

## *Tradewinds Awards*

**Recognition of the Best and Worst services, supplies, provisions, experiences, etc., during our passage through the Rivers and Canals of France, and afterwards whilst cruising the waters of the French, Italian, Spanish, Croatian and Greek Mediterranean**

### **Most Expensive Beer in the Mediterranean:**

My crew Nhu treated me to a beer at one of the cafes in the Piazza San Marco in Venice. The beer was €9.50 for a 0.33 litre bottle but after VAT, a service charge and overhead for music had been added the total price per beer was €15! The waiter asked if she wanted to give a tip!!!

### **Best Internet Bar / Cafe in Croatia:**

This has got to be Caffe Bar Vitriol in Novigrad and I am very happy to give an award to this excellent establishment. It is located on the shore close to the mooring buoys and they do not hassle you for spending too long with just one cup of coffee. The staff are pleasant and the heads are some of the best I have used in Croatia. So, not only is the bar well situated, but it provides all that the visiting yachtsman requires for communicating with the outside world and for a pleasant relaxing place to spend an hour or two.

### **Croatia:**

A special award: Do not be fooled by the smiles and friendly words uttered by the Croatians. They are rip-off merchants and are there to take every Kuna they can extract from the tourists, or visiting yachtsmen. Note also that VAT is 22% on all purchases - probably one of the highest on the European mainland. Everything here is more expensive - marinas, eating out, commodities, berthing, etc. You may think that Italy is expensive going alongside (which it is in the summer), but here in Croatia they have UK prices, plus of course the Croatian Government's Vignette for which they provide nothing. I had to pay 170 Euros for a year's cruising, but last night at sea there were a whole area of rocks at only about a metre above sea level well out to sea that were unmarked. They were on the chart, but at night it would have been very dodgy. As it was we saw them slightly before sunset, but why were they not provided with a light? This is a beautiful country but with some serious shortcomings - out of 4 meals we have had ashore, 3 have been provided with extremely poor service! I am currently in the harbour of Polmena on the island of Mljet and they charge 255 Kuna (£25.50) for a night at their moorings. There is electricity but nothing else - not even a supermarket in the vicinity. We will have to pay a further 70 Kuna in the morning to top up with water! Ashore there are several (very expensive - charging over 400 Kuna (£40) per Kg for a piece of fish) fish restaurants and one pizzeria - nothing in between. This is typical of Croatia - it is a lovely country but beware the prices. That is one of many reasons why I have decided on Italy for the winter, despite the Italians!

### **Best Restaurant in Hvar:**

We were especially impressed by the "Bounty" on the quayside in Hvar, which provided excellent service at reasonable prices. Compare 50cl of draught beer at 15kn against the 25kn charged by several other establishments. Their wine is also very well priced at 50kn for a 1ltr carafe. The menu is varied and includes fish, pasta and traditional meat dishes all at reasonable prices. There are many quayside restaurants in Hvar but I am happy to give the "Bounty" this award.

### **Good Croatian Anchorage - Simuni:**

Although there is not a great deal ashore and the anchorage is not particularly spacious or shallow, it is worthy of note and of an award that Simuni on the island of Pag provided excellent holding in gusts of 60 knots over a 36 hour period! We yawed a great deal, healed over in the massive gusts, but Tradewinds did not move. An excellent and safe anchorage on the southern coast of the island of Pag. The location of the anchorage was: 44° 28'.08 N, 15° 57'.47 E.

### **Biggest Rip-Off Marinas in the Mediterranean - Portofino & Portoferraio (Both Italian ports):**

Portofino:

This has got to be going alongside in the Italian harbour of Portofino. The overnight charge for a very uncomfortable (rocking and rolling) berth for a 10m - 11m boat next to the public toilets and close to the fuelling pontoon is €48, and to leave after only a few hours can cost as much as €35 if the harbour staff have been used to help tie up and garbage has been taken ashore. Add to this that, apart from being an attractive place, there is nothing much to do in Portofino and everything is staggeringly expensive, there is absolutely no point in visiting this place and no enjoyment can be derived from doing so. Portofino is therefore awarded an extremely large silver trophy for being the biggest rip-off in the Mediterranean and the most useless place to visit.

