

Reservations are currently accepted until October 2024.

Reservations for November 2024 will be released at midnight, 00:00 am local time, on the 01 December 2023, local hour.



If you want to eat at El Celler de Can Roca, in Girona Spain, you will have to wait 11 months for an opening. The illustrated story that follows takes you through a journey along the Mediterranean sea whose ultimate goal was to visit the famed restaurant and re-connect with one of my mentors from surgical training. Come with us on our splendid vacation to the South of France and Beyond. This installment will not include our return trip from Girona. That is for another time



*Rick and Jen's
Splendid
Vacation to
Southern France
+
Beyond
Oct 9 - Oct 24, 2023*

Rick and Jen's splendid vacation to Southern France and Beyond. Oct 9-24, 2023. We put together a 33 page book of our upcoming destinations, and bound them into a cool collection. A map, confirmation numbers, etc. were included for each "leg".

FRANCE 2023.xlsx 9:54 AM 11/13/2023

STOP #	DATE	FINISH	MILES	DESTINATION	# NIGHT	RM TYPE	CONFIRMATION
	9-Oct	SF CALIF		AIRPORT	0	In the halls	na
	10-Oct	LONDON		AIRPORT		couch	na
	10-Oct	NICE		Flight			
	11-Oct			Radisson Blu Hotel	2	Premium Room-Sea View	ITYV9DX6
	12-Oct	La Ciotat	100	Best western Premier Vieux port		Junior Suite, sea view	725381 42382494
	14-Oct						
	15-Oct	QUARANTE	201	STEVE/CAROL	3	With Love	Cause they said so
	16-Oct						
	17-Oct	BARCELONA	170	NH Barcelona Gran Hotel	1	Premium Room, terrace	725381 71526456
	18-Oct	GIRONA	63	Hotel Cacao	1	Junior Suite	791060620S-RE
	19-Oct	Agde	133	Le Palmyra Golf Hotel		Double golf view	5H15992421
#	20-Oct						
	21-Oct	CASSIS	162	Hotel Les Roches Blanches			72571097236009.00
	22-Oct						351795E011161
	23-Oct	Flight 3 pm		HILTON @AIRPORT			
	24-Oct	HOME		Flight			

NEED TO CANCEL: FIRST RES AT LE PALMYRA AND SECOND NIGHT IN BARCELONA

9/26/23, 9:18 AM

Nice, France to Nice Côte d'Azur Airport - Google Maps

Google Maps Nice, France to Nice Côte d'Azur Airport

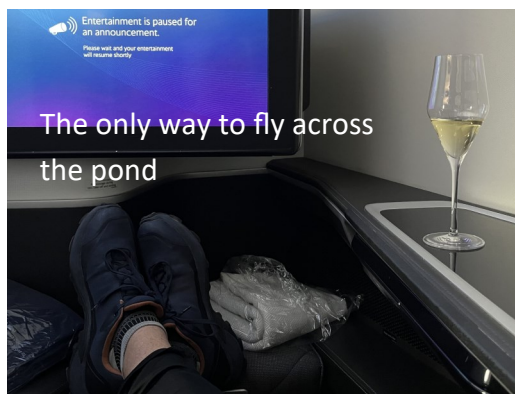
Round Trip

Drive 1,512 km, 16 hr 21 min

939 mi

Map labels: GERONA, Spreadsheet, La CIOTAT, BACK TO NICE, ID STUFF, FLIGHTS, BARCELONA

In the “Chart notes” 1st qtr, 2023, I wrote about molecular gastronomy (*She put de lime in de coconut*), and I explained how Jordi Roca, Patisser at the restaurant El Celler de Can Roca, created a dessert entitled “Old Book”. Details of the history of the Roca Family and the restaurant(s) are fascinating but not for today. Suffice it to say that the restaurant boasts 3 Michelin stars and was rated the #1 restaurant in the world by the Magazine “Restaurant” in 2013, 2015 and 2018. A NetFlix episode showcased Jordi Roca on their “Chef’s Table” series. Almost 15 years have passed since we traveled to Europe, so what the heck, we made reservations for two people at El Celler de Can Roca for Oct 18, 2023, and we made travel plans around this date. By Plane: Portland to SF to London to Nice. By Rental Car: Nice to La Ciotat to Quarante to Eau de Thau to Barcelona to Girona To Cap Agde to Nice. By Plane: Nice to London To Seattle to Portland



