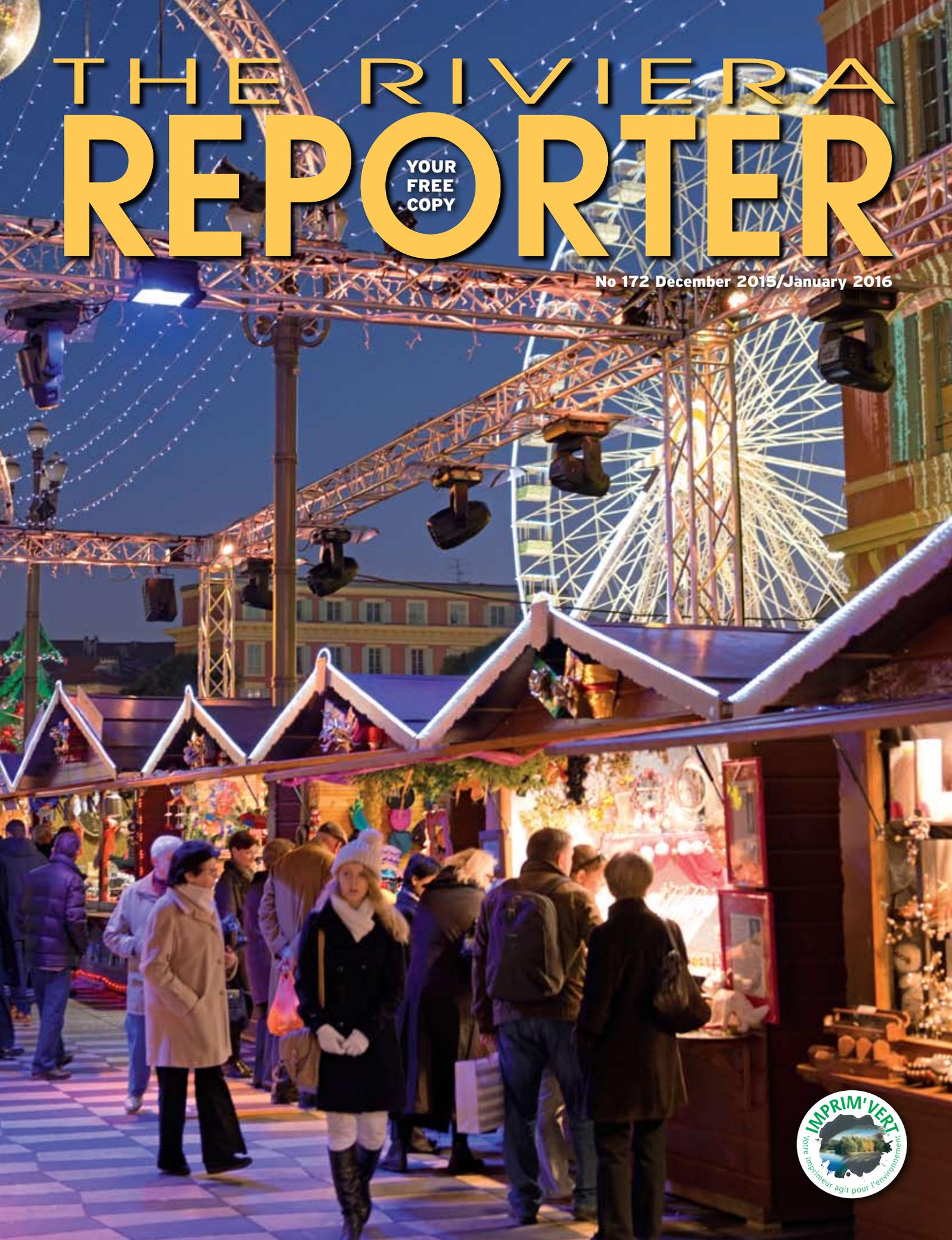


# THE RIVIERA REPORTER

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No 172 December 2015/January 2016



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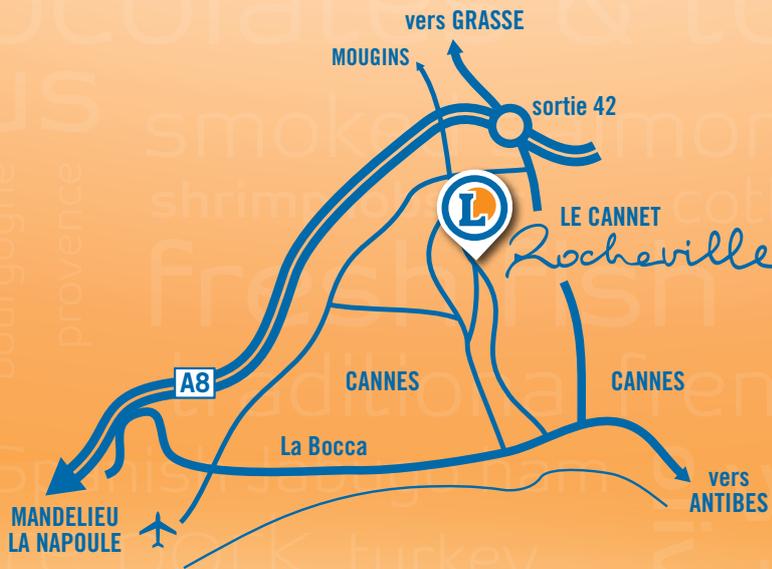
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## In this issue ...

### The Insider

TWO months. Doesn't seem like a long time but so much can change as the days unfold in between issues of the "Reporter".

Since our last edition, storms swept across Southern France on October 4th, killing 21 people and leaving many others homeless. The floods affected many of our readers, including Burton Gintell in Cannes (pg 44).

We lost our dear friend, Roy Cox, who died from Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis on October 18th (pg 9). Stella, Astrid, you will be in our thoughts even more so over the holidays.

In the same month, Monaco Editor Molly Brown suffered a broken arm and ensuing surgery (which has not affected her feistiness) and contributor Chrissie McClatchie welcomed the birth of her daughter, Lottie. I became a great-aunt for the second time courtesy of my nephew, Matthew Wilson, a former Mougins School student.

Lin Wolff at the English Book Centre in Valbonne, who is more than just an advertiser, celebrated the marriage of her daughter Lily, also Mougins School alumni, in Austin, Texas, on November 1st, while Mairead Molloy, who lived in Cannes for years and is now global director of

the discreet dating agency Berkeley International (cover), was chosen to host RTE2's hour-long matchmaking special "Money Can't Buy Me Love".

This all leads to Friday November 13th and the 129 people who died in an "Act of War" in Paris (pg 45).

Yup, all since our last issue.

Some things remain the same. Santa, the original jet-setter, is busy at his workshop preparing for his December 24th journey, which can only mean two things: one, that I've been blissfully listening to nonstop Christmas music on internet radio since November 1st; and two, that in the run up to the holiday season, many local charities and associations, including English-speaking ones, need support and volunteers (pg 39). For our annual list of English-language Christmas services and concerts on the Coast, see page 33.

And with New Year's resolutions around the corner, Fitlane comes to the rescue by offering you a free 3-day pass to their gyms (pg 15). I've not quite decided on my pledge for 2016 but after witnessing my mom, widowed a decade ago after a happy 53 years of marriage, fall in love recently at the age of 84, I wholeheartedly believe anything is possible. *Nancy Heslin, Editor*

### TOP STORIES

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*US Notes returns next issue.*



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Cover: Nice ©H. Lagarde.  
Top: Isola 2000 Skipark: ©Robert Palomba



**TIS THE SEASON** PAGES 30-36

In the mood to Fa,  
La, La? Christmas  
concerts and  
services are listed  
on page 33.



## ANTIBES BOOKS, *Fenella Holt*



### *Villa America* by Liza Klausmann

THE storyline of this fascinating semi-biographical novel takes place predominantly on the Cap d'Antibes at the home of Americans Gerald and Sara Murphy. The cast of characters reads like a who's who of the 1920s and '30s on the French Riviera: Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, the Picassos, Cole Porter, The Hemingways, Dorothy Parker; the list is endless. Their wild and extravagant lifestyle is portrayed as a carefree, frivolous and essentially artistic bubble, which must inevitably burst giving way to tragedy, madness and heartbreak. There are a few irritating factual errors, but the narrative is amusing and descriptive and makes for a very enjoyable read. (Picador). See page 39.

## ENGLISH BOOK CENTRE VALBONNE, *Lin Wolff*



### *Number 11* by Jonathan Coe

THIS book of comedy and politics centres on the (mostly horrid) Winshaw family and is Coe's 11th book – he plays with this number throughout. Whether he is lampooning publishing (book titles include "Great Plumbers of Albania"; "300 Years of Halitosis"; "So You Think You Know about Plinths?"), politics, film, or marriage, this angry satire with an unconventional narrative kept me glued to the saga and wishing for more. As this is a follow-on to "What a Carve Up!" (published 11 years ago, see?) I can look forward to going back to read that one, too. (Penguin Books). See page 35.

*More Christmas bookshelf on page 30.*

## CÔTE POETS+, *Richard Ward*



### *6th Edition* by various contributors

IN time for Christmas, the 2016 limited edition of "Côte Poets+", with its offering of poetry and art, will appear in a new, larger format, which, as Editor Richard Ward says, "The new format gives added value to the words and images of our contributors from the region and other parts of the world – Australia, South Africa, USA, UK and Ireland."

Release is set for December 10th, with copies available at Antibes Books, the English Book Centre and Brittain's (both in Valbonne) and Mougins School, or by contacting Richard direct: cotepoets@hotmail.fr or 07 89 54 48 66.

## le FLASH de NOËL

### GIFT IDEAS

#### For kids

- Magnetic French Poetry
- Anything with Le Petit Prince
- "Bonjour Les Amis: French Made Easy for Children"

#### For cooks

- Truffle Hunting at Les Pastras
- Crêpe Pan
- Fondue Set
- Stemless Wine Glasses
- Oyster Knife
- Crème Brûlée Set
- Madeleine Cookie Pan



#### For him

- Beret
- HasEurope.com Satellite TV
- Woodman Collection rug
- Boules Set

## TRAVELLING IN 2016

... FOR the first time in four years, Delta will maintain its Nice-JFK direct service from January to March, offering 4 flights weekly.

... FROM May 17th, 2016, Aegean Airlines, – a member of the Star Alliance program – will serve Nice-Athens Tuesdays and Thursdays until October 25th.

... AIR Transat will introduce Nice-Toronto direct from May 24th, 2016, departing Nice Tuesday at 11h40 to arrive in Toronto at 14h25 (return Dep 20h25; Arr Nice 10h).



... AND for American business travellers, the US State Department will no longer be issuing 24-page inserts for passports. You can request the extra pages until the end of the year but from 2016 you'll have to buy a new 28- or 52-page passport.

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# BURQA BAN 5 YEARS ON: “We created a monster”

## FRANCE IN THE NEWS

...in partnership with *The Local*

FIVE years after France introduced its controversial ban on wearing the full Islamic face veil in public, the subject still bitterly divides opinion.

While opinion polls suggest most French are in favour of the so-called 2010 burqa ban, as is the Socialist government, some experts who have studied its impact tell a different story.

Agnès de Féo, a sociologist and filmmaker who has explored the subject for ten years and studied the impact of the 2010 law,

says it has been “a total failure”.

She argues it has both encouraged Islamophobia as well as given Muslim extremists more cause to feel the need to rise up against the French state.

“We created a monster,” De Féo says. “Those who have left to go and fight in Syria say that this law is one of things that encouraged them. They saw it as a law against Islam. It had the effect of sending a message that Islam was not welcome in France,” she says.

The 2,000 or so women who wore the niqab before 2010 “were hardly a threat to French culture or society,” De Féo says, unlike the home-grown jihadists who represent a real menace to social cohesion in the country.

Defenders of the 2010 law, brought in under the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy, argued that its main aim was part of a security measure to bar anyone from being able to hide their identity in public.

Secondly, supporters said it would help promote freedom and respect for women. Those who flout the ban are subject to €150 fines, while some undergo citizenship courses.

But critics like De Féo argued at the time that the law was simply brought in to win votes and pander to Islamophobes.

“Islamophobia works very well in France,” she says. “Both on the Right and the Left.”

“People had the impression that the women wearing the veil were abused by men. But in ten years I have never met a woman who was forced to wear the veil by a man,” she says.

“People presented this cliché that Muslim women needed to be saved from men.

“We now live in a society where people think it’s normal to insult Muslim women wearing the full veil just because they are disobeying the law,” she says, pointing to several unsavoury incidents in recent years including women being attacked and having their veils pulled off their faces.

“The more these women are insulted, the more they feel they are not accepted in France. It’s a total rupture with society.”

FRANCE NEWS, PAGE 6



Photo: Antoine Taveneaux

FRANCE NEWS, FROM PAGE 5

She argues the law has encouraged the kind of “communitarianism”, which France is ever desperate to avoid, because those who insist on wearing the niqab stay in the housing estates where they live.

“They don’t leave for fear of being insulted or stopped by police,” De Féo says.

Before 2010, there were considered to be only around 2,000 Muslim women wearing the veil in France, but according to De Féo the motivation for many women who wear the veil has now altered.