Portoferraio:

We spent a night in the old port early in July and were charged €80, which was the highest I have ever paid in the Mediterranean in 4 years of cruising. The facilities are almost non-existent and the water gets turned off at night. The jetty is stone and a public thoroughfare and road - there is no security at all. The jetty is absolutely filthy and much of the muck obviously arrives on deck each time crew come off shore. Note that the anchorage off Portoferraio is excellent and the dinghy can be used to get ashore without any problems.

#### **Best WiFi Deal in Italy:**

"Cafè Friends" in the marina at Porto Di Roma provides an excellent facility for visiting yachtsmen. It is a pleasant bar with a good and friendly atmosphere, and on some evenings provides live music. It is a bar and restaurant - customers can log onto their WiFi system for free, whilst eating free small-eats from the bar most of the evening. There is also a good menu from their restaurant. So, for the price of a beer (about €5) you can enjoy a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere, eat free small-eats from the bar and have as long as you want on their blisteringly fast WiFi network. A really good facility. Congratulations to "Cafè Friends" on their Tradewinds Award.

#### **Best Port Facilities:**

In Nice they built some new bathrooms close to "H" pontoon on the west side of the port. These new facilities are the absolute best that we have encountered in any port in the Mediterranean and consist of individual en-suite style bathrooms with shower, head, sink, heated towel rail, hair dryer and excellent lighting. There are 4 bathrooms in the new block and each can be accessed separately using a swipe card obtainable from the Capitainerie. We done Nice for continuing to improve your services to visiting yachtsmen.

#### **The Most Ignorant Frenchman:**

He was aboard the French boat ("Ker Anel" Registered Number: BI 690434), which anchored near to me in the Rade de Villefranch on 23rd July 2006. Although it was obvious that he was too close, he remained where he was and eventually collided with Tradewinds. Actually he saw the collision coming but did nothing to prevent it - it was his davits that were going to collide with my stem, so presumably he was not concerned over any damage that might occur to his boat! The convention when anchoring in open water is of course that the boat who anchors in a particular position first has the right to remain where he is, and the second boat has to go find a new anchorage where he will not affect any other boat at anchor. I had been anchored in the same position for almost 4 days - he just arrived on 23rd July 2006 and dropped his anchor too closely. The particularly bad mannered and ignorant Captain of this French boat was however abusive, would not move to a safer anchorage and suggested that as the Rade de Villefrance was in France, then it was Tradewinds because it was a British boat that should move. Needless to say I did not, but spent most of the afternoon on the foredeck with my book just in case the two boats looked like colliding again, which they did not. What an ignorant specimen the Captain of "Ker Anel" was - he certainly deserves this award. I found it particularly ironic that his vessel was in a "Princess 385" (of course a motor boat), which is actually a British manufactured boat that was built in the same yard in UK as Tradewinds - the former "Marine Projects" of Plymouth, now renamed "Princess Yachts".

#### **Best Quotes:**

1. We had Gibraltar in view for almost 6 hours, but unfortunately adverse winds prevented us from getting there before dark. We therefore decided to divert into Estepona for the night before continuing the next morning. When we got underway the next day the weather was fantastic and the winds were excellent for our course to Gibraltar. We were sailing on a reach at about 7 knots and suddenly John checked the way clear under the genoa and came out with the classic quote "Tony, what's that huge rock dead ahead?". This was a genuine question! Maybe too much pop the night before?

2. An unknown person came out with this classic gem, "Television is a marital aid designed to keep couples together without the need for communication".

