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# art<sup>of</sup><sub>the</sub>peace

## The Mattsons

THREE VISUAL JOURNEYS—ONE BLOODLINE



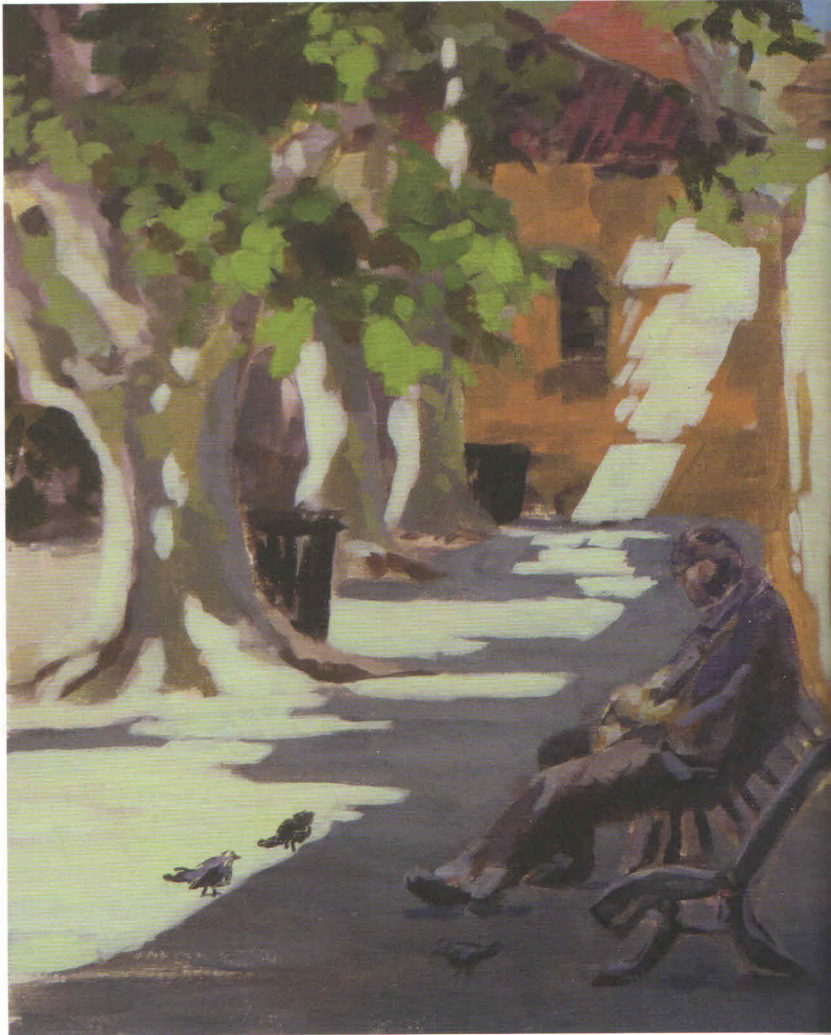
TOUR DE FRANCE

BEST OF THREE STUDIOS

EMILY LOZERON



*Canopied Streets—Arles, France, Acrylic, Suzanne Sandboe*



*Under the Buttonwood Trees—Aix-En-Provence, France, Acrylic, Suzanne Sandboe*

# Tour de France

FIFTEEN DAYS EN PLEIN AIR IN THE FRENCH  
COUNTRYSIDE

WRITTEN BY SUZANNE SANDBOE

In June 2014, I travelled to Paris and the South of France on an inspiring and adventure-filled painting excursion with a wonderful group of painters from across Canada. We were led by Mike and Nancy Svob, and the excursion was entitled Paint and Create: a Plein Air Painting Adventure France 2014. I had been in Paris over 30 years ago as a young budding artist, and on this trip we revisited some of the haunts from my first trip many years ago. Landing in Paris on June 16, we stayed within walking distance of the Eiffel Tower. We toured Galleries, Moulin Rouge, and did a walking tour to Montmartre, a favoured place of mine where artists set up outside around the Basilica painting and selling their works.

From Paris we travelled south by train to Avignon and then on to Arles. We spent four wonderful and intriguing days there, plein air painting around the Roman Amphitheatre. Quaint medieval streets and alleyways surrounded us, where canopied eateries and shuttered windows, in a variety of shapes and colours played off the ancient walls in this historic city and begged to be painted each day. We followed in the footsteps of the masters, including Monet, Van Gogh and Cézanne. We visited Monet's Mont Sainte-Victoire, Van Gogh's olive fields at Saint Remy, and crossed paths with locals interested in our outdoor work. One resident claimed to be a distant relative of Van Gogh.

We passed the next four days spent in Aix-en-Provence, followed by a tour of the southern French countryside with its little towns and villages. We were surrounded by breathtaking panoramas of patchwork fields viewed on high from the hills at Lourdes.

The following four days were spent painting at Grignan in the Rhône-Alpes region of southeastern France. There, we experienced the unbelievable perfume and views of the lavender fields surrounding the Renaissance castle of Madame de Sévigné. The sights were breathtaking! Everywhere we turned, another painting presented itself. Though we were there for two full weeks of painting, each day whizzed by; as we worked diligently to capture as much of the beauty and intrigue of this land that we could. I worked in watercolour and acrylic and managed to fill a journal with sketches and notes.

The camaraderie was infectious, the food and wine were superb, and the group had boundless energy and contagious enthusiasm. Fifteen days later we bid farewell to France leaving behind the French countryside but taking with us many fond memories and lessons learned from an experience of a lifetime.

I came back knowing that I will return again one day soon for an extended stay, painting among this historical and inspiring French culture with its love and passion for art.



*Lavendar Fields—Grignan, France, Watercolour, Suzanne Sandboe*



*Windows of Arles, France, Watercolour, Suzanne Sandboe*



*Grapes for the Wine, Provence, France, Watercolours, Suzanne Sandboe*