and he ordered two assassins to kill Inez. After Alfonso's death, when Pedro became King, he ordered the assassins killed and their hearts ripped out, one from in front, one from in back. He then had Inez exhumed and arranged a marriage with her remains, thus making her Queen of Portugal. In the lobby you are greeted with a modernistic statue of Inez, hair covering all her facial features but a crown upon her head.

I was shown the handsome library with back copies of Paris Match and the sweet little chapel. One of the lounges had a cheerful fire burning. The hotel only had one twin bedded room and it did not have the garden view we were promised. To get there you went up some stairs around several corners then down some stairs then up again. The room itself was compact and had two big drawbacks. You had to go up three steps to reach the bathroom and the heater fan made a terrible racket. We complained and the hotel said they would correct it. We went down for an elegant (and very expensive) dinner. I had grouper. Then we returned to the room to find the noise not quite as loud but still there. Martha went to see what else they could do. They said they could move us to a room with a king size bed and we decided to take it. It was a lovely room, all on one level, and looked out into the garden. However, we could not leave the light on in the bathroom because there was a fan that came with it and also a skylight over the bedroom door so the room was bright as day. We could also hear every time the people above us moved around. We managed to work through it. There has to be some price for so much atmosphere!

Saturday, October 25. Woke up to cold rain. I had come to Europe in the expectation that it would be balmy weather like last year. Eight degrees Celsius is not balmy! Particularly with rain and a good breeze blowing. Fortunately Martha had an extra turtleneck to loan me.

We had been given a map so it was no trouble to get back to the A-1. It took about an hour and a half to drive to Oporto, which is always called Porto. As always we got off at the wrong exit, but this turned out well as we approached Porto on the marginal road along the river Duoro. There are several bridges that span this major river. The Ponte Eiffel, designed by the same man who built the Eiffel Tower, looks like someone built it with an erector set. Following the signs to the town center we came to some construction and being a bit confused pulled into a parking zone. A man came to help us and gave us directions how to go the 3 blocks to our hotel, the Infante des Sagres. Then he held us up for a tip for directing us. We gave him a half Euro. This is the first time we have anyone want a tip. In many cases the guides etc seem surprised when one is offered.

The Hotel was built during the 1950s and is very traditional in style. The elevator does not open automatically and you must pull the door open yourself. Then there is a soft seat to sit on while you ride.

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We went out in the rain to the shopping street and found a café where I had a filet of something and Martha some sort of fried fish. Then sloshed back to the hotel to find our guide, Hugo, waiting. He was a nice young man, about 22 years old. He guides during the season and helps his brother in the winter with the football (soccer) league. He was relieved to hear we had a car so that it did not have to be a walking tour!

Porto is Portugal's second largest town and its symbol is a lion catching an eagle, symbolizing the victory over Napoleon. Porto is proud that it has never been occupied very long by a foreign power. The people are very independent, even to jaywalking, which carries a stiff fine. Coimbra has the oldest University, founded in 1290, but Porto's University has more students. We passed the unfinished music hall, built for the 2001 festival! They ran out of money. We drove a long boulevard to the ocean. John IV's statue looks toward Brazil. When the French came he ran away to Brazil. The Cheese Castle is the 17th century fortress of St Xavier. It got its nickname from the shape of the first stone that was laid in its construction. The forts were all along the coast, close enough that a flame signal could be sent between them.

Nearby was a lady in the rain selling popcorn and "lingua es Sogra", a treat that tastes a bit like a sugar ice cream cone and is like a long waffle rolled into a cone. It was a bit messy to eat but interesting to try. We gave Hugo the rest of the package and he said his wife would be delighted, as would the guests they were expecting tonight.

We drove along the bank of the Duoro on a boulevard lined with palms. There are many rivers in Portugal, some originating in Spain. Henry the Navigator was from Porto and many of the explorers set out from here. The south side of the river is an industrial town named Gaia.