“Before the ban most Muslim women wore the veil for religious reasons,” she says. “Now a lot of the women who wear the niqab started doing so after the law was introduced. They converted to Islam and began wearing the veil because it became an identity to them.

“For them it’s an act of resistance against the state, just like the punk or skinhead movements. That’s why they are happy to pay their €150 fines.

“Certain women who wear the veil just want to provoke. They wear it in public to cause annoyance or fear and they are not scared of the police.”

One niqab-wearing woman in France confirmed that view to “Le Monde” newspaper.

“It’s my way of fighting, to say no to the government who took away my liberty,” said a woman named Leila, who began wearing the veil after 2010.

That view is backed up by the figures released from France’s interior ministry to coincide with the five-year anniversary since the law was brought in.

Since the burqa ban came into force, a total of 1,623 stops have been made by police and 1,546 fines of €150 given out, but only against 908 women.

That’s because many of those controls have involved stopping repeat offenders. Indeed, one woman has been fined 33 times and five women have been fined more than 14 times each.

And the number of fines being handed out is on the rise, with 234 being issued in 2011 compared to 397 in 2014.

The way the law has been applied has also been a problem with many police officers more inclined to turn a blind eye, especially in sensitive suburbs, where relations between local youths and police are already fraught.

In 2013 one police check on a woman wearing the veil provoked three days of rioting.

Despite the views of De Féo and other critics, the ban seems here to stay.

In 2014 it was given the backing of the European Court of Human Rights.

## WORTH NOTING



### Forget 35 hours

WHILE the idea of 35 hours a week (even though most people in France work more) is appealing to many around the world, France’s most powerful trade union, the CGT, wants the country’s sacrosanct labour reform – the 35-hour week – overhauled and replaced with a 32-hour limit, which it claims will boost productivity and create and save jobs.

“The reduction in the working week would account for the advances in technology – whether digital or robots – that will eventually lead to many jobs disappearing,” the union argues.

CGT chief Philippe Martinez said the campaign was being launched amid a “general attack” on France’s 35-hour week.

That “attack” appears to be being led by the socialist government’s Economy Minister Emmanuel Macron, who has angered everyone from his own prime minister to unions by suggesting the sacrosanct labour reform is not set in stone.

But the union would get the support of one government minister.

Reacting to the news that France had just relaxed its rules around Sunday shopping to allow stores to open more often, Justice Minister Christiane Taubira revealed her perfect working week.

“I dream of a world where we would only work 32 hours a week, so we can dedicate time to others, to read books and go to the theatre,” she said.

A labour ministry report published last year revealed French workers put in an average of 39.5 hours a week in 2011, slightly behind the EU average of 40.3 hours and the 41-hour working week in Germany and 42.4 hours in the UK.

### Mon Kampf

ADOLF Hitler’s manifesto containing autobiographical, anti-Semitic and militaristic screeds, falls out of copyright next year, and already annotated German and French reprints are being prepared, a Paris publisher confirmed.

“Mein Kampf” – whose title means “My Struggle” in German – originally came out in two volumes in 1925 and 1926, but was banned in Germany after Hitler and the Nazis were defeated in World War II.

No French reprint has been made since 1934. Various translated English versions, however, have been made and are widely available online through retailers such as Amazon.

But now the copyright on the work, held by the Bavarian State, is due to expire at the end of this year – 70 years after the death of its infamous author.

Fayard, a French publishing company, said in a statement it was going ahead with an annotated French print, after pondering on it for the past four years.

“The publication of this book, central to the history of the 20th century, will be accompanied by a critical analysis established by a scientific committee of French and foreign historians,” Fayard said in a statement.

It did not say when the new translation would come out.

### Out for blood

FRENCH MPs have said no to a plan to reduce taxes on tampons, sparking outraged responses across France’s social media channels.

The Socialists had put forward an amendment to the 2016 budget, stating that tampons should be taxed at a lower rate as fell under the “basic needs” umbrella.

French MPs, however, disagreed, voting to keep the tampons, towels and menstrual cups at their current tax rate of 20 percent.

The Socialists had planned to reduce the tampon tax to just 5.5 percent.

The decision not to lower taxes on the items prompted an outcry from both men and women on social media – especially after France’s Secretary of State for the Budget, Christian Eckert, drew parallels between tampons and men’s shaving foam.

Feminist group Georgette Sand kicked off the outcry, releasing a statement that the group was “seeing red”, noting that the decision was carried out “in a meeting where women are underrepresented anyway”.

The group was joined on Twitter by social media users who were also unimpressed by the decision.

“Wow, so I’m paying taxes on my uterus? So now when I have my period I have to pay socially, physically, and financially?” wrote one user.

# French news: fast and fresh



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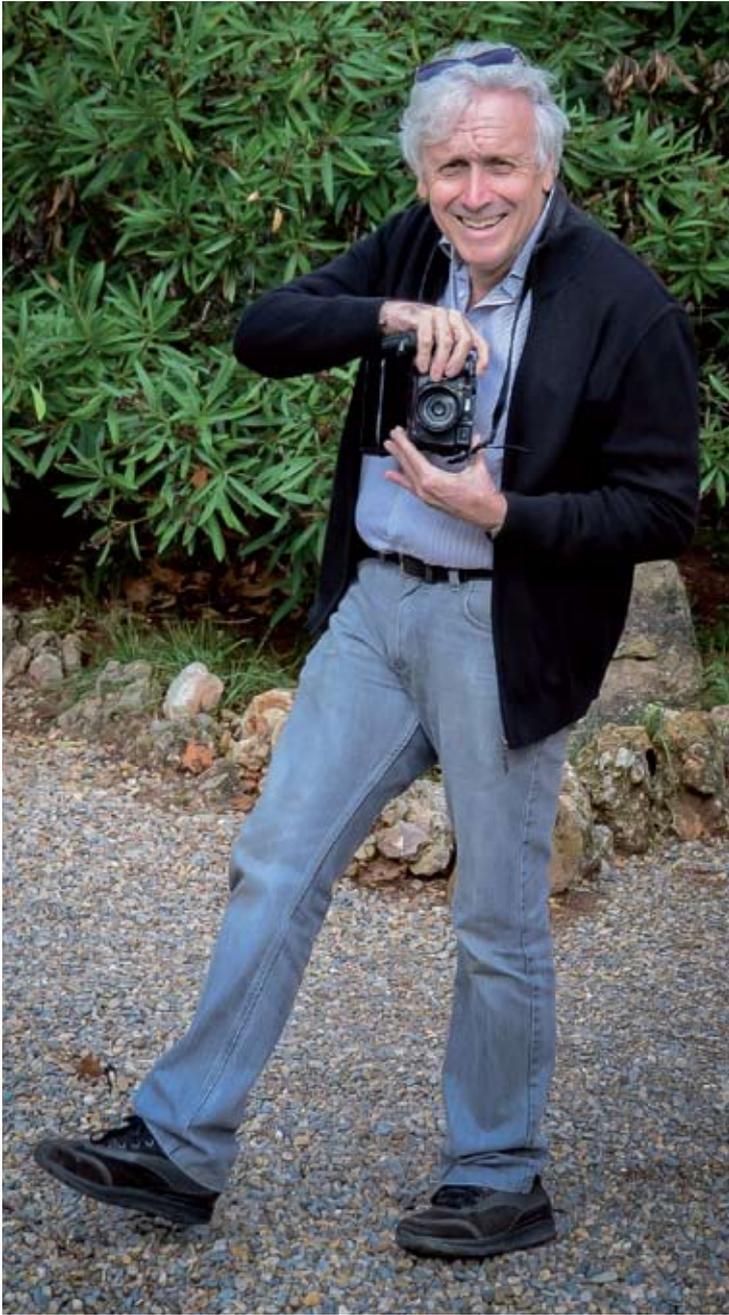
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France's news in English

**THE LOCAL**



# ABOUT A ROY



ROY Cox was born in Burton-on-Trent in the British Midlands. He went to Derby Art College and began his lifelong passion for photography.

It was at a party at the British Embassy in Budapest where Roy first set eyes on his future wife, Stella. During the following year, when Roy was working in sales, they met several times in different parts of the continent, and, typical of such a thoughtful man, Roy once drove from the south of Poland

through the Czech Republic to Hungary to surprise Stella for the weekend. In 1976, they wed and spent their first year of marriage in Moscow.

In 1989, shortly after I started this magazine, Roy made an appointment to see me. He had just moved here with his wife Stella and their infant daughter Astrid. He was looking for work doing the very thing that keeps a magazine such as this alive – introducing the “Reporter” to

potential advertisers. Roy had sales experience and, unlike many job seekers from whom we hear, he was willing to be paid on his merits in the field, rather than a fixed salary. He set himself up as a small French business and our long-term collaboration began.

Over the years, the working relationship took many forms, but Roy was always there, ready to serve this magazine and this community. He was more than a work colleague; he became a true friend of the best kind.

Many of you knew Roy as the generous, soft-spoken man that he was, ready to help out anyone if he could. He had a rather wicked sense of humour and a beaming, ready smile. People instinctively liked him and if one word could describe the community’s opinion of Roy Cox, it would be “respect”.

At one time, he also visited clients on behalf of Riviera Radio and that was a tie-up of mutual benefit, to both the “Reporter” and the station, in an alliance that has never existed since. But Roy made it work and it worked well.

A few years later, Roy took a managerial position with a local transport company. It was better-paid and offered career opportunities that the “Reporter” could not. Although he was no longer a permanent member of the staff, he was omnipresent and remained part of the team, helping with deliveries on his own time and assisting with many other tasks.

An accomplished photographer, Roy took many of our covers, sometimes using Astrid as a model. More recently, his favourite subject naturally became his new grandson Matias.

Sometimes, but in hindsight not often enough, we would set off with our cameras into the picturesque Riviera back

country, not neglecting to stop for a good lunch along the way. Those memories will always remain with me; Roy was lovely company.

About three years ago, Roy came down with a terminal lung disease called Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF). Together with Stella, Roy set off with his usual optimism and cheerful disposition to make the most of the limited time they knew he had left.

Our last meal together was lunch at a small restaurant near his home in Roquefort-les-Pins. He was permanently attached to a portable oxygen supply and every step was an effort, but Roy faced it with his usual courage and smiling disposition. In his own words, “I don’t want you to treat me any differently than before.”

Part of the way through our meal, his mobile phone rang – the lung specialist. We had to cut our lunch short so I could take him home, where an ambulance would come to transport him to Marseille for further treatment. Ours was the last meal Roy ever had outside a hospital.

Roy died at Pasteur Hospital in Nice on Sunday, October 18th, at only 64. He had endured a cruel and painful disease with stoic courage and we never lost hope that a compatible lung transplant would keep him with us. It was not to be.

Rest In Peace, Roy Thomas Cox. A genuinely good man and a true friend, remembered most fondly by his dear wife Stella, daughter Astrid, her husband Andres and grandson Matias; he loved you all, so very much. **Mike Meade** ■

“Projet AiR” of the *Fondation UNICE* carries out medical research into IPF. You can make a donation at [fondation-unice.org](http://fondation-unice.org)

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## UK BRIEFS

... Done deal; if you've been a British expat for more than 15 years, you will not be able to vote in the upcoming "In-or-Out" EU referendum. An amendment submitted by the Lib-Dem Baroness Miller – who stressed that many expats pay tax in the UK on their government and military pensions and should therefore not be deprived of a vote on an issue that directly concerns them – was rejected by the House of Lords 116 to 214 votes on November 18th.

... The new British passport may well be one of the world's most difficult-to-forge travel documents thanks to its use of hidden codes, holograms, 3D watermarks, special paper and invisible ink, but designers didn't give much thought to its visual content. Notable Britons depicted include seven men but only two women – Elisabeth Scott, architect of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-on-Avon, and Ada Lovelace, the mathematician. Almost as dreadful, the images are "a scattershot collage of the entire history of British culture in one go". For example, the UK's largest sculpture, the ArcelorMittal Orbit tower (pictured below) in Olympic

Park (which is reportedly costing Londoners £10,000 a week), is splashed across one passport page to meet Shakespeare "who peers out disapprovingly from every spread." A new design is introduced every five years. Maybe do better next time?

... Once one of the world's finest healthcare services, the NHS is now in a nationwide crisis and shows no sign of improvement. A&E services (where they still exist) are badly hit and an investigation by the Health Watchdog is underway into why dozens of patients with life-threatening conditions died when South East Coast Ambulance services were deliberately delayed. Doctors, especially junior doctors, are overworked into varying states of exhaustion, which can only cloud their judgement and efficiency.

Some NHS patients could even be sent to France for better care. Although primary care and A&E will remain free for EU citizens, millions of British expats living outside the EU have been denied access to the NHS care, which they were promised before the election. EU residents are required to show their

EHIC/CEAM card in order to get free treatment. With Brexit looming, even that entitlement could disappear for those millions of expats living in the EU.

... Findings vary but some surveys say that as many as 48% of Brits want to leave the UK. A recent Ampilot study looked not only at the numbers that have left, but also the way the European host nations view them. For every 1000 inhabitants, Malta has 27 British expats, who on the whole are liked by the Maltese, while France has 2.61 expats. The French don't generalise but "play it by ear" as to whether they are liked or not.

