

Date: 14 October 2010 11:06:28 BST

To: French House Experience <enquiries@frenchhouseparty.co.uk>

Subject: RE: thank you

Moira

Herewith just a little thank you, by way of an unsolicited testimonial if you need to use any of it for any purpose .

Dean Friedman's writers' workshops

An unsolicited testimonial

Dean Friedman is a national treasure. Or at least he should be. When I was a youngish songwriter back in the late 70s, I too was caught up in the *frisson* of lucky stars. But recognising a wonderful songwriter and performer often lurks behind a blockbuster international hit, I purchased his first album. Having done such a thing before, I realised that my paltry resources in such a risky investment could well come to nothing, as it had in many other cases. But it soon became evident, as I was more fully engaged in crafting my skills as a songwriter, that this young Friedman was a major talent, from whom I could learn much. Some 30 years later, my estimation of his talent has diminished in no way.

When *French House Experience* advertised a few days of quality time with such a songwriter, the opportunity was too good to refuse. I replied straight away hoping to scrape in a place. After considerable difficulty with border agencies and like, and considerable support from Moira, we finally made our way to Carcassonne. And we were not disappointed. The French house experience made sure that everything was done to ensure that our arrival would proceed smoothly. The stay in Carcassonne alone would have warranted the cost of this wonderful experience. How could one expect to stay in such beautiful surroundings, such traditional comfort, exquisitely catered food and drink, the kind of leisurely hospitality one is often promised but rarely receives... and on top of it, the opportunity to learn from one of the world's most underestimated songwriting talents?

Dean Friedman is much more than a wonderful writer, a magnificent singer, a consummate performer, and seasoned musician. He is also a nice guy. But to find out he is also a sensitive, encouraging and generous nurturer of talents much more modest than his was a delightful surprise. His mastery of the learning process, which is much more difficult in the creative domain, reveals an uncanny understanding of the struggles of creativity- a struggle incidentally which he seems to overcome with consummate ease.

Nobody could come away from his workshop without feeling inspired, enriched, enlivened and most of all grateful for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. While initially felt overwhelmed and Intimidated by the very idea of exposing my half baked attempts at musicality to the real thing, his genuine and authentic enthusiasm for developing the talent of others became an inspiring beacon for us all. Although I can speak for no one else, I got the impression that others felt the same, and have since communicated these thoughts to me privately.

Could I recommend the *French House Experience* writers' workshop? Did I think it was worth the money? Is the opportunity to spend a few days with Dean Friedman likely to be profitable? Let me just say, regardless of cost, I will be signing up for as many of these workshops as I am capable of attending.

To Moira, Lindsey, the catering staff, and Dean, it promised to be the opportunity of a lifetime. It turned out to be much more; an unforgettable experience from which I have taken more than I could have asked, and which has helped me more than I could have hoped. Many thanks.

best Stephen