



THE BEEMER READER

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Europe trip part two: Italy and Corsica



Route map for the "Tuscany Sardinia Corsica Tour"

by Lucy Storms

On to the next adventure... The "Tuscany Sardinia Corsica Tour". We will be staying in Florence, Siena, Montepulciano and Livorno while in Italy then on to Sardinia and Corsica and back to Venezia through Pisa and Lucca.

We joined the tour in Mestro, a suburb of Venice. The group is small, two couples from the US each riding two up, one couple from Australia again riding two up and one single woman riding pillion. So in all, with Sherri and me, we have six bikes plus our leader Dusan, and of course our

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Next Breakfast/Brunch

Saturday, January 4



WHERE:

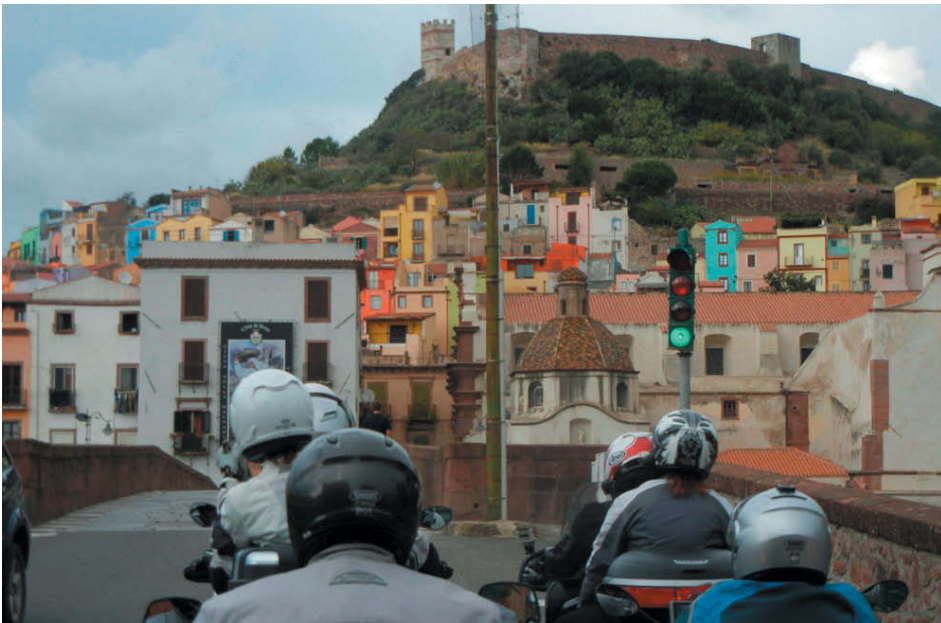
Loghouse Pub
2323 Millstream Road
Langford

TIME:

9:30 am



Historic views treat the senses



Riding through the colourful streets of the town of Bosa

van driver Jasa again. Not having the advantage of the tour package to peruse ahead of time and get all excited about, we jammed our reading of what was ahead in just one night, and it all looked way too great.

We head out of Venice to Florence with a stop at the Ducati Factory and Museum. Although they would not allow visitors to the factory this week, I found the museum very interesting - even though they would not let us park in their parking lot because we were not on Ducatis.

On to Florence, mostly motorways and toll roads. Traffic is crazy and even with just a few of us we had difficulty sticking together with cars cutting in between when there is no space at all. But we made it

safe and sound, staying in the city and just on the outskirts of the "old city". We had a walking tour through the wonderful streets with the private walkways and bridges and architecture of the old city, plus Santa Maria Cathedral where Sherri had to wear the shawl of shame. Then on to see the "copy" of David in the Piazz della Signoria along with the many other amazing statues. We did not get tickets to see the original David - no time.

On to Siena with a short stop high over Florence to get our last glimpse of this wonderful city. We start our travels through the beautiful Tuscan region, with the medieval hill top towns the best in my opinion. Montepulciano, with the many towers. From there the gentle winding roads through the

valley giving us time to watch the scenery. Too bad we are not able to drink while riding because we were going through the best Chianti region. I did however pick up some wine for that evening. Siena is the city with the wildest horse race ever - around the main square of the old city on what I think is a 7 furlong cobble stoned oval. I understand many riders and horses are killed. We had a rest day in which all the others went for a short ride through the Tuscan valley and I stayed at the hotel for a well needed rest. Then I went to the burbs to do laundry and meet the regular folk.

On the way from Siena to Livorno we had a stop at Monteriggioni, a walled village high on the hill top, with a view to die for of the Tuscan region. Again the roads are slow sweeping corners. Another stop in the walled city of San Gimignano with 14 towers remaining from the original 70. Wandering along the cobble stone streets we found a torture museum and the witch hunt museum. Then on to Livorno through some twisties and our first rain - just for about 20 minutes. Just enough to soak me again.

Dinner on the overnight ferry to Sardinia island, where we had a cabin of sorts. Not exactly a luxury cruise but adequate anyway.

Landing in Olbia we start our first day of the fantastic Sardinian roads, still part of Italy. The geology



Land of chianti and carabinieri

is quite different with the many granite quarries. Touted as some of the most exciting motorcycle roads in the world, twisties, hairpin turns and cliff hanging precipices. Just amazing. Not surprising we encountered many other motorcycle groups from Europe touring.

