

It was a pleasure and a privilege to attend Bordeaux to work with Professor Horace Roman and the other senior surgeons working within the IFEMEndo practice, Dr Benjamin Merlot and Dr Thomas Dennis. The way they work together and support each other in their surgery and research was wonderful to see, and a demonstration of how a good team can make such a difference!

I had organised to join Prof Roman many months before, and had been looking forward to the trip all year. I was lucky enough to be supported by the BSGE with a Travelling Fellowship to help cover the cost of 3 weeks with IFEMEndo. I was of course nervous before I started, and thankfully had time to explore Bordeaux on the day before. I even met one of Prof Roman's previous patients completely by accident! She had nothing but good things to say about her experience undergoing surgery for deep endometriosis with Prof Roman.

When I got to IFEMEndo on the first day, I barely had time to put my bags down before I joined for what is one of his "average" surgeries - excision of deep endometriosis along with an ileocolic bowel resection, rectosigmoid bowel resection and total hysterectomy. This was followed the next day by a full day with Prof Roman for his 308th NOSE resection, along with two "minor" cases of a hysterectomy, and a bowel shaving. It felt surreal, after having watched so many of Prof Roman's YouTube videos, to scrub in and assist in these surgeries.

I joined an international team of fellows in Bordeaux including Brazilian, Egyptian, Russian, Romanian and Greek surgeons, with a range of experience and each of whom had a unique perspective in their practice. Having access to this variety of experience and viewpoints gave me the opportunity to reflect on my own practice and the way my team worked in Oxford, UK - both positive and negative - and I look forward to bringing this into my future practice as a gynaecological consultant and advanced laparoscopic surgeon.

I wasn't only interested in seeing the surgeries - I could start watching the HoraceRoman YouTube channel today and still be working my way through his catalogue at the end of the year! My main interest was in seeing how Prof Roman and the IFEMEndo team have turned huge, life-changing, challenging surgeries into a routine operation. This reflects the skills and experience they have developed over decades of practice, but also the support they have from their dedicated theatre and administrative team. This means they can perform incredibly efficient surgeries, from setting up the theatre to having prompt and proficient support from their multidisciplinary colleagues from the urological and colorectal teams.

It is difficult to include all of the great things I saw during my time, but some other highlights included:

- scrubbing in to assist Prof Roman for his live surgery to the BIARGS conference in Liverpool, as he performed an exquisite robotic dissection and resection of endometriosis at the the left sciatic nerve and superior gluteal nerve root
- multiple cases of robotic treatment of diaphragmatic endometriosis
- ureteric resection and reimplantation for an invasive endometriotic nodule of the ureter
- colorectal shaves, disc excisions and segmental resections; more in 3 weeks than in my 2 years of ATSM training!
- the focus on data and research that backs up the surgical practice - Prof Roman has developed a comprehensive database and uses the results of that research to inform his practice and further innovate the surgical management of complex endometriosis

- the inclusiveness that Prof Roman showed - I felt a part of his team in theatre and he really treated every member of the team with respect and kindness. There were no silly questions and no egos on display!

Is there anything that could have been improved on? I wish I knew more French of course! Not the easiest language to learn and it would have made going out for dinner easier. But Prof Roman is diligent in narrating his surgeries and discussing his patients in language that the whole team can understand.

Bordeaux is a lovely city and outside of my time in endometriosis surgeries I was able to visit the coast at Arcachon, the wineries at Saint-Émilion, and run a half-marathon in Casteljalous (and win a bottle of wine!). I've got a pile of notes for my own learning and reflection and I've got a bunch of memories of how big surgeries can be performed safely and effectively with the right skills, equipment, team and mutual support.

Thank you to the BSGE for supporting me with a travelling fellowship grant. And a huge thank you to Prof Roman, Dr Merlot and Dr Dennis and the entire IFEMEndo team for this experience. Prof Roman, I look forward to continuing to learn from your YouTube surgeries and to welcoming you to Sydney in May 2025!



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