#### **Best Restaurant on the Island of Mallorca:**

We had a really excellent dinner experience at "La Piazzetta", located at the Plaça Almirant Oquendo in the centre of Puerto de Andratx. The food was first class, the service could not be faulted and the surroundings pleasant - only a short walk from the Port Authority floating pontoon in the centre of the port, this restaurant is by far the best yet found on the island of Mallorca. Their telephone number is: 971 672 700.

#### **Poorest Marina Service on the Spanish Coast:**

Not only was the service of an extremely low standard at Puerto Banus but it was the most expensive marina on the Spanish coast. The real problem in Puerto Banus was the abysmal level of service - it took longer than any other marina to check in, there was no assistance to dock when we got to our berth, the heads and bathroom facilities were a long way from the boat and there were no adaptors provided to allow us to plug into shore power for the night. Unlike other marinas where dockside sockets are sometimes non-standard,

Puerto Banus could only offer to sell a new plug to us at €124 rather than lend us an adaptor, which is the normal procedure!!! It is so often a fact that the more you pay the lower level of service you receive, and that was most certainly the case in Puerto Banus (see also the Biggest Rip-off Marina on the Italian Coast below - Portofino was also the most expensive). I would never recommend anyone to this marina - the only reason to visit Puerto Banus is to parade amongst the rich, famous and pathetic. We did that but it is not worth the hassle or expense.

#### **Best Restaurant in Spain:**

We discovered El Salearo in the back streets of Puerto De Valez on the Costa Del Sol. It does not look all that fantastic from the street and has none of the trappings of most restaurants found on this coast of Spain. Nevertheless, here we found fantastic sea food at very reasonable prices, and very good service. It might be impossible to do better than to eat at this restaurant!

#### **Best Female Mast Climber:**

In fact the only female to ever scale our mast to the top was Amelia from the yacht "Spicy Maiden" (moored in Almerimar). At only 54kg she was the ideal person to be winched, but not only did she do the job cheerfully as a volunteer, she carried out the task of freeing the anemometer wind vane of Sahara sand with total success! Thanks Amelia, Doug is lucky to have such a skilled and willing crew aboard your boat.

#### **Best 9 year old Chef ever:**

I was invited for dinner and drinks aboard the 45ft Australian registered sloop "Walkabout II" on my day of arrival in Valencia - dinner was prepared and cooked by 9 years old Ryan, the youngest son of the boat's owners Barry & Filomena (their other is son Daniel - 10 years old). The Spaghetti Bolognaise served by Ryan was really excellent and much enjoyed - it was perfectly prepared and cooked and he definitely merits this award for being the best 9 years old chef that I know, by far! Daniel and Ryan are truly remarkable young sailors - they help with all the chores associated with life aboard boat, including scrubbing the decks, cleaning their own cabin, cooking and washing their own clothes!

#### **Best Mobile Telephone Shop in Europe:**

I purchased a SIM card at the Grupo Auna shop in Barcelona whilst visiting the city in August 2005. I had to make sure that the service purchased on the SIM card would permit me to be able to transfer data to and from the Internet via my mobile phone, so I took my computer to the shop to do a test before agreeing to the purchase. The service I received from one of the sales people (she was called Chus) was really exceptional - it took some time for me to fully explain my special requirements, but once she understood she was really helpful in making sure that I got the service I wanted. Later after I got back to sea, I was able to contact Chus by e-mail for assistance with changing the tariff to something more suitable to unique requirements, and for purchasing additional minutes for the card (a "pay as you go"). When I want to top up the card I now just send an e-mail to Chus and she credits my account with the minutes I need, and I pay the required amount into the shop's bank account when next in port. They trust me to do that! The service, ongoing assistance and customer care I have received from Chus is really quite exceptional and in my experience far superior to any I have ever experienced in any other mobile phone shop anywhere in Europe. The address of the shop is: Via Laietana 44, botiga 08003, Barcelona, Spain and their telephone number is: +34 93 268 3953.

