

Cannes Can

Our EasyJet plane landed at Nice past 10 at night. We hadn't eaten so decided to drive into Cannes to eat at our favourite restaurant. At 11 at night Cannes was still lively and buzzy and all the restaurants were still open. We noticed that everywhere was even busier than usual and it dawned on us that the Cannes Film Festival was on. For fun we thought we'd wander along to the Croisette and have a look for ourselves. We'd never been in Cannes at Festival time so this would be a new experience for us.

The streets were throbbing with people, many of them walking in the road as there were barriers to stop most cars from coming through. What was surprising was how many people were dressed for the occasion even though they were just ordinary punters hoping for a glimpse of their favourite celebrities.

We managed to get through the crowds and found ourselves standing near the red carpet. Hot and dishevelled from travelling, we felt quite self-conscious amongst all the glamorous people around us.

A few feet from us there was a posse of paparazzi (how's that for a collective noun of photographers?) all looking our way. All of a sudden they turned at one in our direction and made towards us. I looked around to see who they might be targeting and then realised that it was my other half – Stephen – they were after. They came towards us and then like a group of synchronized dancers they all simultaneously zoomed off at right angles. Phew! Clearly they had mistaken Stephen for someone else. George Clooney? I don't think so. Maybe Stephen Spielberg. He and Stephen do wear similar spectacles! We will never know. However, our brief millisecond of fame was quite alarming and I can't begin to imagine what life must be like for those people who actually live their lives in the spotlight.

A few minutes later we were approached by a young couple who offered us free entry to one of that night's films. It seemed they had tickets they couldn't use. It was for a Japanese film showing at 2am.

We accepted the tickets – it seemed churlish not to – but 2am? Really? It was already well past midnight. We hadn't been home yet. Our suitcases were still in the car. And we were beginning to feel tired.

Down in the street below, punters were still hustling for free entry. Every time anyone who was anyone climbed up those famous red carpeted stairs, people were shouting and clamouring, holding their arms up in the air and trying to get attention. Now and then their cries of, "over here, me, me" were rewarded with tickets! This, we realised, was why we had seen people so glamorously attired. How could we possibly enter dressed as we were in jeans and tatty tee shirts – even if we did have tickets? And a Japanese film? Not really our style. We decided to go home and threaded our way through what was a now a diminishing crowd back towards our car.

We later found out that the film, *Shoplifters*, which the Guardian headline described as "the unfancied Japanese film" had won the prestigious Palm D'Or!