El Celler de Can Roca
Booking details:
18/10/2023 | 19:45 | 2 persons
Thank you! We hope you enjoy your booking at El Celler de Can Roca

El Celler de Can Roca
Carrer de Can Sunyer, 48, 17007 Girona
+34 972222157 - restaurant@cellercanroca.com

Between 1981-1987 I was a resident in Surgery at Swedish Hospital in Seattle. One of my attendings and mentor, Steve Medwell, MD, Colo-rectal surgeon, made a huge impression on me-how to be the best, how to present myself, and how to remain humble in the face of greatness, among others. Out of curiosity, since I had lost contact with Dr. Medwell, I googled him a year ago or so and discovered that he and his wife Carol relocated to Southern France (part time) and started a wine club with wines from small vintners in the Languedoc-Roussillon region of Southern France, along the Mediterranean . The wine club, with a mailing address in Seattle, is called “The Princess and the Bear” and, after a small sampling of their wines, Jen and I became “Mediterranean Club” members.

While Jen and I were in the process of making travel plans around our reservation at Can Roca, the Princess and the Bear were preparing for their annual “Mediterranean Club Members Party” at their house in Quarante, France.

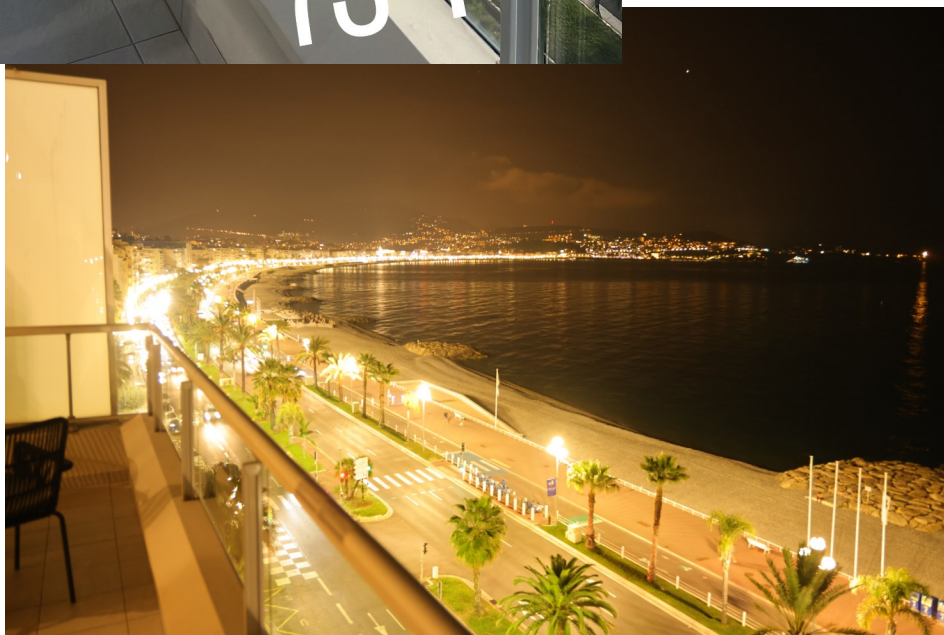
Since the weather along the Mediterranean is still pretty mild at that time of the year, we decided to rent a car and travel along the Mediterranean Sea to our destination in Girona, Spain for the evening of October 18. The club party was scheduled for October 14, 2023 in Quarante, France. If you study the road map, timing could not be better for making a side trip to Quarante.



[RIGHT] British Airways supplied sleeping wear for the Trip across the pond.



Note: Princess & Bear Hat



Picked up rental car, 2023 BMW M4 in Nice, France

From Nice, we drove to La Ciotat. My first experience driving the French Highways really messed me up. I was a complete wreck by the time we got to La Ciotat. It took 3-4 days of driving the French Autoroutes before I finally 'got it'.