#### **Worst Place Visited during four seasons' sailing in the Mediterranean:**

As of mid August 2005 the worst place visited since leaving UK in April 2005 was Puerto Lasnou on the Costa Brava in Spain. The marina has a lot of closed and decayed restaurants and the water in the basins is dirty. The town can only be reached by crossing a railway line and near-motorway. The town is basically non-existent and has virtually no shops, consisting only of scruffy apartment blocks built on top of each other. On a Wednesday afternoon most shops that we did find were closed. Nasnou is also an expensive place to take a boat - it cost us €39.21 for a single night. The Capitania is closed from 1300 until 1600 for lunch! Take my advice and give Masnou a miss or you will forever regret it.

#### **Best Value Chinese Restaurant in the Mediterranean:**

This accolade must go to "Restaurante Siglo Neuvo" in Port L'Estartit in the Catalonia region of Spain. They serve buffet style "eat as much as you like" meals at a standard price of €8.50 per person. There is a full range of dishes and the food is excellent. The wine is cheap and the staff very friendly. "Siglo Neuvo" can be found on one of the side streets close to the marina (their address is Victor Concas, 9, 17258 L'Estartit, Girona - Tel: 972 75 20 40).

#### **Best Books:**

Of the many books I have read during two seasons of sailing in the Mediterranean, there are a small number that stand out as being the best and are worthy of "Tradewinds Awards". They are:

Napoleon - The Song of Departure by Max Gallo  
Napoleon - The Sun of Austerlitz by Max Gallo  
Napoleon - The Emperor of Kings by Max Gallo  
Napoleon - The Immortal of St Helena by Max Gallo  
Saga of a Wayward Sailor by Tristan Jones  
Heart of Oak by Tristan Jones  
The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

#### **Best Yacht and On-Board Food coupled with Great Hospitality:**

By far the best liveaboard cruising boat I have come across is the steel hulled 45ft sloop "Christine Anne", owned and sailed by Australians Russ and Chris. Their boat is fitted with every conceivable domestic appliance and had been designed for long term living in comfort and domestic bliss, including a washing machine, microwave and water maker! The boat was designed and built by Russ in Australia before they set out on their worldwide journey of exploration. I have received so much help and advice from them, and also invited on board for numerous drinks and dinners. The meals produced by Chris are second to none and definitely get an award for the best I have had aboard boat. That is not to say that I have not enjoyed the food and hospitality aboard other boats - I have to tread carefully here because I have thoroughly enjoyed meals aboard a number of other boats, and it has all been good.

#### **Best Marina Staff on the Cote d'Azur (Nice):**

This was written by Bob - If you believe there is no surviving Frenchman who deserves the adjectives "lean, efficient, helpful and cheerful," you will be shocked to meet Greg who works for the Capitainerie in Port du Nice. Whether you are sporting a mega-yacht or cruising a ten metre sailboat, Greg will go out of his way to shoehorn you into the surely full marina in cheerful fashion. If as we always seem to do, you arrive during the famously extended French lunch "hour," you will be pleasantly surprised to find Greg on duty and dedicated to your plight. When we asked him when he took his lunch hour he just shrugged and said he loves his job. We hope to see him in the Solent soon!

Following on from Bob's comments, I received a call from Greg whilst I was still at anchor at the Rade de Villefranche confirming that he had arranged a two night berth for me for when Sue arrives on 8th June. I cannot conceive of any other marina employee anywhere providing such a high level of service - well done to Greg at "Nice Yachting" for being so very helpful. He fully deserves this award and I hope that some of the other marina staffs along the Mediterranean coast take note that there is an alternative to being obstructive, inconsiderate and downright bad mannered! I'm sure that Greg would be happy to provide hints on how marina offices should be run.

Further to the previous comments - an update from June 2007. Again the guys at Nice came up trumps when I needed a berth urgently to be able to go to the airport to meet a joining crew member. Although the port was full, they assigned me a temporary berth (usually for much larger vessels) whilst I went to the airport and found a permanent place much later in the evening after a charter boat had departed. The staff of the "Nice Pleasance" Capitainerie continue to go out of their way to be helpful and to do all that they can to accommodate your requirements.