... What goes round, comes round and preference for a soulmate is no different. According to Match.com, British men no longer want women to be obedient homebodies. Prospective female partners are now expected to be well-paid professionals who exercise regularly. Equally, women no longer expect men to be high-earning fitness fanatics either. An "average" physique will do but a sense of humour is essential. If you're looking for love, see Berkeley-International.com ■



# THE BOTTLE OF HASTINGS

BY NICK KENT



INSPECTOR Poirot called him Captain ‘Astings, and the French sleuth would be proud to know that his faithful if sometimes clueless friend had finally solved a mystery.

Hugh Fraser, who played Captain Hastings alongside David Suchet in the classic TV adaptation of Agatha Christie’s Poirot novels, has turned his hand to crime writing, so this time it is he who is calling the shots.

Hugh has created a memorable, scary heroine in Rina Walker, a hit-girl who at the start of Hugh’s debut novel “Harm” wakes up in a Mexican hotel room to find her employer’s head on the bedside table.

You would be forgiven for thinking we’re a long way from the gentility of Agatha Christie, with Poirot sipping tea from bone china as the “little grey cells” get to work. But Hugh would beg to differ.

“Poirot had its moments of graphic violence,” says Hugh, 70, who is making a special trip to Antibes on December 12th to sign copies of “Harm” and chat with fans at Antibes Books.

“For instance, in ‘The Mystery of the Spanish Chest’, a woman canoodles with her lover as the cuckolded husband watches

through a peephole, the man spies the husband and promptly thrusts a dagger through the hole into his eye and his brain. It’s brutally violent, not a lot of Agatha Christie gentility going on there.”

The passages of graphic sex in “Harm” are another matter, however, guaranteed to give Poirot a red face and trembling ‘tache.

Hugh had tried his writing hand a couple of plays before signing up for a UEA/Guardian creative writing course.

“It was a short story course, and pretty intensive. We were expected to produce one a week. Towards the end of it I started mapping out a novel, took it to my tutor Bernardine Evaristo [an award-winning British writer] who encouraged me and said I should continue with the book.

“It took a year to complete the first draft, and another year until it was ready for publication. My editor, Katie Green, was a great help in the process.

“I found I rather enjoyed the discipline of writing every day, although there are of course times when you get stuck and can’t see the way ahead clearly, that can be very frustrating.”

Hugh tells the harrowing story of Rina in the first-person. It’s daunting and courageous of established male novelists to speak with a female voice, but like the true creative writer he so obviously is, he had no option.

“Rina just took over my imagination and the narrative. It was as simple as that. I couldn’t tell the story any other way.”

For his Antibes Books appearance, as well as answering questions about his writing, Hugh will happily reminisce about the making of a TV classic.

“David Suchet [who played Poirot] and I got along very well. I admired him for being the consummate professional he is. One of his hallmarks was his ability to get ‘in character’ and stay there. One minute we’d be in the dressing room talking about what was on TV the night before, then he would don the moustache and immediately become Poirot: ‘My dear fellow, I will see you on zee set laytur.’

“The summing-up scenes at the end of an episode, where Poirot gathers all the characters in the drawing room and reveals the identity of the murderer, were a particular tour-de-force from David. The script for this dénouement would run to 25 or so pages, he would have every line perfect on the first take. Most impressive.”

Having in “Harm” produced a cleverly interwoven plot that introduces us to the hard school of deadly knocks that transformed the heroine from child to killer while following the doubles-crosses and dirty deals of her time in Mexico, Hugh can move towards his next Rina Newman book with confidence.

And unlike his hapless creation for Poirot, this time Captain Hastings won’t lose the plot. ■

*Antibes Books (13 rue Georges Clemenceau) welcomes Hugh Fraser on Sat Dec 12th, noon, to sign copies of his new novel, “Harm”. For more see page 30.*

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# RALLY ROUND THE HOLIDAYS



Photo: ACM/Michael ALESI

BY MOLLY BROWN

CHRISTMAS is coming and Monaco is in the mood for a glamorous and very festive season. Chefs in restaurants and hotels prepare feasts of delicacies and the best champagnes and wines await the discerning clients who choose Monte Carlo for their family celebrations. The Place du Casino comes alive with music and lights on December 5th as SBM opens the Russian Christmas festivities, with mulled wine and hot chocolate, to entice visitors into the Monte Carlo Pavillons and the new Casino Café de Paris, the most recent addition to the Société des Bains de Mer (SBM) portfolio.

SBM announced less than favourable results for the year 2014/15, with a deficit of €31.5 million, compared with a deficit of €11.8 million the previous year, with again no dividend for shareholders. The deficit is partly due to the loss of revenue during work on the Hotel de Paris and the Sporting d'Hiver construction project. SBM is confident that when this is completed at the end of 2018, all will be well. The prestigious penthouse apartments of the seven new buildings around the casino will each be available for rent ... at €2 million a year.

Meanwhile, Monaco certainly has something to celebrate. The government's

provisional budget shows that receipts for the year are 7% higher and there is a budget surplus of €1.13 billion. With no debt and no deficit, Monaco is in an exceptional position in the context of Europe and its policy of working to increase income while curbing expenditure and investing in the country's real estate for its future growth and prosperity has proved successful.

The future is an unknown, but there will be cars and even electric flying cars will have to park somewhere as over 40,000 commuters enter Monaco daily. A parking complex on the border with buses into town is one solution, but buses use roads, too. Port Hercule's semi-floating jetty was an innovative idea, so why not something completely different? The railway was put underground ... so what about something overground? So, after long deliberations, it has been decided that, as part of the enlargement of the Carrefour shopping centre, an overhead tram will connect Fontvieille with a large parking complex to be built in the Jardin Exotique. Discussions are in progress ... Funiculì, Funiculà, Fontvieille.

## New Year's treats

THE Monte Carlo Ballet celebrates its 30th anniversary with Jean-Christophe Maillot's "Casse Noisette Compagnie" over New Year at Grimaldi Forum. Another treat for the children is Prince Rainier's favourite International Circus

Festival, the largest and most prestigious gathering of circus artists, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary (Jan 14th-24th) with a "Golden Show" featuring a selection of the world's best circus performers from previous years. Despite protests in Britain and elsewhere against animals performing in circuses, it is a long tradition and very popular with Monaco audiences and the animals are well cared for while in Monaco.

## Rally fever

BUT the winter's main event is the 84th edition of the Monte Carlo Rally (Jan 18th-24th) and a surprising number of residents are or have been rally drivers. This year, there is also the Rallye Monte-Carlo Historique (Jan 27th-Feb 3rd). Enthusiastic supporters cheer the drivers on as the cars race around the narrow snowy roads in the hills around Monaco. Both events draw passionate automobile enthusiasts to the area and drivers mingle with engineers, mechanics and fans, who crowd the hotels and cafés, moving en masse to Monte Carlo each year, a migration as certain as the geese going south ... as Monaco has always been about cars.

Wishing you all a very happy and prosperous New Year! Hope to see you in the Palace Square for the Rally prize giving – January 24th at 15h. ■



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# NO GAIN, NO PAIN

**BUSINESS**



**BY PETER JOHNSON**

FINALLY, on October 20th, a resolution on the long-running saga of social charges (*prélèvements sociaux*), which will come as a great relief to many expatriates living in France and many who had sold French property recently and been unfairly “pinged” these charges on their Capital Gains.

The press release from the French

Ministry of Finances effectively gives validation to the decision of the European Court of February 26th, 2015, AND that of the French Supreme Court, dated July 27th, 2015, under the provisions of the so-called *Arrêt 'De Ruyter'*, named after the plaintiff who claimed that he should not pay French social charges as he was no burden to the French social security system because he was covered by the equivalent body in another EU country.

The French Ministry of Finance acknowledges that

*prélèvements sociaux* can only be of benefit, as such, to people in the French social security system; in other words, if your *Carte vitale* is funded by a French *caisse* rather than one from elsewhere in the EU. You can tell this on your *Attestation des droits* by the *code gestion*. If this code is “70”, this indicates that you’re funded by an outside body to France. Such an example could typically be a EU-retired person, who has gained

access to the French healthcare service via an S1 Form from his country of origin. Effectively, it will be this country of origin that funds the retired person’s healthcare while in France.

The dates for which one can make a claim are anything from January 1st, 2013, and this needs to be addressed with supporting documentation (proof of another EU country’s social security cover and/or fiscal residency) to the tax office in France on which you depend. Postal claims should be sent recorded delivery, while email is perfectly acceptable or via the *impots.gouv.fr* website in your personal account under the section “Reclamer”.

Of course, this huge loss of tax revenue (something in the order of €800 million) will need to be compensated for elsewhere, so one expects the whole notion of social tax to be abandoned and henceforth all tax just to be called income or Capital Gains tax. Moves are already under way for this to be effective by 2017, so enjoy the break while you can!

And a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all “Reporter” readers and their families! ■

# New EU Succession Regulation

BY ROB KAY, SENIOR PARTNER, BLEVINS FRANKS



IF you are a UK national living here in France or you own property here, succession (inheritance) law can be complicated. You may have assets in more than one country, which can trigger the application of multiple inheritance laws and create conflicts of law.

On August 17th, 2015, the new European Succession Regulation, commonly known as “Brussels IV”, was launched. It was devised to end this confusion over cross-border inheritances.

In the UK, you can generally leave your assets to whomever you wish, as stated in your will (Scotland and Northern Ireland have some restrictions). However, French law is very different:

- ... Assets do not automatically pass in accordance with your will (unless it happens to match French succession law).
- ... Children are protected heirs, inheriting up to 75% of the deceased parent’s estate. This includes children from an earlier marriage and adopted children, whatever their age – they could be eight or 80.
- ... In the absence of a will, the surviving spouse is only entitled to 25% in full property (the value of the assets when sold), or 100% in usufruit\*, of the deceased’s assets. Spouses are protected heirs only in the absence of children.

(\*Usufruit = the right to enjoy the “fruits” – for example, from rent – of an asset for an agreed period but not to sell it.)

French succession law applies to your

worldwide assets if you are a French resident and always applies to French real estate, even if you are not resident in France.

How can Brussels IV help? Brussels IV is designed to make sure that the court of a single jurisdiction applies a single law to your entire estate, providing clarity and reducing the chance of conflict. Its three main pillars are:

1. The default position and main criterion is that the law of the state in which the deceased was “habitually resident” at the time of their death applies to succession of assets across the Brussels IV zone.
2. This default position may be overturned if there is a jurisdiction to which the deceased was “manifestly” more closely connected.
3. The deceased can elect to apply the law of their nationality to all the assets across the Brussels IV zone, citing it in his will or a similar document. If they have more than one nationality, they may choose either law.

In other words, French succession law will continue to apply to your estate, unless you specify otherwise in your will.

Provided the law governing succession falls within one of the above categories, it does not need to be that of a Brussels IV member state. Assets held in a participating state could be handed down in accordance with the law of another jurisdiction – even if it is the UK, Ireland or Denmark, who have all opted out.

How does this affect my tax? It is

important to note that Brussels IV does not apply to succession/inheritance taxes. The situation remains as before – where an individual has assets in more than one country, and different inheritance tax regimes apply, the double tax treaty (if any) or the national tax rules will determine where and how succession tax is paid.

Therefore, if you are resident in France at the date of your death or if you have assets in France, the French succession tax rules continue to apply. You cannot choose UK inheritance tax instead of French succession tax.

The French taxman will actually benefit from the new regulation. Tax rates are high (up to 60%) for heirs other than your spouse, children and parents (such as siblings, stepchildren and non-relatives), and allowances low (as low as €1,594). So where you use UK law to leave assets outside your immediate family, your beneficiaries could receive a hefty tax bill, unless you take specialist advice and plan for this.

So should I choose UK law? At first glance, this may seem a good idea. However, Brussels IV is untested. As mentioned, the UK, Ireland and Denmark have opted out, and the effect of this on UK nationals in France is not yet clear.

There could be other serious implications for UK nationals. Under the UK/France double tax treaty, UK nationals opting for UK law to govern their succession under Brussels IV could find their estate now liable for both UK inheritance tax and French succession tax. While a credit would be given in France for tax paid in the UK, your heirs could well end up paying more tax. This could seriously affect the tax planning you already have in place.

It is important to understand all the implications for you and your heirs. For your peace of mind, you should seek specialist, personalised advice, to review your existing succession plans and help you establish which law would work best for you. ■

*For more, contact 04 93 00 17 80 or [rob.kay@blevinsfranks.com](mailto:rob.kay@blevinsfranks.com). See ad page 17.*



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# ELECTRIC SHOCK:

## EDF's retroactive price rise is on its way

BY JO-ANN HOWELL



IF you are a Tarif Bleu EDF client in your home, then at some point over the next twelve months you'll be receive a confusing invoice, detailing a supplementary fee on your contract for the period from July 23rd 2012 to July 30th, 2013.

### Why a tarif adjustment?

EDF is required to apply this as a result of a ministerial decree published in the *Journal Officiel* on July 31st, 2014.

### How did this decree come about?

IN July 2012, the authorities increased regulated rates – *Tarifs Réglementés des Ventes*, or TRV – ex-VAT by 2% on average for all electricity consumers on Tarif Bleu contracts. This concerns the period from July 23rd, 2012 to July 31st, 2013.