We stopped at the stock exchange museum. When they wanted to build a stock exchange, the queen had no money, but gave them the site of St Francis Monastery. The monasteries had all been closed in 1842. The building was converted into the stock exchange although some features, such as the cloister are still evident. Today the cloister is called the Hall of Nations. It has a glass and metal dome roof, from which cascade the flags of the many nations that have trade relations with Portugal. It is also decorated with the coats of arms of the nations. There were busts of the past presidents of Portugal. It was set up for some important dinner today. Linen covered tables with multi wine glasses looked very inviting but we could not find out how to get a reservation! Hugo took us through the various rooms. One was the old commercial courtroom, with imposing murals on the wall. The men's meeting room was tastefully adorned with paintings of nude ladies. The floors were oak and chestnut parquet. In the General Assembly Room the plaster was painted to look like wood or bronze. There were portraits of the last Kings of Portugal. Peter IV of Portugal was the first king of Brazil (1798-1824). There was an interesting three-dimensional floor made out of parquet. Most elegant was the Moorish room. Done in Alhambric style, it has gold and silver painted plaster. To rent the room for a reception costs about 7500 euros. Moorish rooms are never perfect since only Allah is perfect. In this room one of the chandeliers near the entrance is off center, but it is not obvious unless you know to look.

We continued our tour of the monastery with the St Francis church next door. Built 1746-1749, it is now a museum. We started in the treasury of ornate church objects and went down into the catacombs. In 1866, when the monks were ousted, burials were made under the church floor but they were exhumed and are now in the catacombs. In one place you can view through the floor the ossuary where the oldest bones are mingled.

The basilica was first gothic but in the 18th century was made baroque. Its opulence probably was one of the reasons the monasteries were broken up. The church had too much riches and power. A granite statue of St Francis shows the three knots in his belt for poverty, chastity and deliverance. There is a fourteenth century painting of John I and Philippa of Lancaster's marriage. One altar is a lovely carved genealogy of Christ. Henry the navigator's parents were married here.

At last Hugo led us to the Majestic Café, one of the last left in Porto. Another one was converted to McDonalds. I had cappuccino and shared a chocolate cake with Hugo, who was delighted to eat the lion's share of it. The coffee houses used to be where plots were planned.

We ate in the hotel. It was too cold and rainy to venture out.

Sunday, October 26. We headed back to Lisbon. In Quest of the Classics should have planned for us to pick up a car in Santiago and drive it to Lisbon. We wasted one whole day flying there, and now are wasting another, repeating the trip we made coming up.

However the sun has come out and it has turned warmer.

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We stopped at Coimbriga, just south of Coimbra, the largest Roman site in Portugal. The Roman habitation dates from two centuries before Christ, but it was under Augustus in 25BC that it became a substantial town. We wandered through the site admiring the many mosaic floors. Under a shaded section we saw the central portion of one house and for .50 Euros made the fountains play. There is also a small museum.

We stopped for lunch in Avienos, a non-descript village, and ate at the Bora Fora Restaurant. I had a shrimp salad and ice cream.

We drove to the Algarve and went through Estoril, the playground of the rich and famous. There were some lovely houses. Our destination was nearby Cascais. Here we could see the Hotel Albatroz but it took a bit of time to figure out how to get to it since it was on the other side of railroad tracks. In Quest of the Classics should have provided us with maps or directions of how to get to the places in which we stayed. Each one has been an ordeal. Our alternative was to hire a driver for \$400m a day, which I found excessive since Martha has lived in Europe and had no problem in driving there.

At the Albatroz, we ditched the car. Our room is very nice, overlooking the harbor, but the wind was very strong blowing in across our balcony. We opted to go out for dinner since the hotel was having some sort of opera night and we were too tired to contemplate it. It was thundering as we set out and when we stopped to check out the menu of one restaurant the heavens opened with torrents of water, making our decision of where to eat easy! I had spaghetti with a sauce of anchovies, capers and olives that was very nice. Martha had a risotto dish. The rain had let up for us to get back to the hotel where we repacked.

Monday, October 27. John was at the hotel at 5:15 to take us to the airport. There was no traffic and we got there a half hour before we could check in. Iberia and TAP have a code-share to Madrid and TAP is a great improvement over Iberia (anything would have been). We had comfortable leather covered seats in coach.

I had ordered a wheel chair in Madrid. Thank goodness. We would never have found Delta on our own. A handicap bus through the baggage area and finally we were there. There was no time to enjoy the business class lounge as they had already started the boarding procedure.

We made two aborted takeoffs, before they decided to go back to the terminal. Some valve in the engine wouldn't open. After two hours in a remote parking spot, some distance from the terminal, they finally announced they had "wired it open" and we took off for Atlanta. How to have a white knuckled flight! Got there two hours late, with little problems, except Martha missed her flight to Cincinnati.