#### **A very good place to be buried:**

The cemetery at Menton on the France Italian border is located at the very top of the old town and has views along the coastline to the east and west and of the town, which it dominates. We walked around the graveyard during our visit in May 2005 and discovered a large number of English graves, mostly from the late 19th Century, so if buried there, there would be good company! It is probably the best located cemetery on the shores of the Mediterranean.

#### **A very good Restaurant in France:**

Bob and I ate in a small marina restaurant at the marina in Menton Garavan in France and were really impressed by the excellent service, quality of food and value for money prices. We can thoroughly recommend "Sotto Le Stelle" in Porte De Garavan.

#### **Most bad mannered and objectionable marina staff in France:**

This was written by Bob - If you are entering France from Italy, do not assume your first impression of the French to be one of the arrogant, smug, overfed and crude Frog you've always heard about. Pull into the Garavan Marina in Menton and you can actually meet the personification of this Frenchman on the fuel dock supervising the grease trade and directing boats to berthing positions. Of course you may expect to be turned away if you seek fuel during the broad lunch "hour" and siesta period which extends from around 1300 hours until say 1600 hours most days...possibly longer on others. But then the objective is not the fuel for your boat but to fuel the overfed dock attendant. And if you arrive in a down-market sailing vessel of, say,

under 50 feet, expect to be relegated to a berth adjacent to the fuel dock where you can experience the aromatic hospitality of diesel fuel and the unpleasant ambiance of rollers thrown off by super-yachts. On the other hand, if the Garavan Marina is your last stop before entering Italy, just savour the "French experience" one last time before you head out for real civilization.

#### **Most Expensive Marina in Italy:**

It may or may not be a rip-off like Portofino, but they charge €100 per night for a 10m boat in the Marina Grande at Capri. Of course we did not accept their offer of one of the many alongside overnight berths and instead took up an anchorage just outside the harbour wall, for free of course. It's not that we were a long way out, as it was only a 5 minute row into the shore aboard the dinghy. This marina at Capri is small, but is also the destination for a constant stream of passenger and car ferries from the mainland, so the wash inside the harbour must be significant and a pain for boats berthed on the finger pontoons, which is where visiting yachts are berthed. So for the benefit of being able to walk ashore, it would have cost €100 to be rocked and rolled all day long and suffocated by the constant coming and going of the ferry traffic.

#### **A Very Good Restaurant in Nettuno:**

There is a small restaurant in the walled village of Nettuno called "Ristorante Pizzeria Al Centro. This small eating house is located in the Piazza M. Colonna and was absolutely excellent. The food was superb, the wine excellent whilst also cheap (€4.50 a bottle) and the service faultless. It was definitely the best restaurant we found in Nettuno, and after the disaster that was the "La Taverna" at Porto Di Roma we decided that it definitely warranted a place on this page despite it costing about 75% less to eat there!

#### **Poorest Marina restaurant in Italy:**

The "La Taverna del Porto" restaurant at the Porto Turistico Di Roma at Ostia gets the award for the poorest marina restaurant in Italy. Sue's steak had to be sent back twice for it to be cooked as ordered, all but a couple of the wines on the menu were unavailable, the potatoes and vegetables were served about 5 minutes before the steaks, the potatoes and vegetables were at best only lukewarm when served and when paying the bill the restaurant had no cash for the change! It was a big mistake using this restaurant - we should have gone to the local Chinese Restaurant just outside the marina (Xing Hua), which was highly recommended to us.

#### **Biggest Surprises:**

Mediterranean winds, which have not been anywhere near as light as expected, and consistently came from the east or southeast. The onshore swell particularly in the Monaco area was also a great surprise. The high number of days lost through gales or high winds were also a great surprise. Take note that the highest winds are found the closer one gets to the Rhone. The Mistral dominates the entire western Mediterranean and can be severe even as far away as the western Italian coastline.

