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### Welcome to the August edition of the Via Nissa newsletter.



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Dear Via Nissa community,

A rather quiet summer high season on the Côte d'Azur. On the 20th of July, France imposed a new stricter measure for wearing facemasks. If you are caught without one in a public space (such as a store), there is a 135€ fine, second offence in 15 days 1500€, third offence in 30 days six months in prison and 3750€. They don't mess around here and people don't complain, they feel safer.

Meanwhile in neighboring Liguria, Italy, the Italians from the north have descended and traffic has definitely picked up, but masks are even more common there. Even walking outside you will see a large percentage of the population wearing masks. Why do people not complain about this inconvenience to their freedoms? Because for months we were confined to our homes and we watched on television each night how deadly and dangerous the virus was. Personally, I have an 18 year at home and she is just as likely to forget her mask than to remember to wear it, so I am pleased with the new rules as I expect to be safer because of them.



Speaking of Italy, I had the chance to visit the Jewish Ghetto in Venice and the Jewish Museum in Ferrara. I had avoided Venice because of the horror stories of the masses of tourists and cruise ships which sent "shoppers" into the city. Certainly, I had been curious to visit the Jewish ghetto, whose museum is now open only a few days per week. I was shocked to learn that normally, 90,000 tourists a year visit the Venice Jewish ghetto. While the ghetto today is lovely, it isn't the first ghetto which is what the vendors were trying to tell me. Not even close. Nice had a ghetto from 1430 (or 1448), more than 70 years before Venice. Barcelona had a ghetto even earlier as did Frankfurt. I also had the chance to visit the Jewish Museum in Ferrara, so nicely written up in the NYTimes, but definitely waste of time. Unless you enjoy standing and reading long panels of a reader's digest version of a story. I went. I lasted about 5 minutes in the museum. Nobody else was there. No need to wonder why. Nice, on the other hand doesn't have a Jewish museum, yet it has Jewish history throughout the city. It is living history, it is everywhere, and it is really unknown and undiscovered. A visit to Venice ghetto would last an hour. Three hours in Nice and you barely scratch the surface of the Jewish history.

Meanwhile, Nice itself is filled with French tourists again. Typically, on the Côte d'Azur, the Parisians and the Lyonnais come from July 15th to August 15th and all through France life slows down. But these figures are nothing to crow about. Hotel occupancy in June and July has historically been greater than 80%, but this past June, occupancy was only 21.3% and July, the peak season, rebounded only to 56.4%. But even that positive trend is offset by the average revenue in July which was down 16% per room.

A few weeks ago I was driving across Italy and near Genoa, somebody hit the back of my car, but the garage to get it fixed is closed. No signs on the door. No idea when they will reopen. But that is how it is here, and we just wait. They will come back eventually. The car will be fixed. Meanwhile about town there are Germany tourists, Belgium tourists, Italian tourist, Swiss tourists and others from Northern Europe (principally Dutch), but you won't find any American tourist, Russian tourist, Australian tourist or Chinese tourist. So, for those of you who like to come at the highest point of the season, this is a great time to be here. (Austalians are not allowed to leave Australia).

This past month we had guests visit the vineyards in Bellet with a twist. Most visits to the vineyards involve a trip to a Domaine where wine is produced, usually harvested in September. Other than that, the vats are either full or empty, but there really isn't anything to see. The employees at the domaine pour samples of the wine. Our visit however was an opportunity to get close and personal not only with the vigneron, but enjoy a home cook Niçois meal prepared by the family who owned the domaine. In this way, the wine was tasted over a two hour lunch with the Niçois specialties prepared for a small intimate gathering, not an institutional affair. No matter how expertise a chef might have, there is no better way to experience the Niçois that by sharing a meal at their home, which they prepared only for us, surrounding by grapes. This is the kind of experience only available to friends and relatives or through Via Nissa.



### A special holocaust commemoration in Nice



This month there was a special holocaust commemoration in Nice, an annual event to remember the 78th anniversary of the round-up of more than 13,000 Jews (including 4,000 children) by the barbarian Nazis at Vel' d'Hiv in 1942. Only six of the children returned alive. The well attended event was held at the Nice train station, the location where the Jews of Nice were brought to board trains to Drancy outside of Paris and then Auschwitz. The moving ceremony was attended by members of the Jewish community in Nice as well as local politicians to show their support. Speeches were given by several holocaust survivors as well as the children of the Righteous among the Nations, the non-Jews who risked their lives to protect Jews during the 1943-1944 period of German occupation.

A military band was placed on one side. They played the French national anthem, the Marseillaise, and the Hebrew song, Oseh Shalom, which was led by rabbis. Along the walls of the station were photographs of the survivors along with flower arrangements presented by the city and groups of individuals who were in service at the time of the war. Six candles were lit by former deportees in commemoration of the six million Jews who were killed. It was an experience which is difficult to forget. Perhaps the words of Oseh Shalom, for those who know this song, help to understand how tears could easily be seen in the eyes of attendees.



*Oseh shalom bimromav (He who makes peace in his high places)  
Hu ya'aseh shalomaleyenu (He shall make peace upon us)  
Va'al kol yisrael (And upon all of Israel)  
Ve'imru Amen (And say Amen)*

Nice is a very special place. Those of us who live here are very privileged.

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