On April 11th, 2014, the *Conseil d'Etat* said that the increase in 2012 was insufficient to cover the cost of electricity, and urged ministers to review the *tarif*.

Pursuant to the decision of the *Conseil*

*d'Etat*, the government has decided on an additional, and retroactive, increase of 5% ex-VAT on average for customers on Tarif Bleu for the period mentioned. A ministerial decree was published in the *Journal Officiel*, following the favourable opinion issued by the CRE (*Commission de Régulation de l'Énergie*) – in July 2014, and it applies to all customers who had a Tarif Bleu contract during this period.

EDF is therefore obliged to apply an adjustment to all affected customers.

The adjustment will be calculated on the subscription and consumption of each customer over the period from July 23rd, 2012 to July 31st, 2013, and staggered between March 2015 and June 2016.

The adjustment could not be applied earlier because of the duration of the appeal process before the *Conseil d'Etat*, and also because of the time EDF needed to develop a technical solution

in order to calculate the amount of the adjustment fee owed by each customer over the stated period. Their solution also allows the correction to be spread over time, to reduce the impact on customers' bills.

Note: the Tarif Bleu rate is one of the prices set each year in the TRV by the ministers responsible for energy and the economy, on the advice of the CRE. The majority of EDF customers are subscribed to this contract rate.

### How is the adjustment calculated?

THE amount of this adjustment

Votre contrat Électricité "Tarif Bleu"		Compteur électronique n°121	
Consommation sur la base d'une estimation	Individuel	Statut de particulier	de 1000 kWh
Consommation	Pro Consommateur	Moyenne de 1000 kWh	1000 kWh
Abonnement	Pro Consommateur	Moyenne de 1000 kWh	1000 kWh
Total de votre consommation d'électricité (dont rétroactivement 21,30 €)		61,75	
Abonnement		12,45	
Total de votre abonnement (dont rétroactivement 11,70 €)		12,45	

**This sample invoice shows how the regularization will appear on your future bill.**

represents the difference between the prices fixed by the new ministerial order published on July 31st, 2014, and those that EDF had charged over the stated period. It is based on the subscription contract and electricity consumption. It represents 5% of the total net amount invoiced over the period.

Regularisation is only subject to VAT at 19.6% on consumption, and 5.5% on the subscription.

To give you an example, between July 2012 and July 2013, if the average bill of an EDF customer amounted to €700, then they can expect an adjustment invoice of €30.

### When will the adjustment invoices be sent out?

IN agreement with the public authorities, EDF will spread the collection of this regularisation between March 2015 and June 2016. If your contract has not changed, the adjustment appears on your bill according to your usual payment frequency as follows:

- Paying by monthly instalments...
- If you receive an annual bill between April to June, the amount is spread over the next two bills (2015 and 2016). Otherwise, the amount is added to your next annual bill.
- If you are billed every two months: the amount is spread in three instalments, one invoice out of two.
- If you are billed every six months: the amount is spread over the next two bills.

However:

- If your contract has changed, you will get a clean bill to regularise the old contract.
- If you are no longer an EDF customer, then you will receive a bill dedicated to this regularisation.

As the old proverb says, "Forewarned is forearmed", but in my experience, the forewarned are no less miffed on receipt of any bill. ■

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# WHERE THE JOBS ARE

Malta attracts IT professionals and Norway entices with its favourable work-life balance, while expats in Luxembourg enjoy excellent job security



FOR its annual Expat Insider survey, published in October 2015, InterNations, the world's leading social network and information site for people who live and work abroad, asked more than 14,300 expatriates representing 170 nationalities and living in 195 countries or territories to rate and provide information on various aspects of expat life, as well as their gender, age, and nationality.

## The Expat Work Week

ACCORDING to InterNations, the average expat works a 42-hour week, with 86% in full-time and 14% in part-time positions. While the global average of 31- to 35-year-old expats working full-time remains as high as 91%, there is a huge dip in the number of those above the age of 50, with 79% of them working full-time.

"We see a shift towards part-time work in this age group, and therefore a slight reduction in the number of weekly working hours to 41 hours among the respondents who are aged 51 or older," says Founder and co-CEO of InterNations Malte Zeeck.

Foreign assignees work the most, with 46.1 hours per week, followed by foreign recruits (44.7 hours) and career-oriented expats (44.1 hours). Travelling spouses, on the other hand, only have a 34.6-hour workweek, which is not surprising considering that 39% of them work part-time. Expat parents only spend slightly less time at work than expats without children: expat dads still work 45.7 hours per week in full-time positions, and 26.1 hours if they have a part-time job. On average, expat moms

work less with 43.1 hours in full-time positions or 22.9 hours part-time. Even among the general survey population, men work slightly longer hours than women (44.2 vs. 39.7 hours). They are also a lot less likely to work part-time than women, with 90% of men working full-time compared to 82% of women.

From a global perspective, it is expats over-50 who are happiest with their work life, closely followed by workers in their early thirties.

Zeeck explains: "Finding the perfect balance between work and life can prove to be an ordeal for many expats. Countries such as Norway, Finland or Denmark provide ideal conditions for expats with the world's shortest working weeks of about 40 hours. At the other end of our rankings, foreign residents

in Uganda, Nigeria, the Philippines and Panama are working up to ten more hours per week than their counterparts in Scandinavia.”

## Best and Worst Career Destinations

MALTA ranks first in the Expat Insider 2015 survey for overall job satisfaction, with seven in ten expats generally satisfied and 27% completely satisfied, compared to a global average of only 16 percent. In terms of career prospects, only the US and the United Kingdom rank higher. Other popular destinations for those in search of an interesting job and good career opportunities are China, Mozambique, Luxembourg and Poland. The lower end of the Job & Career ranking is dominated by European countries: Out of 64 countries overall, Italy, Portugal and Greece — all of them suffering economically — offer the least favourable job opportunities for foreign residents.

## Work-Life Balance around the World

SWEDEN, Norway and Malta occupy the top ranks when it comes to work-life balance, while Saudi Arabia, India and Kuwait are at the bottom. Expats in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, as well as Malta, are also the most satisfied with their working hours, while those in Turkey, Greece, and Chile are the least happy with this aspect.

For more see [internations.org/expat-insider](http://internations.org/expat-insider) ■

THE Working Abroad Index ranks countries according to various factors from three different areas: job and career, work-life balance, and job security. In total, 64 countries are included in this index and questions rated on a scale of one to seven and were used to draw up topical indices: Quality of Life, Ease of Settling In, Working Abroad, Family Life, Personal Finance, and Cost of Living.

## TWILIGHT IN VENCE



D.H. Lawrence spent the last three weeks of his life at the Ad Astra sanatorium in Vence, before moving on March 1st, 1930, to the Villa Robermond in the Quartier of Saint-Donat. Under the care of his wife Frieda von Richthofen, he died of tuberculosis the next day at the age of 44. His funeral at Vence Cemetery took place three days later.

A plaque (above) to the memory of D.H. Lawrence will

be unveiled at the former site of the Ad Astra sanatorium, now the Clinique des Cadrans Solaires (12 Route de Saint-Paul), at 3 pm on Tuesday December, 15th. The invitation-only ceremony will include speeches from the Director of the clinic, the Mayor of Vence and a representative of the UK-based D.H. Lawrence Society, with selected readings from the author's works by some of the Clinic's patients and students. It will finish with a *vin d'honneur* in the gymnasium.

The plaque and ceremony will not only pay tribute to Lawrence as one of the greatest English writers of the 20th century but will also underline the importance of the links between Lawrence and the town of Vence.

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# 3 months' notice



Finding accommodation during Strasbourg's Christmas Festival can be a problem.

BY BARTH HULLEY

IT'S a little known fact that as a citizen of the European Union you are allowed to spend up to 90 consecutive days, working, living or playing in any other EU country without having to tell anyone what you're up to. Although this time limit might seem arbitrary to some, I think it's safe to assume it's based on social norm, like when you've been staying in someone's house for more than twelve weeks and they ask you to start contributing to household bills – because, frankly, you've overstayed your welcome.

If you overstay your EU welcome, that is, reside in a member country for more than 90 days, you're required to declare yourself resident and asked to start contributing in the form of taxes; unsurprisingly, once that three-month period expires, so, too, does your home-state healthcare and social security cover.

Although 90 days of total continental freedom for every EU citizen might be the thorn in the side of immigration officials, with counter-terrorism units and similar agencies trying to track down people *à la* Jason Bourne, it does present a wonderful opportunity to those of us who are lucky enough to be born in such times. To put it simply: you can try before you buy.

When we discovered this for ourselves, our initial fears about making the move to the Alsace in France were immediately swept aside as we realised we wouldn't have to commit one way or the other for the

trial period. Or at least, that's what we thought.

Finding somewhere to stay for no more than three months proved near impossible. Although we were able to find in *gîte* in central Strasbourg for three weeks, it would have been cost-prohibitive to extend our contract at the most expensive time of year, Christmas. We were thus forced into looking for a short-term apartment rental – which we were soon to learn doesn't actually exist in France; you either rent long-term or you don't, *voilà*. After less than a month in the country, we found ourselves committing to a three-year rental agreement with, it should go without saying, a three-month get-out clause.

On the work front things seemed a bit more flexible. I found office space available for short-term let in the city centre, where it turns out the minimum rental period was, coincidentally, three months. Here, I'd hoped to have an opportunity to network with the other business folk renting office space next to mine, as picking up a few local clients wouldn't hurt my company's prospects. In practice though, the only place where schmoozing would've been feasible was in the elevator – I met and conversed with more people on my way up and down the building than I did by the coffee machine. During office hours it seemed that people preferred to, *er*, work; an alien concept to me, but it does explain France's reputation for high productivity per hour worked.

Using an elevator as a networking centre has its obvious drawbacks: small, crowded, no personal space, strange odours and constant interruptions. It did, however, teach me a thing or two about French etiquette. You say *bonjour* to everyone when you get into an elevator and you say *au revoir* when you get out. So, logically, if you're staying in the elevator you say either *bonjour* or *au revoir* to everyone else who either gets in or out. I imagine this could be a real pain in the ass if you're working on the top floor of a skyscraper – which thankfully I wasn't – but may explain why there are so few high-rises in France.

So with no water-cooler moments to tide me through the day, I was rather glad that three months was the minimum let period. I would be out in a matter of weeks. Perfect. Or at least it would have been had my French been good enough to understand the terms of the contract. At the end of the 90 days, as I was clearing my desk, I thought to send one last email to the rental firm to enquire about the return of my deposit. Their reply was short and to the point: "We will return your deposit at the end of the contract which, if you wish to terminate, requires you to send us a letter by recorded delivery ... giving us at least three months' notice." ■

*Barth Hulley lives in Strasbourg and his most recent book, "Freelance in France 2015", offers practical advice on working for yourself in France. See [freelanceinfrance.fr](http://freelanceinfrance.fr)*

# WHAT RUBBISH

BY MICHAEL HEALY

THE Germans have a concise word for it, *Umweltschutz*. And Italians call it *Salvaguardia dell'ambiente*. There will be much talk in these languages and others at the UN's Conference on Climate Change (COP21) in Le Bourget, Paris from November 30th to December 11th. In English we use the words "environmental protection", and a major part of that challenge is the health of the sea. One worry is that a rise in temperature in the Arctic and Antarctic could raise sea levels, flood low-lying lands and cause saltwater contamination of freshwater supplies. Thermal expansion of seawater also contributes to concern; Pacific islands like Kiribati, and also the Maldives – the two flattest countries on Earth – could disappear altogether. So don't delay with that honeymoon!

For centuries, but mainly since the Industrial Revolution, man has been polluting the oceans with toxic materials from land-based activities, blithely assuming that water – 70% of the earth's surface – can absorb all these poisons. Huge quantities of plastic rubbish are slowly revolving in the currents of five major ocean gyres, trapping and choking millions of fish, seabirds and animals with the plastic floating there.

Yacht masters and other seafarers are not usually marine pollution offenders because they are subject to the MARPOL – the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships – which is strictly enforced by Flag States and Port States, requiring them to keep an Oil Record Book and a Garbage Book, logging waste unloading and spillages. But there are offenders, notably fishing boats

and also container ships that seem often to be careless in preventing containers being washed overboard to float for weeks *entre deux eaux*. (Captains are fine linguists because of all that foreign travel!) As for oil spills and macro-garbage at sea along the Riviera, the coast is overflowed daily by an aircraft of the Douanes, which can track any oil slicks and often localise the offender.

Governments seem to have done little, because they have higher short-term priorities for available funds. But there are ever more non-governmental organisations to research the problems and raise the alarm. The Swiss-based "Race for Water Foundation" (*raceforwater.com*) is a leading activist group, concerned about the inevitable shortage of freshwater for the needs of a growing world population. And, unlike for fossil fuels, there is no substitute for water. No, Scotch and soda does not count!

After a round-the-world voyage in search of garbage, the Race for Water team arrived back in homeport, Bordeaux, unfortunately without their trimaran, which capsized in the Indian Ocean; it has now been repatriated to France.

