



## *Land cruising from Burgundy to Alsace & the Alps!*

With Otter safely tucked away for winter, too late to cruise further, we decided to visit Besancon (pop. 116,775). What a Burgundian gem, nestled in the loop of the River Doubs, bordered by six hills, with Jura Mountains in the background. The city's rich historical and cultural heritage is long, dating all the way back to 58 BC, the Romans, Dukes of Burgundy, the Holy Roman Emperor -Charles V, Philip II of Spain, Austria, and the Nazis under WWII. It has earned many titles along the way- including the historical "Watch-making Capital of France", "the Greenest City in France", "Town of Art & History" (it's Museum of Fine Arts & Archaeology" was the first museum in France (1694). Today it leads the way in microtechnology and biomedical engineering and is the seat of the Universtite de Franch-Comte'. And apart from all that, it just rocks!



The Citadelle de Besancon, designed by military engineer, Vauban, took 30 years to build and has been a World Heritage Site since 2008.

Peaceful today, and a wonderful place to catch your breath again with its breath-taking views, it's hard to imagine that from 1941-42 it housed a Nazi concentration camp with over 3000 women & children British-passport holders, many of whom died in the harsh conditions, and that over 100 French resistance fighters were executed here. There is a lovely memorial and garden. 325 km. east of Paris, it seems in a world of its own. It was a wonderful day out.



The historical centre is full of classical stone buildings, some dating back to the Middle Ages or the Spanish Renaissance, with some Roman remains. It's a very compact and vibrant city to stroll around, full of cafes, boutiques and art galleries. And yes, we did buy a clock!



On the trip back from Greece to St. Jean de Losne (returning to put Otter on land), we realized that with a small detour, we could finally visit our friends, Annick and Captain Jeff, as we had so often promised to do, at their gorgeous mountain home perched in the Alps in Les Adrets. You can virtually step out the door and onto the ski slopes in winter. The views are breathtaking and we so much enjoyed getting together again at their lovely home. And so another season has flown by. Otter will undergo a facelift this coming winter – a major sanding down and recoating of her hull which has faded during the past 30 years and now has a few more scratches. A small repair to the propeller will also be done, after we hit something underwater and took a chunk out of it! She will look like new in 2022!