

A different holiday

MONACO'S D.C. EMBASSY POURS DELILLE CELLAR WINE FOR EVENTS

Greg and Stacy Lill, co-founders of Cashmere Partners consulting and events business, spent Thanksgiving as guests of royalty in the principality of Monaco, a tiny sovereign city-state-country on the French Riviera. Their first invite arrived a month ago with instructions for required attire, and then a week before the trip, the formal invite with official wax seal was delivered by FedEx, from His Serene Highness **Prince Albert II** of Monaco and Ambassador **Maguy Maccario Doyle**, for a week of festivities celebrating the 60th anniversary of NASA. Monaco has a strong commitment to, and interest in, the space community with its joint telecommunication satellite project and the country's hopes to establish its own space agency.

The Lills came to know the prince over many years because Monaco's Washington, D.C., embassy pours DeLille Cellar wines for events. Greg co-founded DeLille in 1992.

The couple arrived in Monaco on Nov. 18, the day before that National Day of Monaco with the required items in tow, such as hats, stockings and dresses for women, and a variety of black- and white-tie tuxedo outfits, including tails for men. They brought some wine as a host gift.

With a handler to guide them, the Lills spun from one event to another, sometimes three or four a day, often sitting fairly close to the prince, his wife, **Princess Charlene**, and his sisters and their children.

From high Mass in one of the most beautiful cathedrals the Lills had ever seen, to a ceremonial military parade, to a formal black-tie dinner at the Grimaldi Forum, to the Opéra de Monte-Carlo for "Samson and Delilah," to small private dinners at the Hotel Metropole, to Monte Carlo Casino for a jazz concert, to the Monaco Yacht Club, to a special screening of Discovery's documentary "Above and Beyond: NASA's Journey to Tomorrow," to a press conference



COURTESY OF STACY LILL

Greg and Stacy Lill in Monaco on Thanksgiving for that tiny country's week of festivities around its annual National Day of Monaco.

filled with space stars including **Buzz Aldrin**, Capt. **Robert "Hoot" Gibson**, former NASA head **Charles Bolden**, **George "Pinky" Nelson**, Dr. **Margaret "Rhea" Seddon** and more.

"It was so surreal," said Greg Lill. "It's an honor to get the invitation, and when we realized we were one

of two couples from the United States invited who were not part of a governmental tie to the holiday, it felt even more special."

Stacy is working on a meaningful thank you note that will include one of their signature magnums etched with a special quote of gratitude.

I'm jumping in with some books I'm into right now, including "Idea Man," by the late and great **Paul Allen**, a book I read when it first came out and had to read again because of the import and impact of Allen to this region and the world. Also, "Factfulness" by **Hans Rosling**. I like it because facts and data don't lie, and maybe things aren't quite as bad as some think. Also, "Clock Dance" by **Anne Tyler**, a touching novel of hope and second chances.