The Race for Water team will be in Paris for the COP21 with their newly donated flagship – the *Titanor PlanetSolar* vessel that circumnavigated the world Monaco-Monaco under solar power alone. She will stay alongside in Paris until December 12th and then start further voyages of garbage investigation and ocean preservation for her new owners under the evocative name *Race for Water*. Time is short – it really is a race. ■ **MH.**




**A.V.M.**  
*wish you a Merry Christmas  
 and a prosperous 2016*

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# Sirens of the South

BY DELANA NELSEN

**After a sports accident left her paralysed for six months, Rachael Dickens was so impressed with her osteopath rehab that she decided to train at the The British School of Osteopathy. She now has a team of 16 at her clinics in Antibes and Beausoleil**

“I was the worst patient ever,” Rachael Dickens says, “but I walked out of there ... and with hope, for the very first time.”

Her subsequent treatments and health improvements sparked a need for change and so Rachael gave up her successful career in publishing to return to school for a 5-year course to become ... an osteopath! Not quite finished with life transitions, Rachael, an avid skier, decided to move from England to the South of France. “I wanted to be somewhere with the Mediterranean in front of me and the mountains behind. The choices were Barcelona and the Nice area. Being that I spoke fluent French and there was no way I was ever going to learn Catalan, Nice it was. And I have no regrets.”

Rachael now has two clinics (*englishosteopath.com*), one in Antibes and the other in Monaco. With 16 bilingual staff, her clinics offer everything from massage, reflexology and acupuncture to relationship counselling, medical interventions such as Botox injections and, of course, osteopathic treatments. Expats make up 98% of the clinic’s clientele.

“We also do a lot of classes for new mums. Our professional midwife teaches women what to expect, how the pregnancy and birthing process works and how it may be different here than in their own country.”

In her off time, Rachael works as the Medical Lead for the charity Skiing with Heroes (*skiingwithheroes.com*), an organization that works to help wounded veterans start new lives



**Medical Lead of Skiing with Heroes, Rachael with Andy (amputee), Billy (visual impaired) and Matt (amputee) on a visit to Monaco to help raise awareness for the charity.**

through “skihabilitation” – a process whereby wounded veterans regain their confidence and start on a path to fitness, sustained wellbeing and then, if desired, employment. Something that Rachael can personally relate to.

**WINE ANYONE:**

My *vin* is currently the orange wine home brew my neighbour makes. It’s a pure alcohol-sugar mix with a strong hint of orange. More than a thimbleful and I’m on the floor.

**WHAT’S LEFT ON THIS YEAR’S TO-DO LIST:**

See the Northern Lights. Just Google “Thermal Glass Igloos” ... then salivate.

**FRENCH PRODUCT YOU CAN’T FIND IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY:**

The Anglophone expat community!

**BUILDING UP A SWEAT:**

Working as an osteo can be quite physical but I do a lot of skiing, cycling and kayaking.

**LOCAL SKI RESORT RECOMMENDATION:**

I’m a bit of a fan of Isola 2000. Admittedly, it looks like it was designed by someone who thought that a concrete 5-storey walkthrough block would look charming in a beautiful, natural setting, but the skiing is decent for a local resort.

Elsewhere, I ski a lot in Klosters, Switzerland, as I know so many people in the village. It’s like another home surrounded by friends and the hitting the slopes is great, too.



**COSY WINTER DINING:**

Le Brulot, Antibes, makes the best *canard* I've ever had, they cook it in a huge open oven. The resto is in a cave and things fall off the ceiling. If they serve you your pitcher of wine in a new jug, you can ask them to change it for an old chipped one. The atmosphere is great.

**WHAT TO DO WITH ENDLESS VISITORS:**

I own a 3.5m kayak so I take them kayaking in the Gorges du Verdon.



**MUCH-LOVED SPORTING GOODS STORE:**

Nootica, near Nice. They have the best prices for sailing stuff. I just bought a kayak from them, even though I went in to buy a life jacket!

**RETAIL THERAPY:**

Queen Bee, secondhand clothes in Monaco. The owner knows me, hands me clothes, they fit, I buy them. I really hate clothes shopping!



**DOWN TIME:**

Walking my dog Mavis (who is half flea, half rabbit in a Labradorish sort of way) on the beach or in the forests. In

addition to my sports, I love to paint, though I don't do it well. In fact, most of my paintings are burned in the fire later. But I still love it.

**BEST PEOPLE WATCHING:**

Cafe de la Plage in Juan-les-Pins. It has a huge clock on one wall so locals know it as the Clock Café.

**COASTAL FÊTE PICK:**

Voiles d'Antibes, only when the local band Blah Blah plays, everyone loves them. This event is brilliant with a beer tent and live music; it seems every expat and all your friends are there.

**NECESSARY EXTRAVAGANCE:**

Weekly massage and osteo treatments whenever I need them. I magically turn up on my colleagues' schedules and then refuse to pay. Hey, I'm the owner!



**BON APP:**

My Blackberry. I prefer phone calls not apps.

**CHOICE FACIAL CREAM:**

Argan oil every day.

**FAV FRENCH PHRASE:**

"C'est noté".

**JOIE DE VIVRE:**

I love the fact that there are not as many health and safety regulations, things are more people's personal responsibility. But banks closing for lunch and then again at 4:30? That still does my head in! ■



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# FATHER PETER JACKSON: A YEAR ON

*FATHER Peter Jackson, who was born in the UK, went to Oxford University and trained to be ordained at Theological College at St Stephen's House in Oxford, arrived at Holy Trinity Nice in October 2014, a few months before the Charlie Hebdo massacre. Uncannily, he was also in Washington as 9/11 unfolded, driving across the bridge as the Pentagon was hit. Following the Paris attacks, he reflects upon the past twelve months.*

A year ago, I became Chaplain of Holy Trinity, the historic Anglican Church in Nice, as well as of St Hugh Vence, a nearby smaller church. I have served in a variety of parishes and schools, including twelve years at Harrow School, but I have never received such a warm and practical welcome as here.

We have had so much help in settling into the presbytery – the 1890s priest's house next to the church – getting to know the community and becoming accustomed to life in France.

The assistance offered was invaluable as Holy Trinity is quite different from my previous parish in London. The congregation there consistently drew from only the immediate area, while the Nice one is constantly changing. There is a loyal core of people who have made their permanent home here but there is also a constant flow of visitors from all over the Anglophone world.

In recent months, we have welcomed students from the Netherlands, Australia and the US, a Canadian Air Force chaplain, as well as visitors from the UK and North America.

There are also those who come

for a few months at a time: some from Canada wintering on the Riviera, as the British did in the nineteenth century, and others simply spending time in apartments that they own in Nice.

There is also a significant American presence, which dates back to the time 40 years ago when the American Anglican congregation of the Episcopal Church of

the Holy Spirit joined Holy Trinity, having sold their church in Nice to the French Protestants. This explains why Holy Trinity, a chaplaincy within the Church of England Diocese in Europe, is also listed as an associated parish by the Episcopal Church.

Attendance, as well the composition of the congregation, varies considerably.



Fr Peter: "For the people who come to Holy Trinity Nice, the service needs to be elegant, lasting an hour and giving them their space."

We had almost 300 in church for the Easter Day service but fewer than half that number at Christmas, reflecting both the tendency of many permanent Nice residents to visit family at Christmas and the popularity of the Riviera as a holiday destination at Easter.

When I describe the Holy Trinity congregation to visiting friends, I say that they are more like a cathedral congregation than a parish one. The factors that draw people to us are similar: a desire to participate in worship in English, and worship, that is accessible and mainstream. Also, I cannot assume that everyone is Anglican or that everyone is equally devout: some may be seeking something spiritual without yet having strong commitment. Moreover, the social time after services, when many linger to chat over a glass of wine or a cup of coffee, is for some an indispensable complement to the worship – English speakers in a foreign land, they are keen to find an English-speaking community. But this has to be balanced by a recognition that some are also attracted by the fact that you can also slip in and out of Holy Trinity without the obligation to become more involved.

The historic church site includes, apart from the church itself, the presbytery, Hall and churchyard, and is home to many activities apart from worship. Since the church is open every day, many come simply to visit it or to find somewhere for contemplation or prayer. Others come to the presbytery to seek me out for help or advice. The churchyard provides a green space for visitors and neighbours to stop in. The Hall accommodates the weekly meetings of diverse

groups and serves as a point of outreach to the wider community. The English American Library is housed in a part of the Hall and offers a large choice of English-language books for lending.

Reflecting on all these aspects of our congregation's nature also convinced me early on of the need for good communication: first of all, visitors or those new to living in Nice need to be able to find us. For this reason, I commissioned a professional redesign of our website – *anglican-nice.com*. I have also completely revised the service books and weekly service sheets to make them as clear to follow as possible. Even as a priest, I have sometimes found it very difficult to follow what was happening in a service when visiting churches on holiday; I am determined that visitors to Holy Trinity don't have that experience.

No tour d'horizon of a first year in Nice, especially from an Englishman, would be complete without some comment about the weather. Until I moved here, I had no idea how heavy the rain would be. A long-standing parishioner frequently remarks that Nice has a higher annual rainfall than Manchester. As the basement of the presbytery is prone to flooding, I now have first-hand experience of what this means. Also, in common with many native *niçois*, we found the record-breaking *chaleur* of this last summer close to unbearable. I now appreciate why our forebears chose to visit during the cooler months: it is delightful to walk the streets of the city on a winter's day in bright sunshine or wander along the Promenade and see people sunbathing on a January afternoon – in a sheltered spot, of course – by a sparkling blue sea. **P.J. ■**

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It's the good life for most Anglos on the Riviera, but for those growing older, life can become very hard without moral and physical support. It's up to those of us who are in a secure position, having good health and the support of friends and family to offer a helping hand to those who are less fortunate.

Sunny Bank exists to provide that help and support for English speaking residents on the Côte d'Azur. Working closely with commercial operator EMERA, in Mouans Sartoux, the nursing home Victoria offers 90 rooms.

Opening early 2016 on the same site, Albert offers 33 apartments for independent living. Sunny Bank also provides grants to help people to continue to live independently in their own homes.

The Grange, which is adjacent, provides a vibrant social hub for English speakers with regular lunches and social events and also a wide selection of books and bric-a-brac.

Sunny Bank already has many amazing volunteers who provide a range of services including daily visits to Victoria, and also all-important fundraising.

However, we need more volunteers to help us run the Sunny Bank charity. *In particular we are looking for volunteers who can provide project management, financial or commercial skills, as well as those who can give some time to visit the elderly in Victoria and Albert or to help with our social events.* Interested? Email Catherine Wright, Secretary, Sunny Bank, at [catherine.wright@wanadoo.fr](mailto:catherine.wright@wanadoo.fr)

**Further information about Sunny Bank at  
[www.sunny-bank.org](http://www.sunny-bank.org)**

# CHECKING OFF YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST



*Dear Santa – I've been really, really good this year and all I really, really want is ... well, a perfectly positioned waterfront property on the Côte d'Azur ... that would be just perfect!*

WHERE better to wake on Christmas (or indeed any other!) morning than looking out over the bay of St Tropez? Blue skies, sunshine and the glint of azure sea – for this coast is justly

named! Indeed, Santa may be tempted to linger, to sit on the terrace beside the pool and wait for the sun to rise, for here it is a truly magical experience.

The coastal resort of Les Issambres

is noted for its pretty inlets and sandy beaches as it stretches along the coast between St Raphaël and St Maxime. South-facing over the Mediterranean, to the north this area is protected from the cold winds of the Mistral by the Massif des Maures – leaving it with the most perfect of climates. More tranquil than many of its neighbours, it boasts enough cafés and restaurants to please the most jaded of palates, as well as its own **PROPERTY FEATURE, PAGE 28**



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## PROPERTY FEATURE, FROM PAGE 26

water taxi service, the Bateaux Verts.

Indeed, this area has long been a magnet for artists, poets and writers attracted by the perfect climate, beautiful surroundings and azure blue water.

In Les Issambres, perched on a rocky outcrop, with its own direct beach access, a stunning property awaits (are you listening Santa?). As you approach along the waterfront, you'll first notice how this Art Deco property has been built to take maximum advantage of its site – painted the softest of terracotta shades it makes a subtle, yet sumptuous, statement. Swinging into the paved driveway bounded by grand mature palm trees, a fabulous glazed arched entrance is set to welcome you. This leads directly into the impressive wood-panelled hallway but what really entices is the view, for ahead is the huge

glass-walled sitting room (naturally decked out with a grand piano) where the vistas are quite simply breathtaking.

While the property was previously run as a boutique hotel, it is now being marketed to discerning private buyers. At the moment, there are 16 luxury suites – the main house having three – the views from each that have to be seen to be believed! In this building, as well as the sitting room, there is a dining area – again designed to take in the seascapes.

A separate pavilion and outside Tropeziennne-terraced area are immediately adjacent to the magnificent pool with room for copious numbers of sun loungers – for this is a property with space bounded only by the water below.

From here, steps lead down to its own tiny cove with a landing, sunken moorings that could be reconstituted and anchoring points ready to keep your yacht at the foot of the property.

Of course, the kitchen is equipped to run a luxury hotel: cold rooms, a refectory and a 10,000-bottle wine cellar among all the other necessities. There's a separate building with further guest accommodation, including a tower at one end and even a dovecote!