Other hazards on the road were the

sheep and cows being herded from pasture to pasture. At one point I even thought the alpha cow with horns was going to come after us. Our hotel in Cala Gonone was a small family owned villa on the coast. Our room on the top floor had the best view of the beach and ocean, the meeting place for afternoon cocktails. A rest day -

again a few of the group went for a short ride on yet more twisty roads. I stayed behind to wander the streets, even finding a church with Sunday mass. A nap on the beach made a wonderful day off for me.

Crossing over the mountains from the east to the west side of Sardinia to Alghero, again excellent riding with lots of twisties. We pass



Posing with the motorcycle police in Siena



Rural twisty roads abound and confound



Local traffic jam Italian style

through Orgosolo, a town with murals depicting the family feuds and political unrest. Another stop to see the nuraghe and ancient megalithic edifice, developed during the Neolithic age between 1900 - 730 BC. Then passing through Bosa, a colourful little town on the west coast before arriving at our destination for the next two days, a big beautiful hotel on the coast with a salt water pool. A little too chilly to swim on our day off, we opted for a boat ride to the end of the peninsula with its high cliffs and the grotto De Nettuno with its 30 ft column

stalagmites and stalagmites resembling church pipes. Another wonderful day of rest, our last for the rest of the trip.

We ride from Alghero to the northern part of Sardinia to Santa Theresa to catch the ferry for Corsica in the late afternoon. The roads are pretty straight and fast, giving us time for sight seeing - stopping in Castelardo, another medieval town with battering rams huge gates and many other ancient weapons.

The ferry, only one hour, lands us at Bonifacio and my first time

on French soil. Although half the Corsicans voted to separate from France, they do speak French and look different than the Italians, shorter and darker skin. We stay in the heart of the old town and walk to dinner, up and down the hilly street to the west end of town. It gave us an unbelievable view looking back over the town at the sunset raising from the bay behind the town.

Our ride from Bonifacio to Porto brings us inland, over the mountains considered the Corsican Alps, then back to the



The Corsican Alps, rocks and rallies



Waiting for the rally cars to be on their way

coast through the awe inspiring spiky red granite rocks jutting out of the sea, the colour changing from deep orange to russet red. We encountered the beginnings of the road rally cars in Porto. Between them and us, we have taken every available room in this small town. Our hotel did have a pool but we arrived too late in the day to appreciate it. This I think was our last chance to swim in the ocean but none of that on this leg of the trip.

The weather has been around 20°C during the day, even on the one day of rain. When higher in the mountains, it would drop to maybe 13°C but all in all very good riding weather so far.

We leave Porto for Bastia, our last night on Corsica. A winding road

going inland, the rally cars begin to pass us. We thought they were going the other direction from us, however they did close the road ahead of us when we stopped for morning coffee. Stuck for three hours, we hung out with the drivers, looking at all the cars while they waited to get their start time. There was about 275 cars starting that leg of the route, one every minute. Nothing we could do but wait, it could be worse... having our lunch while waiting still gave us the opportunity and time to do the long route up and around the finger of the island. The road was the most twisty so far. Following the rally cars, we found only three that hit the dirt or rock walls. Up and over the mountain again, at 1500 meters we had our first cold

weather, dropping to 3°C. The poor Americans. Then back to the coast for more winding, narrow coastal roads, much of the road broken away. Mountain on one side and drop to the ocean on the other, very exhilarating. We arrived in Bastia late and a short walk to the harbour for dinner. We all hit the pillow early, no more rest days for this group, and it is starting to show.

We caught the early ferry from Bastia to Italy, a four hour ride. We take turns sleeping, reading, writing and playing games. Funny how with this big ferry to spread out on, we find our self all grouped together. We have become a tight group. A stop at Pisa to tour the town centre and of course ,take pictures trying to push the tower up right. The cathedral was awesome. The



Lucy holding up the Tower of Pisa



Toasting the end



Final farewell, complete with champagne

short ride of 45k was uneventful, with mostly straight roads, and we arrived in Luca early. We taxied to the walled centre of old town. No cars allowed inside the town centre which is in the shape of a circle, surrounded by connecting buildings, each with an oval facade. Dinner of pasta again.

Our last ride day and our last chance to ride the corners, passing through the Apennine mountain range. A stop at the Ferrari Museum in Maribello, where for a

mere 200 Euro Vaughn, one of our tour group, drives a Lamborghini for 20 minutes. From there just freeway all the way back to Venice, not without some excitement. With no real speed limits we took the opportunity to just see how fast our bikes and us could go... some got up to 200 kph . Champagne again on our return, the bikes to be loaded on a trailer back to Ljubljana. More hugs and promises to keep in touch also a promise to do another bike tour together in 2015..... and why not?

FOR SALE:



Arai Corsair RX-7 medium helmet in good condition. I only use a helmet for four years and then replace it. This would make a great second helmet for a passenger.

\$50 o.b.o.
Contact Chris Jones
250-592-4311

Newsletter Submissions:

Have something to share? Send your photographs and write-ups to victoriarides@gmail.com and we will let everyone enjoy your adventures

Club Event Schedule

Date	Event	Location	Comments
Wed, Jan 1, 2014	TROC	Island View Beach, Bob's House	Party
Sat, Jan 4, 2014	Monthly Gathering	Loghouse Pub	Breakfast