Here are the simple rules for driving the French Autoroutes. The autoroutes are usually 6 lanes –3 in each direction. NEVER drive in the left hand lane unless you are going faster than every body else. NEVER drive in the middle lane unless you are passing someone in the right most lane.. NEVER pass anyone in a lane to your left. In approximately 1,000 miles, we paid ~\$200 US in toll road fees. Watch out for “Peage” One of the things we really liked were the frequency of rest areas! Approx. One every 10 miles. We chose the town of La Ciotat because of its, relatively slower, non-tourista environment. 35k residents give or take and a very slow pace of life. I also chose La Ciotat because very few people will speak English and it gave me a good reason to practice my French.



La Ciotat



Used for Water Jousting in summer



We decided to bypass the Autoroute for the trip from La Ciotat to Quarante. It was fun, colorful and full of a different stress. The cars were everywhere, mostly small. The roads are narrow and people drive fast, especially the service and delivery people—way too fast for roads that have drop offs everywhere.

Along the road to Quarante



The house surrounds an intimate, luxurious Mediterranean garden with a cooling pool and hidden treasures

PRINCESS & BEAR MEDITERRANEAN CLUB PARTY,
QUARANTE , FRANCE. October 14, 2023





Joe Henderson on the Vinyl



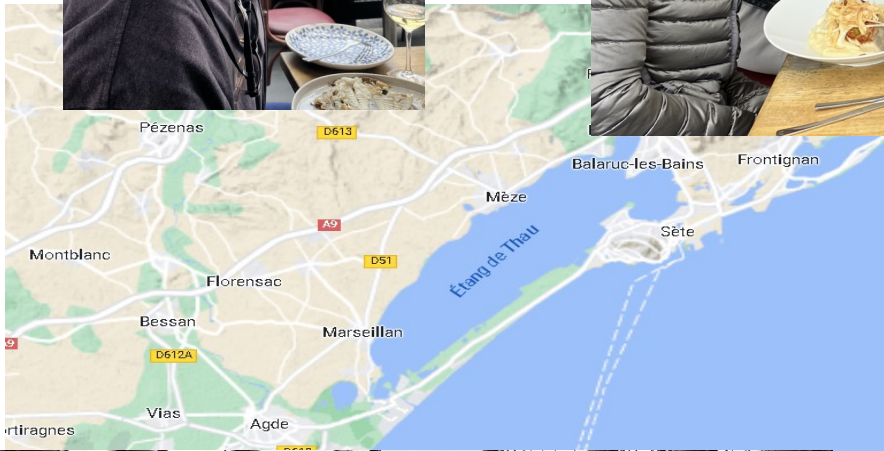
Look for Randy at Oh Gobie



We spent 3 great nights in Quarante with Steve and Carol and included a memorable trip to the market in nearby Narbonne. Steve is directing the fella to fillet our fish for tomorrow's dinner which was excellent.



In Saint Guilhem, we see High atop a mountain are the remains of a fortress built by the monks in the 12 century. To the lows of Etang de Thau, where we had lunch, at "Oh Gobie". I was especially taken by the Turbot, very Sole full.



The pic to the left does not do justice to the scope of the shell fish operations in the Etang de Thau. Mussels, oysters, clams etc.

Because the shellfish do not get the extremes in tide changes, the fishery's must buy and cultivate product from surrounding sea. 750 separate fisheries, 3000 oyster tables, 13,000 tons/year. Then there are mussels, clam and the like.



La Sagrada Familia.
October 17, 2023

Barcelona, Spain:

We travelled from Quarante, France to the NH collection Barcelona Gran Hotel. I must have been coming down with something from the party' cause I was wrecked by the time we made many wrong turns in the nightmare of a busy city with people walking everywhere and crazy drivers—don't get me started on the motorcycles and scooters, that were ubiquitous as gnats on a warm, moist summer night.

The La Sagrada Familia is worth mentioning as a building started in 1882, and is expected to be finished in 2026—we'll see.