Five separate terraces make the most of the panoramas and in the pavilion, with its lavish interior, there's a further expansive dining and seating area not to be outdone by the fantastic bar evocative of the Roaring Twenties. To complete the indulgences, a fully-fitted spa with sauna, massage room and treatment area are on site ... and you won't have to share them with hotel guests! "PS Santa: This truly exceptional slice of the true Riviera lifestyle doesn't come along very often!" ■

Contact Charles Kennard of Leggett Immobilier ([leggettfrance.com](http://leggettfrance.com)) directly on 04 94 17 04 32 or [charles@leggett.fr](mailto:charles@leggett.fr)



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PROPERTY

## A HOME FOR THE HOLS

(... and the rest of the year, too)



BY TIM CLARK

WELL, another year draws to a close and what a period of ups and downs it has been.

I feel privileged to live and work in this region of France and often have to pinch myself when I commute into Cannes, Nice or St Tropez, all the while staring at the azure blue Mediterranean Sea. I don't know about you, but when I see that view from my traffic jam, it seems less of an issue than when I used to sit on the M6 staring at some tower block.

This brings me onto the property market. I think we predicted at the beginning of the year a return of foreign buyers to the market, an increase in transactions and also more stability, well 2 out of 3 isn't bad, right? The foreign buyers are definitely back in force and we have experienced a 40% increase in transactions this year compared to 2014.

The stability in the market is still very much on a knife-edge and, while transaction numbers are up across the board, this has come at the expense of achieved prices. The Notaires de France published figures in October 2015 showing a decrease of 7% for sales of houses, for the second quarter of 2015 across the Alpes-Maritimes and 3.7% fall in the Var. Meanwhile, Immoprix reported that the average sale price in the Alpes-Maritimes is €430,000 and €304,600 in the Var region.

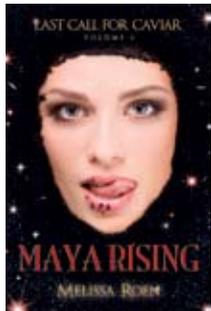
I will continue to keep a close eye on how things develop as we go into 2016 and I do, albeit with a little caution, believe we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

It remains to thank our vendors and clients for their continued support throughout 2015 and also a huge thank you to "Riviera Reporter" readers for allowing me the platform to pass on my musings and experience. Wherever you are celebrating, I wish you all the very best for the festive season and look forward to catching up in the New Year. ■

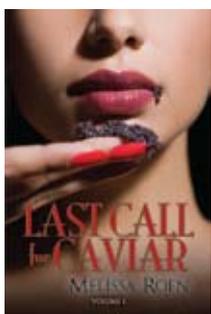
Contact Tim Clark of Leggett Immobilier at [tim@leggett.fr](mailto:tim@leggett.fr)

# TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

... the Reporter's reading guide for the holidays

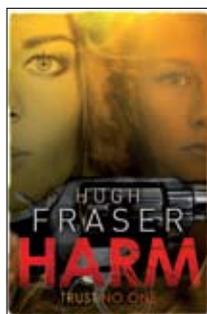


IT'S 2019 and humanity is imperilled: governments and kingdoms are toppling, societies – across the planet – collapsing. Natural catastrophes, resource wars, systems failure, famine and disease threaten our survival. In the heavens, a dim red star brightens in the night sky, heralding epochal change. Are we the architects of our own demise? Or are we merely bystanders to cosmic events? Among the endangered billions, Maya Jade, an American trapped in the South of France, is searching for answers while fighting to stay alive. Darker and more erotic, “Maya Rising”, the sequel to “Last Call for Caviar”, by Melissa Roen, picks up Maya Jade’s story at its cliff-hanging mid-point. Combining elements of adventure, romance, and science fiction, Maya and her companions flee the besieged Côte d’Azur searching for safety in the vastness of the French Alps. (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform). See page 37.

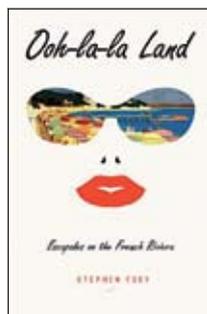


AS the world comes unhinged, a lucky few will be quaffing Cristal and nibbling Beluga as they stock their Feadships and gas-up their Gulfstreams for a last-minute dash to safety. For American expat Maya Jade, the Côte d’Azur remains a fast-eroding zone of normality amid global chaos. Welcome to the Madhouse. Welcome to the year 2018. “Last Call for Caviar”, the debut work of fiction by author Melissa Roen, conjures an all-too-plausible scenario of end-times on the glamorous, treacherous and geographically blessed French Riviera. Anyone looking for a thrilling, fast-paced read with a powerful savour of impending doom will relish this

smart, page-turning primer on living like there’s no tomorrow. “Last Call for Caviar” describes a world where a gal’s Glock fits a diamond holster and that second helping of caviar may be your last. This sharply-observed narrative of an uncannily realistic future is as fierce as it is fabulous. (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform)

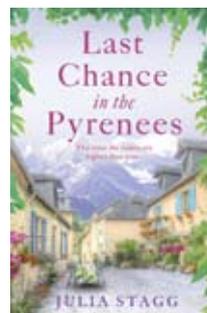


Agatha Christie’s imagination for criminal plots has rubbed off on him as in July 2015, Hugh made his debut as a writer with his first novel, Harm. The action-packed fiction that takes place mostly in Mexico centres on the adventures of a beautiful and beguiling contract killer. The heroine, Rina Walker, grows up in postwar Notting Hill amongst a background of poverty, petty crime and gangland “protection”. In two parallel stories, the reader discovers what drives an innocent girl to murder in self-defence, and how she evolves into a ruthless assassin. See page 10. (Armstrong Nyan)

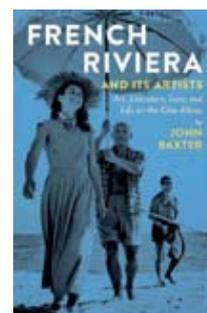


WHEN Canadian Stephen Foy and his wife planned their trip along the Côte d’Azur, they dreamt of stunning beaches, opulent hotels and gourmet food. But in their wildest dreams, they couldn’t have imagined the host of oddball characters and comical situations they’d encounter there. In the tradition of Bill Bryson and Peter Mayle, Stephen Foy’s “Ooh-la-la Land: Escapades on the French

Riviera” describes one of the world’s most sought-after landscapes with a humorist’s eye and self-deprecating wit. Whether our protagonist is fumbling for exactly the right – and therefore utterly wrong – French phrase or getting trapped in a high-tech European toilet, he never fails to entertain. His wife is a perfect foil, keeping her husband calm and sane throughout their journey to over forty towns and villages. (WorkPoint Ventures)



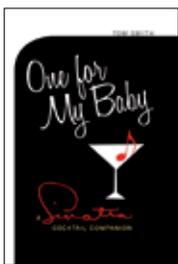
THE final chapter of Julia Stagg’s semi-autobiographical Fogas series, which chronicles a British couple who buy an *auberge* in the Ariège-Pyrénées, is out. “Last Chance in the Pyrenees” sees your favourite characters that must once more rally round to protect their precious way of life after tragedy strikes their small mountain village of Fogas in the French Pyrenees. A struggle for the town hall sees political ambition rise to ever more dangerous – even life-threatening – levels, crucial relationships are tested and a deadly plot for revenge and retribution has terrible consequences. Yet, in good times and bad, the value our villagers place on community and friendship has never been greater. (Hodder & Stoughton)



“FRENCH Riviera and Its Artists” is the latest from Australian author John Baxter, Paris resident since 1989. From iconic figures linked to the South of France, like Paul Cézanne to Pablo Picasso, from D.H. Lawrence (see page 19) to Graham Greene, and from Coco Chanel to Grace Kelly, Baxter fills 21 chapters weaving fascinating true stories

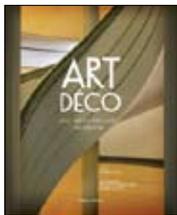
Nice-based artist Alfred Head continues his nearly 40-year tradition of producing a calendar of painted local scenes. Proceeds from his 2016 edition (€10) available from the English American Library in Nice ([nice-english-library.org](http://nice-english-library.org)) go to charity.

and little-known facts, like in 1956 Picasso turned down Bridget Bardot's offer to pose for him with a curt "I only have one model at a time." "French Riviera and Its Artists" is an enjoyable lively read that will appeal to travellers, Francophiles, and culture lovers alike. You will also learn about many well-known masterpieces that were inspired by the French Riviera—and will never look at them the same way again. (Museon)



FROM the biographer of Blondie and The Ramones, Tom Smith, comes "One For My Baby", the story of Frank Sinatra with a twist – combined with cocktail recipes. The book introduces us to his life and art seen from an unconventional point of view – Ol' Blue Eyes' prodigious appetite for alcohol. The book begins with a look at the role drink played throughout his life and ends with a consideration of his most enduring persona – The Last Saloon Singer. In between there are stories, legends, anecdotes and facts to

be able to make a compelling case that his drinking was an integral part of his character, his lifestyle and (by extension) his creative output. (Peter Owen Publishers)



ROBERTA Dallo worked for over ten years on architectural heritage, with a fondness for façades. Technical referent for the restoration of the façades of Place Garibaldi in Nice, Dallo is founder and president of the Association Gloria Mansion and he cooperates with specialists from all over France. Together their research led to "Art Deco: Une Méditerranée heureuse", a reflection on the historical, technical and industrial colours that Nice is famous for. (Éditions Gilletta-nice-matin)



EXPAT children's book author Susan Keefe's latest release, "Toby's Tails: The Christmas Kittens", will donate 10% of the sales to Hélianthus, an animal charity based in Pre-en-Pail, France. Toby the Border Collie's owners rescue three little kittens, and under Toby's watchful eye, they all celebrate their first Christmas. (Strategic Book Publishing) ■



### THE PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING

From Christmas crackers to puddings, your Riviera grocers have all you need.

**BRITTAİN'S**, Valbonne: See pg 19.

**GEOFFREY'S OF LONDON**, Antibes: See pg 29.

**LECLERC**, Le Cannet Rocheville: See inside cover.

**MORRAN'S INTERNATIONAL**, Antibes: See pg 9.

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# It's the most wonderful (and stressful) time of the year



BY SUSAN TOMASSINI

THE holiday season is just around the corner – a time to connect with friends and relatives and emerge feeling refreshed. Or not. Even those of us lucky enough to live in the relative halcyon of the French Riviera can experience the holidays as overwhelmingly stressful. The combined effect of increased family obligations and overindulgences of the festive season can leave us guilt-ridden and completely lacking the motivation needed to tackle New Year's resolutions.

As a qualified nutritionist, I'm aware of the dangers of stress when it comes to our heart and our immune system. It's no coincidence that the festive season brings an increase in cardiac events, as well as heightened vulnerability to infectious bugs making their rounds along the coast at this time of year. Considering how closely the brain and gut interact, it's easy to understand how the intense feelings connected with the holidays (frustration, anger, elation and isolation – to name a few) can trigger a number of familiar and distressing digestive symptoms. When prolonged, stress can

even shrink our brain and add fat around our belly (not ideal for that LBD).

Fortunately, there are some simple ways to help the body react better to inevitable strain and boost our immunity and enjoyment of the season, but the main thing is to realise that this needs to be done on a daily basis – not just on weekends.

Yoga is a stress-busting technique that integrates mental, physical and spiritual aspects. Health benefits from regular practice include improved sleep and immune function and reduced food cravings and emotional eating. There is no shortage of yoga centres to choose from along the French Riviera – from Sunshine Yoga at the Monte Carlo Bay Hotel ([yogamontecarlo.com](http://yogamontecarlo.com)) to Elanda Villa Wellness Centre in Cap d'Ail ([clairesmyth.com](http://clairesmyth.com)). Check listings for yoga in your area.

Meditation is another very effective way to decrease stress hormones and reduce anxiety. Transcendental Meditation (or TM, for short) is a technique that is becoming especially popular because it's simple to learn and fits in easily to busy lives. Repeating a mantra allows the body

to settle into a state of profound rest and the mind to achieve a state of inner peace, without concentration or effort. It's taught on a one-on-one basis by a certified TM teacher. One such instructor is Dr Michel Plantié who, with over thirty years of experience, has now made Transcendental Meditation available to everyone on the Riviera ([monaco.tm.org](http://monaco.tm.org)).

Finally, it's hard to overestimate the effect that food and drink have on our mood and ability to deal with pressure. It's tempting to jump on board the sugar, caffeine, booze and white flour train that are ever present during the festive season – and they happen to be exactly what we crave. But overdoing places us in a vicious cycle. The Clever Kitchen ([theclever.kitchen](http://theclever.kitchen)) can help put you on the right track with a workshop dedicated to managing stress with super foods on Thursday December 10th at Stars 'n' Bars Monaco.

So as we head into Christmas, give yourself the gift that will keep on giving: master your stress. ■

Contact [melanie@theclever.kitchen](mailto:melanie@theclever.kitchen) for more workshop details.