Another great surprise was the ease of receiving mail from UK in France and particularly in Italy. With good planning and thanks to our neighbour at home, our achievement rate was 100%. We had been led to believe that mail might be lost, but this was not the case.

#### **Most helpful Marina Staff in Italy:**

Although there was no pontoon space available for us in Salivoli the staff went out of their way to arrange for us to berth alongside on the corner of the fuel berth. Normally this position is not provided with shore power, but they ran a special cable and shore connection box especially for us. They helped us tie up to the pontoon on arrival and assisted when we came to depart the day after. We were able to embark water and fuel without moving from our alongside position. In the Capitainerie the people there were also extremely helpful, acting as a Tourist Information Office in response to our questions - they even went to the Internet for some train times and printed the results! They have a very good team at Salivoli and are worthy of this award.

#### **Best Italian Ice Cream Shop:**

This was Cottliano's in Sestri Levante where for €2 we got a tub with three different flavours of ice cream, topped with whipped cream and cherries or chocolate flake.

#### **Best Value Italian Meal:**

At the Pizzeria Serenata located at the Piazza Chiodo in La Spezia. Pizzas were on average €5 each and the House Wine was €5.40 per litre.

#### **Friendliest Italian Town:**

This was Fazzano, which is located within the Golfo Di La Spezia. Everyone chatted and the mafia were not there to tell us that we had parked our dinghy in the wrong place! Getting our mail from UK was the easiest yet - the Postmistress had our mail in her hand before we even gave her our names!

**Biggest Gin & Tonic:**

At the Yacht Club Bar at Sestre Levante for €3.40. Half of the half-pint sized glass was gin!

**Most Aggressive Mosquitoes:**

We have experienced no real problems with mosquitoes since leaving UK, but the most aggressive have been:

In France - at the Port Napoleon Marina.

In Italy - At the Sestri Lavante Yacht Club Bar and alongside the River Tevere near Rome.

**Lowest Priced Wine:**

This was purchased in a supermarket in the Italian Ligurian coastal resort of Rapallo. The price for a litre of Tino was €0.63 (less than £0.50).

**Best Mediterranean Marina Value:**

Arenzano near Genoa because the first two nights are free, if you can get a place in this little marina. It is a bit rocking and rolling whilst alongside, but for free we can put up with a little hassle!

**Best Pizza Calzone:**

At the Brasserie Saleya, 11 Cours Saleya, in the old town at Nice. Not good for the waistline but an excellent combination of hams, cheeses, mushrooms and other unknown ingredients all wrapped up in this traditional Italian dish, which resembles an overgrown Cornish Pastie! One of Tony's favourites.

**Most Unique Champagne Party ever attended:**

Whilst aboard Tradewinds tied up alongside "Radisson Diamond" in Monaco on 7th September 2004.

**Best Cruise Ship in the Mediterranean:**

This definitely has to be the "Radisson Diamond", which has the greatest Staff Captain, Tour Manager and Crew. We went aboard whilst the ship was anchored at Cannes and enjoyed a fabulous lunch on the Pool Deck and tour of the sumptuous passenger areas and facilities. Unfortunately the "Radisson Diamond" was sold and taken to Hong Kong to be a floating Casino!

**Best Mediterranean Eating Place:**

The Pool Deck Buffet at lunchtime aboard the cruise ship "Radisson Diamond"! The food is of a fantastic quality and is presented beautifully.

**Most Expensive Restaurant / Cafe / Bar Wine:**

Sue treated us to a glass of wine each at the Carlton Intercontinental Hotel in Cannes at €9 per glass! In the very unlikely event that we had wanted to eat as well, Hamburger and Chips were on the menu at €26!

**Best Restaurants in Paris**

La Favorite at Alfortville (Suburb of Paris), near the entrance to the Marne.

