

# WHITE OVER RED 03 – BEGINNING



Posted on 2022-10-10 2023-04-04 by spd\_wp\_admin

Dear Reader (posted 2022-10-10),  
Forward and Table of Contents can be found [here](#).

Date: Saturday 2022-08-06  
Location: Evian to Bernex

Delivery vehicles can still access the pedestrian mall at this hour of the morning. There is the clattering of metal against metal as roll-up store front shutters are being wound up. Shop owners share the success and failures of last night's football game (soccer), hopes for the day, and morning pleasantries all over café-longes. I don't understand the words rising from the street, but I do recognize the tones of familiarity, as I look out my hotel room from the first floor (ground plus one). It's 7:00 am and there are only a few things left to do. I put on my boots, put on my pack, walk downstairs, settle my account, and enter the street. Now, I'm part of the morning theatre. In minutes the first rays of day will touch this cobblestone street. I turn right towards the plaza, and then turn right again, up a lane.

In less than an hour I have climbed out of town. Using a combination of digital and paper maps I end up on the main road to Bernex. There is a small road off to the right with a sign pointing to my next hotel, Le Boi Joli. It is far too early to check in. Instead, I walk 30 / 40 minutes more to the village of Bernex. There is one restaurant that looks as if it might open. Perhaps I can get a late breakfast or early lunch.

A low stone wall provides an excellent vantage point to sit, watch, and wait. A woman starts unfurling patio umbrellas, and I ask when the restaurant will open. She replies that it is just her on shift, and she will only be able to seat those with a reservation. She mentions the café I had passed on my walk into the village. It is only 5 minutes away.

Café Ceasar's kitchen is closed. I sit down at one of 3 small tables inside the cramped room, and drink a Fanta (they don't have Orangina) and an espresso. Over the next 6 weeks I will come to relish Orangina as my rehydration drink of choice. It is not too sweet, actually tastes like it might have orange in it, and has enough fizz to be refreshing. In the final days of this walk I will discover a new-to-me aperitif. An Aperol-spritz is made using 3 parts prosecco, 2 parts Aperol (Italian bitters), 1 part soda, all poured over ice, garnished with a slice of orange, and served in a large, stemmed water glass. Today though it is just coffee and Fanta.

Over the next 20 minutes, half the village enters and leaves this shop. Some are picking up and delivering parcels. Others come in to buy lottery tickets or cigarettes. Three people sitting beside have obviously been friends for some time, and look like they meet here long and often. Overseeing the constant ebb and flow of people is a serene calico cat sprawled in its place of honor on top of the lottery counter. It too has been here a long time. I am still hungry and the excitement of beginning that got me here is starting to wane.

I walk back the way I had come to Le Boi Joli. Dominique, the front desk woman is delightful. Keeping in mind that the following all occurs in French, and my French is atrocious the next two hours goes something like this.

Me Hello, my name is Sean Drysdale and I have a reservation.  
D Hello, welcome to Le Boi Joli. Your room is not ready.  
Me That is okay I can wait. Can I please have a beer.  
D Certainly, you can sit just over there, and I will get you one.  
Me Thank you kindly. Do you have anything to eat.  
D We are having an event, but let me ask chef.  
Aside A multi-generation event, possibly a special birthday party, is unfolding out on the canopy draped terrace above the pool. Young boys wearing ties, and young girls wearing party dresses are running around.  
D (Half an hour later) Your table is ready.

A couple has been seated outside on the patio ( not the terrace). A table has also been prepared for me. The appetizer is a bowl of cold melon soup, garnished with melon balls and a single thinly sliced coil of prosciutto – delicious. The main dish is composed of 1 large prawn with head and tail, 2 smaller prawns with tails, and half a dozen shrimp served over ratatouille. I savour my glass of white wine and look out towards layers of hazy mountains. The dessert of apricot tart is presented, like the other dishes, in Instagram worthy visuals but with more class and style than Instagram will ever have. After dessert, I lie down on the thick turquoise cushion of a chaise lounge by the pool. A blue sky massages my eyelids, as I drift in and out of sleep. Perhaps, I should stay here a day or seven more. I am vaguely aware of the party coming to an end.

The lovely receptionist with a gentle voice says “Monsieur your room is ready.”

Later that evening, I dress for dinner by donning the one collared shirt I have packed. We all travel with a little luxury. For some it is a pillow. For me it is a collared shirt. The terrace that was the scene of the party earlier today is now bathed in light from strings of clear festive lights. There is a metal straw in my lemon-based aperitif. Supper of a mixed tomato salad, chicken with apricot almonds and mushrooms, followed by fruit salad is just as delicious as lunch.

I thank the universe for looking after me and go to bed. I will thank the universe often over the next six weeks, for big things, for little things, for the privilege of being able to do this walk. Though there will be days that try me, there will only be three sections of the trail that make me feel unsafe, and I will never be outside my range of capabilities.

Photos 2, 3, 4 were also in the teaser post.



01





03



04



05 Bernex



06

## Notebook Notes

A friend told me that temperatures are cooler above 1,000m. The twinkly lights of the umbrellas give faces a warm glow. Mist has descended, cloaking the hill tops and tomorrow's destination.

### 3 Replies to "White Over Red 03 – Beginning"

1. **Keith** says: 2022-10-13 at 09:12 Edit

I had been hoping for a photo of the calico cat. But there is a cow giving you the eye in photo 3, so I suppose that will have to do. I quite like that photo, with the cow bringing some life to a nicely composed scene.

And again in 4, the fountain is bringing life to a quiet scene, framed top and bottom.

But back to the beginning, #1. At first I thought, there I was and this is what I saw, some stairs to a doorway. Ho hum. Then I left it up on the screen while I attended to some other matters (a demanding cat) and saw it several times as I went back and forth, before the screen went blank. Then it was there as I started up again, and I discovered it had grown on me. Wondering what's on the other side of the door, and who lives there, and if they like to hump their groceries up the stairs several times a week. Then I started looking at the textures of the various materials.

2. I instantly saw the circular framing and followed the path. But there I got stuck. Around and around the whirlpool and down the path.

Looking forward to seeing more!

1. **spd\_wp\_admin** says: 2022-10-13 at 20:24 Edit

Thank you Keith for visiting, commenting, and spending time with #1.

2. Pingback: White Over Red 01 – Forward and ToC – Sean P Drysdale