# Christmas 2015

## Church & Choir Services

### AIX★EN★PROVENCE: ICCP INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF PROVENCE

Cathedrale St Sauveur, 34 place des Martyrs de la Resistance - iccpaix.org - Pastor Timothy Arlen  
**Sun Dec 6, 16h:** Annual Christmas Carol Concert in English. Prelude begins at 15h30. Come join us for an inspirational hour of joyful praise as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The concert is free so get there early for a good seat.

### BEAULIEU★SUR★MER:

#### ST MICHAEL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

11 chem des Myrtes - stmichaelsbeaulieusurmer.org  
Father Tony Ingham  
**Mon Dec 21, 18h30:** Anglo-French Carol Service with Catholic Parish of Notre Dame d'Esperance at St Michael's. This service will be followed by hospitality of mulled wine and mince pies.  
**Thurs Dec 24, 19h:** First Service of Christmas.  
**Fri Dec 25, 10h:** Christmas Day Eucharist with carols.

### CANNES: HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Ave Branly - holytrinitycannes.org - Reverend Giles Williams  
**Sun Dec 20, 19h30:** Carol Service.  
**Thurs Dec 24, 16h:** Children's Carol Service.  
**Thurs Dec 24, 23h30:** Midnight Communion.  
**Fri Dec 25, 9h:** Early Communion.  
**Fri Dec 25, 10h30:** Family Service with Communion.

### MARSEILLE: ALL SAINTS' ANGLICAN CHURCH

4 rue de Belloi - anglican-marseille.org  
Reverend Canon David Greenwood  
**Sat Dec 12, 17h:** Carol Service.  
**Fri Dec 25, 10h:** Christmas Day Service.

### MENTON: ST JOHN'S CHURCH

31 ave Carnot - anglicanchurchmenton.com  
Rev Dr David Hart TSSF  
**Sun Dec 20, 10h30:** Christmas Eucharist with Carols.  
**Fri Dec 25, 10h30:** Christmas Day Eucharist.

### MONACO: ST PAUL'S CHURCH, MONTE★CARLO

22 ave de Grande Bretagne - stpaulsmonaco.com  
Father Walter Raymond, OGS  
**Sun Dec 13, 10h30:** Children's Nativity Play.  
**Sun Dec 13, 19h:** Annual Carol Service.  
**Thurs Dec 24, 17h:** Children's Christingle Service.  
**Thurs Dec 24, 23h:** Christmas Eve Midnight Mass.  
**Fri Dec 25, 10h30:** Family Christmas Communion.  
**Sun Dec 27, 10h30:** First Sunday of Christmas.

### NICE: HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN CHURCH

11 rue de la Buffa - anglican-nice.com  
Father Peter Jackson  
**Sun Dec 20, 18h30:** Carol Service.  
**Thurs Dec 24, 17h:** Crib Service, Christmas Eve.  
**Thurs Dec 24, 23h:** Midnight Mass.  
**Fri Dec 25, 11h:** Sung Eucharist, Christmas Day.

### NICE: INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH

13 rue Vernier - ibcfrance.org - Pastor James Arnold  
**Fri Dec 4, 20h:** 7th Annual Christmas Carol Celebration at Eglise St Pierre d'Arène (52 rue de la Buffa).

### ST PAUL DE VENCE: INT'N BAPTIST CHURCH

Commercial Centre Saint Claire, Level 0  
ibcfrance.org - Pastor James Arnold  
**Sat Dec 5, 20h:** 7th Annual Christmas Carol Celebration - Cathédrale Notre Dame de la Nativité, Vence.

### VENCE: ST HUGH'S

Avenue de la Résistance  
anglican-nice.com - Father Peter Jackson  
**Mon Dec 21, 18h:** Carol Service.  
**Fri Dec 25, 9h:** Sung Eucharist, Christmas Day.

### VAR: ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

sjevar.com - Reverend Keith Bretel  
GRIMAUD VILLAGE: St Michel's Church  
**Fri Dec 18, 19h:** Traditional English Carol Service followed by mince pies and mulled wine.  
ST RAPHAEL: 117 ave Paul Doumer  
**Sun Dec 20, 10h30:** Carol Service as part of morning Communion, followed by mince pies.  
**Thurs Dec 25, 10h30:** Christmas Day Communion Service. Lunch will follow for those who are alone at Christmas.

### ANTIBES: RIVIERA INTERNATIONAL SINGERS

06 17 81 15 08 - riviera-international-singers.com  
**Fri Dec 4, 20h:** Christmas Carol concert in Antibes Cathedral with all proceeds going to the Antibes SNCM Lifeboat. Come along & sing with us and enjoy some post-concert sausages and mulled wine. Pre-sale tickets available from Bluewater at 7 Bld d'Aguillon, Antibes. Tickets: Adults €10 (wine incl); children under 12: €5.

### CAGNES★SUR★MER: SWEDISH CHURCH

40 ave de Verdun - svenskakyrkan.se/sodrafrankrike  
**Sat Dec 12, 18h:** St Lucia's coronation and celebration at Eglise St. Pierre, Haut de Cagnes.  
**Sun Dec 13, 11h:** Mass (Cagnes/mer).  
**Sun Dec 13, 17h:** St Lucia Celebration and Glögg at Holy Trinity Church Nice/Place Massena.  
**Sun Dec 20, 11h:** Mass Mother Mary (Cagnes/mer).  
**Thurs Dec 24, 11h:** Christmas Eve Prayer (Cagnes/mer).  
**Fri Dec 25, 9h:** Christmas Morning Service (C/s/mer).  
**Thurs Dec 31, 16h:** New Year Eve Prayer and Champagne (Cagnes/mer).

### CANNES: BIG BLAZE CHORUS WINTER CONCERT

06 77 90 97 97 - bigblazechorus.com  
**Thurs Dec 3, 19h-20h:** The anglophone choir perform songs from their winter repertoire including a surprise children's performance. Free entry, all ages welcome. At Holy Trinity Church Cannes (ave Branly).

### CANNES: CHARITY AT SUNSET CHURCH

06 62 83 72 15 - mgart06.fr  
**Sun Dec 6, 16h:** Christmas carols around the world led by Florence Daly. 17 musicians and 50 singers from l'ensemble MGART orchestral and Ars Vocalis choir. Several songs in English. Tickets: €5-€20; 10 & under free. Benefits go to flood victims. Book online.

### MESSIAH MONACO: ENSEMBLE VOCAL RISTRETTO

ristrettovoices.com  
**Sat Nov 27, 20h:** For the second consecutive year, Errol Girdlestone will be directing Handel's masterpiece at St Paul's Church, Monte-Carlo, 22 ave de Grande Bretagne. Tickets €30. The benefactor of this concert has made a commitment to underwrite the costs of future performances and is making an effort to recruit other music lovers capable of joining him in covering the costs in the hope of establishing "Messiah" as a Riviera pre-Christmas tradition.

### VALBONNE: RIVIERA INTERNATIONAL SINGERS

06 17 81 15 08 - riviera-international-singers.com  
**Thurs Dec 10, 20h & Sat Dec 12, 18h:** Get into the spirit of Christmas with the RIS' Carol Concerts with traditional carols and Christmas songs at St Blaise Church (rue de la Paroisse) in Valbonne. Come along & sing with us and have a cup of mulled wine after the concert. Part of the proceeds go to local charities. Tickets: Adults €10 (wine incl); under-12: €5.

### VALBONNE: SWEET SEVEN CHRISTMAS

06 09 20 77 53 - Brigitte Delépine  
**Sun Dec 6, 17h:** Come and share a special charity Christmas evening with the cappella group Sweet Seven (there are eight of them!) at St Blaise Church in Valbonne. Come for a wonderful evening of Christmas music with traditional carols, as well as your favourite Christmas fireside songs, reworked in glorious Technicolour. Tickets on sale at the church from 16h: €10, under-16 free. All profits go to church charity.

### VENCE: ENSEMBLE VOCAL SYRINX

06 26 47 10 18 - ensemblevocalsyrinx.com  
**Sat Dec 12, 20h30:** With celebrated organist Stéphane Eliot, EVS presents a Traditional Christmas Concert in Vence Cathedral, including a selection of classical and popular Christmas music and carols. Tickets: €15; under-16, free. Tickets: Office de Tourisme Vence Tel: 04 93 58 06 38 or on site from 19h30.

**FOR MORE CHRISTMAS EVENTS  
SEE PAGE 47 &  
RIVIERAREPORTER.COM**

Isola 2000 photo: Robert Palomba

# A winter wonderland

Get into the holiday spirit with a short pre-Christmas break to Stockholm



The Christmas market is in the Old Town of Stockholm until Dec 23rd, daily 11 am-6 pm. The 38-metre tree on Skeppsbron is the world's largest real Christmas tree, decorated with 5000 lights and a four-metre star at the top. Photo: Henrik Trygg

BY NANCY HESLIN

AFTER discovering the sport of SwimRun – in a nutshell, running in your wetsuit across islands in Stockholm's Archipelago and plunging into the 10°C Baltic Sea to swim in your running shoes to the next inlet – I found myself making several journeys to the country that gave birth to the craze: Sweden.

The bonus of training for Ötillö (*otillo.se*), the SwimRun World Championship ranked by CNN “as one of the toughest

endurance races in the world” held the first Monday in September, is that, despite three months of having to drag myself out of bed at 4 am to workout, the race destination is as rewarding as the event itself.

Part of my immediate affiliation to Stockholm is its familiarity to many Canadian cities: it's clean, has reliable public transport, people are terribly polite (and speak English, thanks to watching undubbed American TV), there are gorgeous lake districts, and, of course, there's the similarity in the

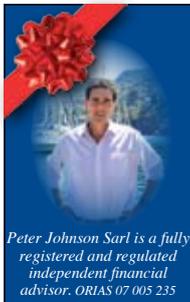
weather, with people embracing the climate in which they live: nearly a quarter of Swedes still manage to jog regularly and a third cycle to work despite windy, wet springs; short summers; crisp falls; and snowy, chilly winters.

Stockholm offers a welcome contrast to Nice – civilised not chaotic, cheery not dispirited – and its wintery conditions provide the perfect backdrop for the city's Christmas market, open from the last Saturday in November to December 23rd (daily 11 am to 6 pm). That's not to say sea-facing palm trees decorated with flashing white lights don't provide a festive atmosphere here on the Riviera but, having grown up in a snowy and severe winter climate, tingling cheeks and seeing my breath gets me more in the mood for Santa's impending visit than dropping by the Nice Christmas market on my way home from a run, wearing shorts and shades.

With origins dating back to the medieval markets in 1837, Stockholm's Christmas market at Stortorget Square, near the Royal Palace, in the enchanting Gamla stan (the Old Town), is the oldest

Stockholm's hippest new boutique hotel, the Kungsträdgården, has close ties to Nice. Avid cyclist Adam von Mentzer (pictured at Place Massena, Nice), the hotel's ever-resourceful and discreet concierge and Member of Les Clefs d'Or, has spent his holidays at a family home here since he was a child, while the hotel's restaurant, Brasserie Makalös, is French, thanks to chef Yohan Adell, also a part-time resident of Nice.





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in the country operating officially since 1915. It's been called "one of the world's best" and "a Christmas market to see in your lifetime", so what could be more joyful than sampling Swedish Christmas sweets, *pepparkakor* (gingerbread) and *glögg* (mulled wine) from some of the 40 red chalets selling traditional handmade knitted caps, candy floss, a range of Swedish handicrafts arts and gifts – especially knowing that all the proceeds from the booth rentals goes to charity? And if you really want "to dive into the Advent atmosphere", sign up for the 90-minute Stockholm Christmas stoRY Walking Tour" ([storytours.eu](http://storytours.eu)).

Stockholm's "New Nordic" food scene deliciously balances pickled herring, salmon, Swedish meatballs with lingonberries and dark, hearty breads (that, ahem, you may want to avoid before a run) ... with carrot cake, Prinsesstårta sponge cake with jam and cream and authentic Swedish cinnamon buns. And thick-moussed, seasonally flavoured café lattés are available from an abundance of coffee houses, where you will be served with a smile – a dose of friendliness that only helps to improve your festive mood.

Gamla stan and Kungsträdgården, the city's 15th-century central park, are easy to get around on foot – or skates, there's a winter ice rink in the King's Garden, open from lunch to 6:30ish pm – with shops a plenty peppered with boutiques, chain stores and restaurants. Treat yourself to a beverage at the iconic Grand Hotel bar and certainly a visit to a spa is a no-

brainer. The world renowned Sturebadet Spa, founded by balneologist Carl Curman in 1885, is one of Stockholm's oldest and although the original bathhouse was destroyed by fire a century later, it has been reconstructed from original pictures.

For the history buffs, a 30-minute walk from Central Station to the Djurgården district will take you to the marine Vasa Museum, while the pop culture fanatics may be more inclined to visit the nearby Abba Museum.

According to "Vogue", Södermalm, south of Stockholm, is "one of the coolest neighbourhoods in the world". Scenes from "The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo" were filmed here and you'll find no shortage of vintage shops, food trucks and cafés.