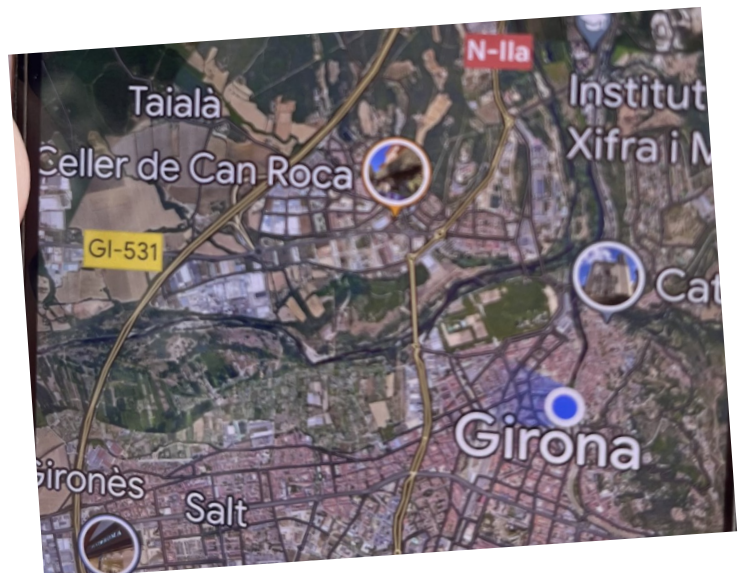




At last we arrive at the Roca Family Hotel Casa Cacao — of the house of Chocolate, a seven minute ride to the Restaurant. We were lucky to have landed one of only 12 rooms. It took us a while to figure out how to get to the Hotel as it is located, partially, in a blind alley.

They have, also at this site their Chocolate Factory.

Girona, Spain, Home of El Celler de Can Roca





El Celler De Can Roca

Hard to see it, but the tables are seated, inside, along the outside wall of a triangle that encloses a triangular outdoor space with see through glass.

Take a good look at the menu, hopefully you will receive this publication with the ability to zoom.

Girona, the 18th of October 2023

Wines

Albet i Noya El Celler Brut Reserva D.O. Clàssic Penedès
 Gonzalez Byass Palo Cortado 1986 para El Celler de Can Roca D.O. Jerez
 Esmeralda Garcia El Carrascal 2021 Segovia
 La Perdida O'Pando Orange 2021 Ourense
 Domaine Rolet Tradition 1989 A.O.C. Côtes du Jura
 Domaine Clos de Rouge Gorge 2017 IGP Côtes Catalanes
 Riffault Akmenimé 2019 A.O.C. Sancerre
 Viña Tondonia Blanco Reserva 2012 D.O. Ca Rioja
 Suertes del Marques Los Pasitos 2012 D.O. Valle de la Orotava
 Domaine du Traginer 2014 A.O.C. Collioure
 Peter Jacob Kühn Doosberg 2018 VDP Rheingau
 La Maison Romane Les Clos 2019 A.O.C. Fixin
 Pedro Balda Cosecha 2017 D.O. Ca. Rioja
 Mas Doix 2013 D.O. Ribera del Duero
 Grans Fassian Piesporter Goldtröpfchen spätlese 2015 VDP Mosel
 Domaine Huet Le Mont 2001 A.O.C. Vouvray
 Olivares 2018 D.O. Jumilla

