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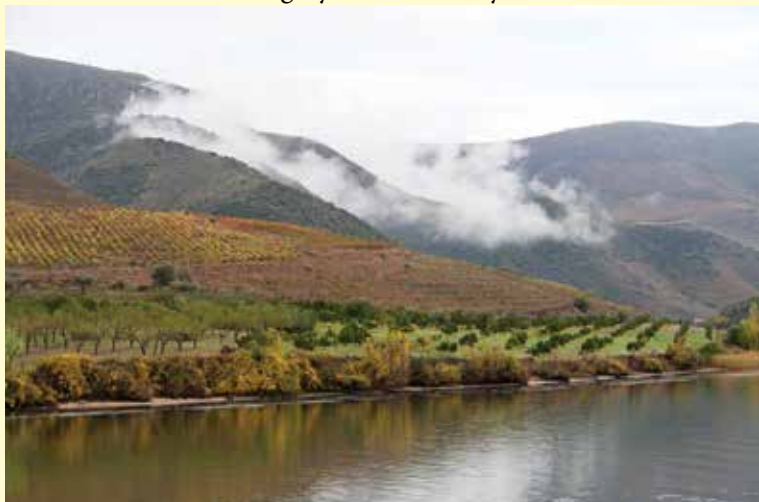
October 28
2015



Ferradosa and the Wine Road

Following a wonderful meal that was punctuated by *paella* prepared on board by our resident chefs, four ladies that followed us from Salamanca came on board to entertain us with their lively version of a foot-stomping and finger snapping *Flamenco*, a dance that originated in Southwestern Spain in the community of Andalusia. It did not take much time for our group to render our version of the dance, with a Filipino twist of *tinikling* or perhaps more of the moro version of *singkil*, without the bamboo.

We got up the following morning ready to cruise down stream in the Rio Douro this time taking time to enjoy the colorful Fall scenery as we passed through the locks of Pocinho and Valeira and stopping at different destinations along the way. There was time to catch up with our CMEs as Dr. Tony Gonzales gave his talk on Cataract Surgery and Dr. Gerry Flores on Contrast



Cruising down the Rio Douro enjoying the Fall colors

Nephropathy, following the earlier talks given by Dr. Sanny Uy on Wine and the Heart and on Omega 3 Fatty Acids and Dr. Greg Tan on Congestive Heart Failure and on EKG for the Primary Care Physician.



Dr. Boy Abay and FAITH

Dr. Boy Abay, the Chairman of Filipino American Initiative to Transform our Homeland (FAITH), updated the group and urged everyone to apply for dual citizenship and register to vote in the coming Philippine national election. There was even time to learn new line dances from our DI-extra ordinaire, Ched Gonzales, even as some sat in the open deck to watch the acres



Between Zumba & Line Dance, there was no time to be a slouch

and acres (I guess it is hectares in Portugal) of vineyards and orchards on the slopes of the valley with colorful farm houses and sometimes small villages interspersed along the way.

After a quiet lunch, it was time to get off the dock in Ferradosa and board our buses to explore the narrow and winding *wine road* and visit a Quinta on top of the mountain overlooking the village of Pinhão. But first we stopped on a hill with seven chapels. We could only get to one of them as there was not



Ferradosa and the hill with seven chapels overlooking Pinhão

enough time to scale the steep slope. We dropped in at the town of S. João da Pesqueira that had a beautiful plaza with a small church and stores with stalls outside the buildings where local products were on display. Needless to say, we had an opportunity to exercise our bargaining skills.

Finally, it was time to go up to the Quinta do Ferreira following a winding and very narrow road with several switch back turns



The House of Sandeman at Quinta do Seixo of the Ferreira Consortium

The town of S. João de Pesqueira on the hills of the Douro Valley
 that pretty much left portions of the bus seemingly overhanging the cliff. You can just imagine the consternation that we all felt when two cars met us on the way up and our buses had to back

off to make room for them to pass. I guess our holding our breath deep helped to make room for them to squeeze by. We were met by a hostess clad in a "Zorro" Sandeman outfit and were shown through dark corridors the various rooms

of the Quinta where grapes were processed. It used to be that people would stomp on them with their feet. I guess some of us were prepared to wallow in burgundy juices but fortunately the harvest season was over and besides they now use robots for this purpose. They are more efficient, can work 24/7, and they do not go on strike, so we were told. The inevitable wine tasting followed and a chance to bring home bottles of Sandeman wine to US from their souvenir store that was kept open despite the late hour.

Even in the rapidly darkening dusk, the view of the valley of Pinhão was beautiful. It was really dark when we were dropped off at the old train station and it was hard to appreciate the famous *azulejos* (Portuguese painted tiles). We took pictures anyway just to prove that we were once there.



Rio Douro Valley overlooking the town of Pinhao and its old train station

The Costume Party

This was supposed to be our gala dinner night but we had decided as a group to make it our “Costume Party”. Tonight we would show of the fruit of our painstaking search for a unique costume as we traveled from France, through Spain, and now Portugal. Some brought their costumes from home but others did hunt for an outfit and this is the time when we would be judged for how well we prepared for this unique evening. No matter who were acknowledged to have won, everybody was indeed a winner as evidenced by the laughter and conviviality that permeated the *MS Gil Eanes* that night. Oh what a night it was!



Images of the Costume Party



It was indeed a night to remember! While the staff of Croisi Europe's MS Gil Eanes expected the guests to dress up in a formal wear as most Gala Dinners are meant to be, a suggestion was made to make it more fun and exciting by making it a costume party instead. A challenge was cast to make it even more challenging by inviting everybody to look for a costume as we traveled through France, Spain and Portugal. There was a sense of urgency as we got closer to our river cruise because there were fewer opportunities to shop for that one unique costume to wear on the river ship. And after days of frolicking and scavenging, what you will see is the result of a memorable hunt, for some, even before boarding the plane in the USA., and for others, while they were actually already on the pilgrimage and tour.



