

**TT No. 193: Paul Roth** - Friday 3rd March 2006 Championnat De France Ligue 2; **Sete 34** vs. Le Havre; Res: 0-3; Att: 1400; Entry: Euro 15; Programme: 16-page A4 size on glossy paper given away free.

After an early start from my Margate base on Friday morning, I met Steve Hurley at Thurrock services and we travelled to Luton Airport for the 11.30 flight to Nimes in Southern France. We were joined there by Paul Shakespeare (who had flown from Liverpool) before picking up our hire car and completing the 80 or so mile journey to Sete in good time to get a hotel for the night and enjoy a sublime seafood meal. We then set off by taxi to watch our chosen 2nd Division match - Sete vs. Le Havre.

The town of Sete, which I had never heard of (before Steve asked if I was interested in going along with him), is situated 30 miles south of Montpellier and is separated from the mainland by a large salt water lagoon. Water really is the theme in the town and all streets seem to lead to or have water running by them. It makes for a charming ambience and with the town council obviously taking great pride in their surroundings, having enhanced the place by bedecking the streets with flowers at every opportunity. As you get nearer to the actual seafront there are masses of fine seafood restaurants and it was in one of these, we enjoyed some good wine and lovely local fare.

A taxi from the restaurant found us at the ground, about 2 miles away, in good time for the match, the kick off not being until 20.30pm. The Stade Louis Michel was a better venue than I personally thought it was going to be from the aerial pictures I had seen on the club's official website. There is one big covered stand which backs onto the railway line and a long uncovered one opposite which runs the entire length of the ground. Behind both goals are grass banks. The playing surface was in superb condition and the four corner floodlights threw out a very high lux value. A very good A4 size glossy programme was given away free.

I don't get to too many foreign games, or not recently at any rate, and so after such a fantastic day it would be wrong of me to say that the game was a classic -it wasn't, but the three second half goals which Le Havre scored to win the game without reply were. In truth the goals were the only highlight as poor Sete, bottom of the table by miles, struggled to create anything. I should mention here that I was watching this particular game as Steve Hurley is a Le Havre supporter and of course had not visited this club before.

At the final whistle we eventually managed to get a kind soul to phone a cab to return the three of us to the charming town centre, where we enjoyed a few night caps, a chat and a game of pool with some locals before retiring to the hotel at about 1am, all concurring what a super day we had had.

All in all, a very different but hugely entertaining start to the weekend and with a CFA2 fixture pencilled in at Carcassonne, with its fabulous medieval "old citie",

the next day, the fun was only just starting. A description of that day's events to follow later (see Part 2).

FGIF rating 5\* for the day (3\* for the match itself).

04/20