R

Joan Roca i Fontané
 Cuiner

Josep Roca i Fontané
 Cambrer de vins

Jordi Roca i Fontané
 Pastisser

R

EL CELLER DE CAN ROCA
 Menu

Porcini brioche (2009)
 Bruna cow's fresh milk cream from Formateria la Xiquella with veal and porcini (2021)
 Porcini sandwich / Poularde cannellone (2001)
 Razor fish with an emulsion of bergamote (2012) / Squid romana (1997) / Roasted chicken muffin (2022)
 Charcoal-grilled courgette with a demi-glace of courgette and pumpkin seed milk (2012)
 Olivada: aloreña, cordoba, cornicabra, Kalamata and Verdial with piparra (2018)
 Yucca flower (2013)
 A whole prawn. Prawn marinated with rice vinegar, head juice, crispy prawn legs seaweed velouté (2012)
 Oyster ying-yang (2011)
 Pork cracklings with mannated tuna collar (2019) / Foie nouget, hazelnuts and cocoa (2005)
 "Bad weeds", Nettle "mató", nettle sauce, sea fennel and plankton granita, "ajo blanco", seasonal weeds
 Orange salad. Mussels, carrot purée, saffron and vinegar, yuzu marmalade, carrot sauce, tangerine, apple, orange juice, ginger, sriracha sauce, grilled mango, yellow beetroot, salad of chicory, Jerusalem artichoke and mango, air of "piparra" and bottarga.
 Porcini with hazelnuts. Jelly, mousse and consommé of porcini, cooked hazelnuts, toasted hazelnuts, confit kumquat, oak wood-grilled porcini, pickled porcini, hazelnut milk, coffee and licorice
 Eel and figs. Smoked fig brandade, pickled celery, black and red fig mole, pickled figs, black olive, purple onion and confit rhubarb
 Pickled Girona pepper, smoked apple cream with pine nuts and ají pepper dust, charcoal-grilled Fuji apple, Girona pepper demi-glace, Golden and Fuji apple juice reduction. Pickled Girona pepper with a purée of charcoal-grilled apple and walnut oil, stir fried porcini with Granny Smith apple and basil, charcoal-grilled melon
 Autumn tubers. Jerusalem artichoke stew, Jerusalem artichoke demiglace, Jerusalem artichoke foam, salsify with butter and black pepper, pickled salsify, parsnip and coffee purée, Jerusalem artichoke broth, crispy purple potato, gold potato and Jerusalem artichoke fried skin powder
 Charcoal-grilled eggplant, lacquered with miso, aubergine caviar, pickled aubergine, smoked yogurt, bulgur with sesame and cardamom béchamel
 Onion with jigged squid. Calaman grilled over holm oak embers, roasted shallot, stuffed shallot, smoked Figueres onion purée, red onion sauce, white onion sauce, onion in Porto sauce, concentrated onion juice, snow fungus, orange and curry
 Fish of the day confit. Purée of charcoal-grilled red-root amaranth leaves, pickled red-root amaranth seeds, fried red-root amaranth seeds, pickled red-root amaranth leaves and fennel
 Langoustine with poularde parfait. Surf and turf. Roasted poularde juice, chicken cracklings, langoustine bisque, poularde liver parfait, pickled seaweeds, pickled sea fennel
 "Ramats de foc" lamb. Stew of lamb neck, loin, belly and charcoal-grilled meatballs with smoked sheep's cottage cheese, lemon verbena, artemisia, rue, thyme, rosemary, sempervivum, wild blackberry, fennel flower, verdial olive, ratafia and walnut oil
 "Xuixo" of duck stew. Cured and smoked duck, duck sauce, duck marinade, duck consommé, pickled duck sauce, blood orange
 Figs, honey and mató. "Mató" (fresh goat cheese), toasted honey and pollen jelly, fig and honey jam, "mató" powder, fig leave oil, fig granita and fig leave cloud
 Old book. Cinnamon and cream reduction, toasted powdered milk, earl gray tea cream, madeleine mousse, madeleine cubes, lemon jelly, lemon jam, caramelised crunch, rice paper
 Blackberries from our garden Mas Marroch with chocolate. Sheep milk chocolate mousse, a cream reduction with Java pepper, toffee, blackberry granita and caramel sauce



Long story short, we were able to get a table for four and shared our experience with Steve and Carol. As you saw from the menu, this was something like a 22 course meal with 17 + wines tasted. No words will do justice to this incredible and unique event and the events of the past week. Without question, it was the best meal I have ever had and it was such a blessing to share it with a mentor and his life partner and my life partner. I encourage you to learn more about the Roca Family; see all of the photos available on the web, and who knows perhaps you'll find 11 months to plan for a meal that will last a lifetime with a four hour commitment.





Old book. Cinnamon and cream reduction, toasted powdered milk, earl gray tea cream, madeleine mousse, madeleine cubes, lemon jelly, lemon jam, caramelised crunch, rice paper

Lastly, I was able to chat with Jordi Roca, the man himself.

I could not have asked for a better ending at

El Celler de Can Roca. The “Old Book” essence that Jordi created using a gastrovac was sprinkled on our hands just before eating this dessert.



Morning coffee from Hotel de Cacao for the drive back , ultimately to Nice. First stop the small quiet town of Agde at the edge of the Mediterranean .