Le Caveteine at Bastille for lunch. Great atmosphere and excellent food. Try the snails!

**Best Restaurants outside Paris:**

La Marina at Meaux - a small café close to the Halte Nautique with excellent food and service.

Quai No 4 Restaurant at St Tropez - close to the marina and reasonably priced with excellent food and service.

Trasteve in Villefranche.

**Worst Restaurants:**

Falstaff in the St Michel area of Paris.

**Best Miniature Dog:**

Doris Rajwans, who we met at St Tropez!

**Best Place we had never heard of before:**

Sanary-sur-Mer on the Côte d'Azur. We visited in August 2004, 2005 & 2006..

**Best Fuelling Place:**

This accolade has to go to La Rague Marina in the Golfe De La Napoule. The fuelling station is located just inside the entrance to a large marina, but with plenty of space to turn into the well-sheltered pontoon. There are 2 Diesel Pumps (and two petrol pumps) and water taps, with a hose provided. The pontoon is festooned

with fenders making it unnecessary to rig them on your own boat, and there are mooring lines already rigged for your use. Diesel is €1 per litre, which is highly competitive for the Côte d'Azur. The pontoon deck is carpeted and there are tables and chairs to sit at whilst either waiting your turn to be fuelled, or if the fuelling and watering process takes some time. The guy running the place is very hospitable and although he speaks very little English, knows the important words to help the process go without a hitch. Solent Marinas could learn a lot from these guys!

**Best Pain Aux Raisin:**

Sorry Linda but this was easily the best, as it was of the right consistency, had a wonderful taste, was the biggest and was the cheapest. It came from the Boulangerie on the right just past the crossroads in the town at Joinville on the Canal de la Marne à la Saône. Their baguettes were also very good. For those interested, the German for these delicacies is "Rösienschnecke", which roughly translated is "Raisin Snail"!

**Best Canal Capitainerie Captain:**

This was the Captain at Port de Plaisance de Nogent-Sur-Marne. He was extremely helpful by driving us in his car (in the rush hour) to a cycle shop about 5 Km from the boat to obtain some new brake pads for Tony's ancient bike. In the event the shop did not have the new pads, so the Captain returned us to his office to call a bike shop back in Paris, which was expected to have the parts. In the event they didn't, but it was not for the want of trying that it proved a failed mission!

**Best Emus:**

At the entrance to écluse St Maurice at the start of the Marne River.

**Best French Canal Marina:**

Paris Arsenal

**Best Halte de Plaisances:**

Meaux

**Best Locks:**

The locks of Canal St Martin are set in beautiful surroundings and the lock keepers are extremely friendly.

**Worst Locks:**

The first two locks into the Marne, which operate at two speeds - dead slow and stop!

**Best Lock Keepers:**

St Martin Canal in Paris

**Worst Lock Keepers:**

The one who accused me of going too fast!

**Best Wildlife:**

Geese at Port de Plaisance Nogent-Sur-Marne

**Best Wine:**

Difficult to make a choice, but Möet & Chandon champagne has got to rate highest!

**Best Museum:**

d'Orsay in Paris

**Best Tourist Activity:**

Cycling around the Palace of Versailles Gardens.

**Best tourist attraction outside Paris:**

1. The medieval streets and cathedral of Rouen.
2. Monet's house and gardens at Giverny.
3. Möet & Chandon champagne house and gardens at Épernay.
4. The Hotel Negresco in Nice.
5. St Tropez.
6. Villefranche.

**Best Bread:**

Everywhere!

**Best Onboard Chefs:**

Angie & Sue!

**Best Cathedral:**

Notra Dame in Paris

**Best Street Market:**

By far the best was Sanary-sur-Mer on the Côte d'Azur, closely followed by the one in St Tropez.

**Highest recorded Wind speeds:**

49 knots whilst anchored off St Tropez in August 2004 and 55 knots whilst berthed in Port Grimaud, May 2007.