

About Celt

The song Celt originally went by the title "Gaul" or "Gall" (I've seen it in the archives spelled both ways). Celt was written in March, 2011 as we prepared for our return to Paris, under the influence of the historian Andre Maurois whose *History of France* described the ancient Celtic residents of the region as fair haired warriors ever-wandering over the next hill in search of new lands to settle, carrying their beautifully crafted swords in one hand and their trusty golden harps in the other.

The song emerged Athena-like, fully formed from the first line's horrid pun. The six days with two careless spies line references Marcia and Al's voyeuristic enjoyment of my initial ascent up the St. Paul Metro steps the year before. Let there be no doubt whose photographs I am savoring at the end of the first verse...

The next two verses delve deeper into Maurois' historical observations, culminating in his learned assertion that, while Julius Caesar's forces defeated Vercinogentrix on the left bank battlefield that later became the center of French military culture, the Champs de Mars (above which the Eiffel Tower currently soars), it was actually the *Celts* who won out in the end. Sure, they were forced to pay Roman tribute and to swear never to take up arms against the emperor, but look what they got in the bargain! Their habit of dwelling exclusively in mud hovels was supplanted by the novel and far more pleasant notion of the elegant stone villa with its cool courtyard and warm interior rooms. Not to knock the Celts' preferred beverage, sweet honey mead, but a little dry red wine was surely seen as a welcome alternative on what may have passed for weekends 2000 years ago. And finally, like all subjugated Roman affiliates, the Celts were allowed to keep their own gods.

In the early going, I had planned to make Celt (key of G) segue into the album's next tune (damned now if I can recall what that tune was...) which was in the key of A. Thus was necessitated a key change which purpose the instrumental bridge served, I think, quite nicely. I love engaging in that sort of musical problem-solving.

Finally, the last verse imagines Marcia and I on Rue Mouffetard, drenched in sunshine and fresh fish smell, stumbling (no, waltzing...) along the arch-patterned cobblestones, absorbing every sensation, indulging in every treasured treat and enjoying, in the best Celtic tradition, the beauty all around us as we dance along the banks of the very same river and revel in the sight of the very same islands our Celtish ancestors wrote about and sang to and fought over so long ago. Here's to the Parisi...and to Roman Lutetia that taught us how to savor.

The musical structure is really simple...guitar, mando, bass, a nicely distorted guitar for the bridge. The amazing harmonica part Al laid down really makes this version of the song something special, and I had been hearing drums on it all the way along, too--thanks, Timothy, for pulling off my vision (audio-tion?) to a tee!