

Trip 2 – Episode #5 – Exploring New Iberia

There was lots around New Iberia to explore. After wandering through the town, we went to Jefferson Island. What they call an “island” here is not what we think of as an island, although I suppose there’s an argument to say it’s all islands, since everything is surrounded by water and no place is more than about 3 metres above sea level.

Anyway, Jefferson Island is a grand estate with beautiful gardens on Lake Peigneur. The gardens are called Rip Van Winkle Gardens, because the owner of the estate, Joseph Jefferson, was an actor best known for portraying the notorious napper.



We didn't tour the entire gardens but what we saw of the estate was very impressive. And of course, this is fall, so it wasn't at its height.





We'd been told they served a great lunch. So we went directly to the dining room, and once again, forgot to get shots of the meal. But I can tell you the seafood bisque was the best I've ever tasted. Jim had the gumbo which was also great.



We chatted with the couple at the next table. They were from the area, and we discovered that the husband was Acadian. His parents only spoke French and he had spent time in Quebec, where they were so impressed with the way he spoke French (i.e. Quebecois French) that he did a series of interviews on the radio about the Acadians in Louisiana. During the next few days, we spoke to several Acadians who had similar experiences, either visiting Quebec or Grand Pre Nova Scotia. The Acadian roots are very strong.

Just as we were about to leave the restaurant, one of the servers threw some hunks of bread on the ground outside. I asked what she was trying to attract, and she said, "The Peacocks." (!!)

She told us they had several of them on the grounds. Unfortunately, they didn't swoop down to eat the bread, but she told us they'd likely be perched in the trees around the building. And so they were.



A very friendly woman, Jeannie, who was our neighbour on the other side at the K.O.C campground, had better luck when she was there, and she got this great shot of them. Thanks for letting me use this, Jeannie!



Our next stop was Avery Island (also not an actual island) which is major historical site, as it's the home of Tabasco Sauce. Our campground neighbour in the twin RV told us he made a detour to New Iberia on their route to Florida, specifically to go to the Tabasco plant and do the tour.



We didn't go for the tour, neither of us being huge Tabasco fans, but we got a kick out of seeing all the ways Tabasco could be turned into merchandise in the gift shop.



Of course, I had to succumb.



Our last night in New Iberia, we had another great meal at a restaurant called Preservation. Crab cakes, Popcorn Shrimp, Boudin Grilled Cheese Sandwich, Brussels Sprouts, Caesar salad with eggplant croutons – Yum!



Oh, and they also had wine...



The next morning, after doing a little maintenance (replacing the water filter - successfully!!) and saying goodbye to our new friend Jeannie, we hit the road and followed the Evangeline Trail to Lafayette.



Not without seeing at least a few more of those amazing live oak trees.

