

ANDALUSIA, SPAIN

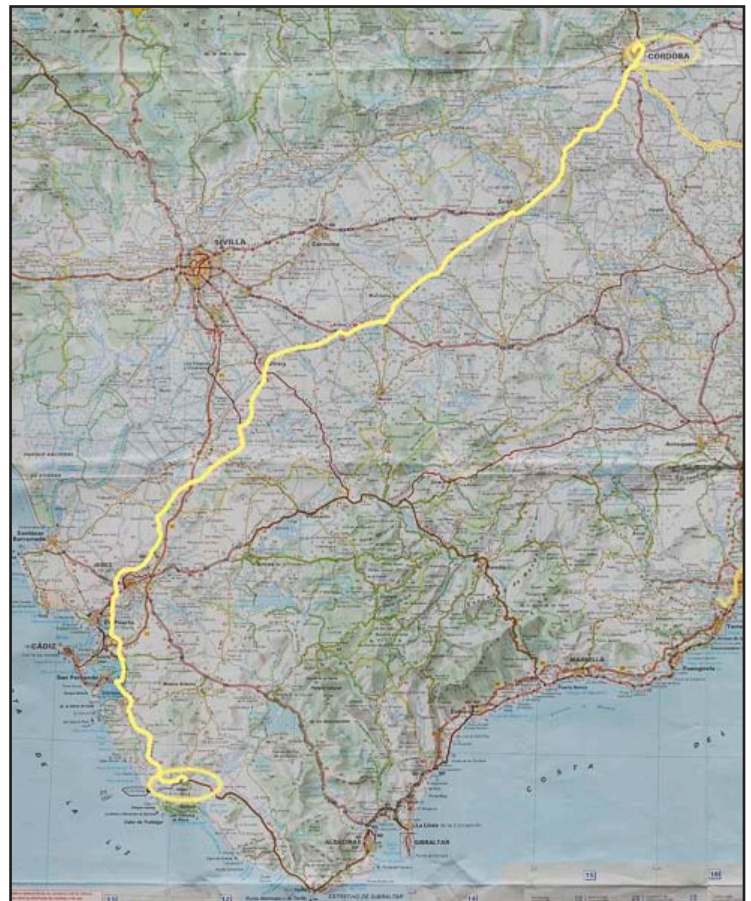
CORDOBA TO VEJER DE LA FRONTERA, MAY 1 - 3, 2013

This map show our overall route highlighted. The ovals show where we stopped for a few days to explore the immediate area.



Cordoba to Vejer de la Frontera

On a very quite damp early morning, (very early by Cordoba standards), we woke our sleepy hotel clerk and politely asked them to bring our car from where ever they had parked it a few days earlier. We stowed our luggage in the boot and before the streets were very crowded, began threading our way through the maze of narrow one way streets towards the main highway and our next destination, Vejer de la Frontera. I only made one error but was very fortunate to be able to make an easy loop around a few blocks and catch the turn on a second pass. Had the streets been crowded with people as it would certainly have been a bit later, I'm not sure we would have ever seen the turn. The turn took advantage of traversing what appeared to be a pedestrian only plaza for a few yards before becoming anything that would pass for a narrow street again. As we worked our way out of the ancient section we were staying in, the road got wider and easier to follow. We found the main highway and took a general direction of south west towards Seville. Before long we cut off the main highway, avoiding Seville, and onto what we hoped would be more interesting back roads to Vejer. We will have to come back and explore Seville another time, but not with an automobile. We stopped along the way for breakfast at a cafe in a small farming community and enjoyed a pleasant drive onto Vejer.



An Alternative Catholic Universe?

We stopped outside this place as it was just so interesting to be along the road in this rolling hills farmland. We could not readily find a way in that was not gated and/or had heavily fortified metal doors. There were cameras along the outside so we decided not to pursue entry and after taking a photo or two were on our way. We could not see over the walls, so the photographs were more to help figure out what the place was later when I returned home. This is called the Christian Palmarian Church of the Carmelites of the Holy Face, or commonly, the Palmarian Catholic Church. It is a small schismatic Catholic church centered around El Palmar de Troya, Spain. The church regards Pope Paul VI, whom they revere as a martyr, and his predecessors as true popes, but hold, on the grounds of claimed apparitions, that the Pope of Rome is excommunicated and that the position of the Holy See has, since 1978, been transferred to the See of El Palmar de Troya. The Palmarian Catholic Church has had three pontiffs since its break from the Catholic Church; Pope Gregory XVII declared himself pope in 1978 until his death in 2005, (Pope Peter II) succeeded Domínguez in 2005 and was replaced by Pope Gregory XVIII who was elected by conclave in 2011. More about the place can be found here along with links to better photographs: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palmarian_Catholic_Church

Viva Wikipedia and Google Earth!



Osborne Bulls

We saw a few of the iconic Spanish Bull signs along the way. The Osborne bull (in Spanish: Toro de Osborne) is a 14-metre-high black silhouetted image of a bull in semi-profile, and is regarded as the unofficial national symbol of Spain. The bull was created in 1956 by Manolo Prieto. The Osborne sherry company erected large images of bulls starting in 1956 to advertise their Brandy de Jerez. The images were black (with the brand "Veterano" in red on it) advertising boards located near major roads throughout Spain. The current larger image was created to comply with a law that prohibited advertising within 150 metres of a road. In 1994 a law was passed prohibiting all roadside advertising, and the bulls were therefore to be removed. By this time the signs were nationally renowned, so although some campaigners wished them completely removed to fully comply with the intent of the law, public response resulted in the signs being retained, but completely blacked out to remove all reference to the original advertisers. The Court eventually allowed these signs to remain on the grounds that they have become a part of the landscape and have "aesthetic or cultural significance", thus turning the bulls into public domain images.





Caffeine Refueling...

Just before getting to Vejer de la Frontera I stopped for a little pick-me-up espresso. One does not want to enter via automobile into any sort of small town interior without adequate caffeine. Lack of caffeine puts one at such a tremendous disadvantage in the competition for road space and parking. I've learned to slow down and stop, take few minutes to relax and stoke up on caffeine... THEN.... We took an unnecessary turn or two, and missed a couple turns we should have taken... BUT... we made it to the top of the hill town and the end of navigable roads...

MY SPACE! MY SPACE! MY SPACE!

VIVA CAFFEINE!

I found this parking space fair and square! I landed the car in the parking space, well... okay... if one wants to be technical, a place that I thought 'may' be a parking place. Wendy & Pat then ventured forth to find our hotel at the top of Vejer. This is scientific evidence that caffeine improves driving skills! It was as close to the hotel as non-residents were allowed to get. The car would not have fit on any of the roads further up anyway. It was right on the main plaza, (Plaza de Espana) and allowed plenty of locals something to learn on for the next few days we were in Vejer. I could hardly believe my luck, so I had the hotel staff come down to see if I was dreaming. They said I was cool with leaving it there and was luckiest of the lucky in finding it! And they said I had a 'HUGE' car by Vejer standards. I had scouted the Plaza as being about as close as we could get to the hotel before we left the USA via Google Earth... so I recognized the general layout... all except the extreme up and down of the typography, which Google Earth does not reflect that well.

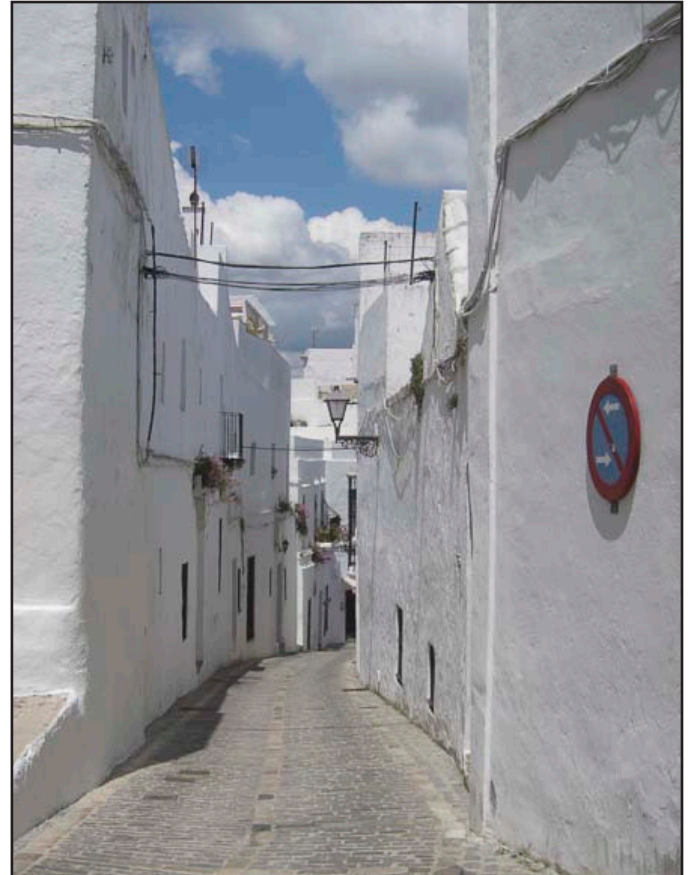


Cars Of Vejer...

One could always tell if an automobile was local and had been negotiating the Vejer streets for any length of time..



The Vejer Streets...



Plaza de
España in
Vejer



Cat getting ready for the evening prowl...



Vejer de la Frontera from the 3rd floor roof garden of our small hotel.

Pat critiquing and questioning my driving while I re-fill via espresso!



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