No matter what part of Stockholm you explore (and don't forget to pack your wetsuit), you'll find no bah-humbug here this holiday season. ■

**WHERE TO STAY**

The family-owned Kungsträdgården is Stockholm's newest boutique hotel, located 50 metres from the King's Garden. Offering outstanding service in an exquisite setting, each of the 98 classical Gustavian decorated rooms leaves no detail overlooked, and the buffet breakfast is equally as impressive. See [hotelkungstradgarden.se](http://hotelkungstradgarden.se)

**HOW TO GET THERE**

Norwegian Shuttle Air ([norwegian.com](http://norwegian.com)) flies direct Nice-Stockholm daily and offers free in-flight Wi-Fi.

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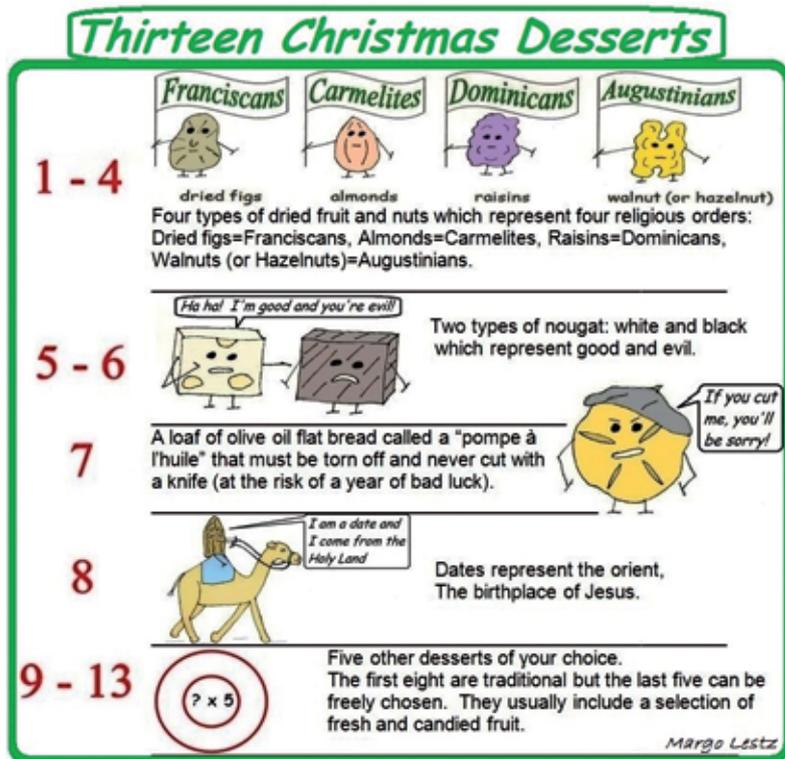


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# UNLUCKY THIRTEEN?

Not when it comes to dessert ... BY MARGO LESTZ



“beggars” portion stands for four monastic communities: walnuts stand for the Augustinians, almonds for the Carmelites, raisins for the Dominicans, and figs for the Franciscans; fresh fruit (a platter typically of oranges, apples, and grapes, which counts as one dessert) and pastries – *fougasse* or *pompe à l'huile*, broken into pieces by hand eaten with jam made from the last harvest season, which protects one’s wealth from bankruptcy in the coming year.

### The Yule Log

ON Christmas day there is normally another large meal featuring turkey. After that the traditional *bûche de noël* (Yule log) cake is added to the other thirteen desserts. Yes, another dessert!

Originally, the *bûche* was a real log. The burning of the Christmas log is an ancient custom, which is now practiced only by those in possession of a big fireplace. In the olden days, people would search for the biggest log they could find, ideally coming from the trunk of a fruit or olive tree, and was meant to burn for a long time, at least three days or even for a week, until the first of January. Wine or olive oil would be poured over it before it was lit by the oldest member of the family amid wishes for a year of prosperity and happiness.

Since many modern homes and apartments are not equipped for burning tree trunks, what can be done? Well, the obvious solution is to make a cake that looks like a log. Its frosting is wavy to resemble tree bark and often little almond paste mushrooms and other decorations are added to it. This yummy log cake can count as one of the thirteen Christmas Eve desserts or it can be introduced the next day, after Christmas lunch (as dessert number fourteen).

No one knows exactly when eating cake took the place of burning a tree trunk but in my opinion it was a pretty good idea. ■  
 For more see [curiousrambler.com](http://curiousrambler.com)

CHRISTMAS in Provence and the South of France is full of customs and, as with all good traditions, food is usually involved.

### Miniature wheat fields

PREPARATIONS for the Christmas meal begin on December 4th, St Barbara’s Day, with the planting of wheat (in the kitchen, that is). Wheat germ is placed in small bowls lined with damp cotton, which will later be placed on the Christmas Eve dinner table or in the nativity *crèche*. If the green shoots grow tall and strong, inhabitants can expect a good and prosperous year; if not ... well let’s just say, you better make sure that you water your wheat sprouts!

### Réveillon: dinner by the numbers

THE *gros souper* (big dinner) eaten on Christmas Eve (*le Réveillon*) is rich in religious symbolism. Even if some of the sacred aspects have been forgotten, the traditions remain.

The holiday table is covered by three

white tablecloths, three candelabras and three dishes of wheat sprouts. After dinner, the desserts stay on the table for three days. The number three, of course, representing the Holy Trinity.

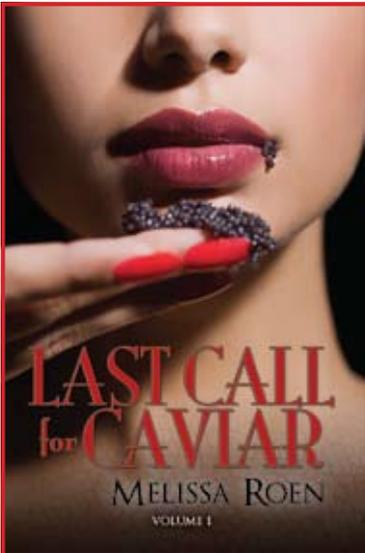
The meal is made up of seven meatless dishes. Normally a fishplate is served along with six vegetable dishes. The number seven represents the seven wounds of Jesus.

The dinner is accompanied by thirteen bread rolls and then followed by *Les Treize Desserts de Noël*. The number thirteen represents Jesus and his twelve disciples.

### Thirteen desserts

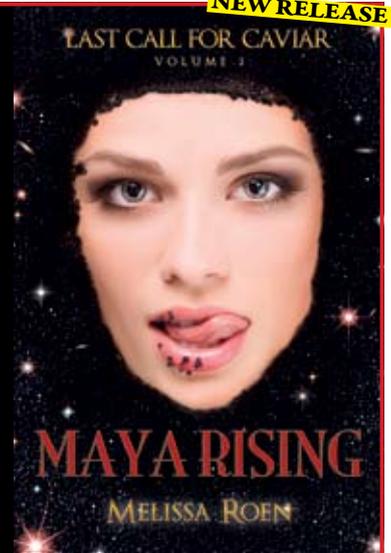
YES, you read that correctly, there are THIRTEEN desserts after dinner. This is definitely my kind of meal! And everyone is required to taste (at least a small bite) each one of them! It’s no surprise that the different types of dessert are also symbolic. Desserts fall into four categories. Candied (nougats, and the almond paste *calisson d’Aix*); dried nuts and fruit – the “four

NEW RELEASE



The year is 2019: humanity is imperilled. Governments are toppling; society collapsing, cataclysmic events roil the planet. Among the endangered billions, Maya Jade, searches for answers while fighting to stay alive.

Set on the decadent and treacherous Côte d'Azur, *Last Call for Caviar* and the sequel, *Maya Rising*, by Melissa Roen, chronicle an uncannily realistic future that is as fierce as it is fabulous.



For further information on where to purchase books, please visit: [lastcallforcaviar.com](http://lastcallforcaviar.com)  
Also available on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

# Getting naked with your wine

BY ALEX IGNATIEFF

WINE



THE weather is neither snowing nor frightful but no doubt about it, the festive season is here. Champagne must flow, too much must be eaten and pledges to never do it again made and ignored. My favourite time of year and no consequences that a gaudy Christmas jumper won't put right in a tick! But there is one thorny question that refuses to let us completely relax into the mayhem – what tittle to serve?

With stupendous nibbles, savoury and sweet, foie gras, turkey, goose, cheeses (one for every day of the year) and puddings, Christmas or otherwise, the festive table spread challenges even the most ardent oenophile. Yet with a tad more effort than it takes to make a quick trip round the supermarket specials, simple morsels can be made glorious with the perfect liquid companion.

There are a few golden rules to help: white wine for fish and white meat, red for red meat, sweet wines for sweet dishes and so on ... but more important is understanding the reasoning that lies behind these.

A few years ago I had the chance to visit the Beringer winery in the Napa Valley. They were working very closely with the Napa Culinary Institute and showcased their wine with dramatic taste

discoveries. The attention-grabbers were steak paired with one of their Napa Chardonnays and a filet of salmon with a Napa Cabernet – both, served without any sauces or sides, worked brilliantly. Without the additional flavours that usually accompany a steak, its natural sugar worked with the sweetness of the Chardonnay fruit and the wine had enough structure from its wood handling to live up to the weight of the beef. Inversely, the naked salmon, plus some healthy caramelised charring to work with the red, in turn had enough sunny softness to not overpower a meaty fish like salmon.

Out of the classroom, one steak is not the same as the next. So much depends on those little Nigella touches and what it is served with. Match the weight of the dish and then it is a question of picking a wine with good acidity or astringency to cut through the sauces, sides and centres. Typically, a good Burgundy (RED!) will meet this brief. And it's no coincidence that the wine of a region is usually a perfect partner for classic local dishes. Sancerre works brilliantly with goat's cheese and river fish or fish in general. Bordeaux whites with seafood and oysters while the reds match perfectly with lamb or *magret de canard*. A hearty cassoulet demands a hearty Languedoc red.

It's all about balance: don't overpower either your wine or your dish, hence fish with more delicate whites, a rich creamy sauce needs a wine of healthy acidity. That same wine might be tart and mean with a more meaty sauce, which needs something rounder and fuller. Always match a sugary dish with a sweeter wine and spicy heat can be tamed by a bit of sweetness.

Getting specific for the season, I can't go past champagne as an icebreaker. Crisp, clean and relatively light, it's the perfect foil for a gamut of canapés and starters and is sublime with oysters. Maybe something off-dry like a Monbazillac for the few that don't like the show (or acidity)! Classic white Burgundy with its weight and cleansing finish is the perfect accompaniment to any seasonal bird. Mind you, so is a classic Claret, if served with all the trimmings. A flamed Christmas Pud is always tricky but a rich Sherry or Pedro Ximénez works, maybe a Banyuls or why not just go straight for the Cognac! But these are all classic examples of proven styles, keep the styles and explore to your heart's content. ■

For more recommendations see [emporiumduvin.com](http://emporiumduvin.com)

# ON THE RUN FROM SCHOOL MUMS

BY DAN BRIGGS



DEAR reader you will not believe what happened this month. So far, this story has been one of social mishap after social mishap, of exclusion and self-doubt and, above all, a gnawing worry about the fate of our children within the French school system.

I've woken in the middle of the night with the same sick feeling in the pit of my stomach that I last had on the eve of exams in my teenage years. During the day I'm accompanied by a continual, jittery, nervous exhaustion. I'm the gregarious sort and the daily exclusion from society, which has become my diet, sits badly with my psyche.

To date, each time I've tried to break out of my linguistic cage, ignominy has resulted. But not this month. This month, the Mums at the school gate actually approached me. They solicited my opinion, guided me through an alien process. It was as if the entire French nation, or at least the population of my village, had taken a charm course from American waiters. I kept waiting for them to ask for the tip.

Here's what happened. It was a day like any other. Cathy left for work and I shoved as much food as possible down the kids. Toast, cereal and then to finish off, a couple of pancakes each. Overkill and a sure path to obesity you might think,

French school?

Answer: Looking after them yourself.

Clocks in Provence strike the hour twice. The first time is just a warning, to hurry up the forever tardy locals. The second time is the real deal.

The head teacher is known to be ruthless. No excuse is a plausible one in her eye. Neither a washing machine flood, a pet cat stuck up a tree, nor even an appeal to the gastronomic soul of France, a soufflé rising in the oven, could sway her delight in barring the door on the second strike of the hour.

But at 9.05 the door remained open. My children passed through without objection. A paper and a pain au chocolat were next on my agenda.

"*Avez-vous voté?*" asked one of the Mums who'd gathered in a huddle around the gates.

"*Oui,*" I answered, pretending to understand while weighing up whether to order a *café* or a *café crème*.

Before I could be corrected I headed off.

My phone rang several times during the day. Not recognising the number and being pathologically scared of unplanned French conversation, I forwarded to voice mail. There were messages, but there was also no chance of me understanding them. I continued with my freelance article for "Home and

yet when there's an outside chance of pig's trotters for lunch, it pays to take precautions.

And so we flew out the door with minutes left before the school gates were due to shut. My insistence on that final carb boost of pancakes had put my day ahead in jeopardy.

Question:

What's worse than sending your kids to

Garden" about the benefits of the judicious planting of late blooming plants. An elaborate phrase here and a quick dose of Wikipedia there was all it needed.

Then there was a knock at the door.

I was greeted by a delegation of Mothers all smiling sweetly. A round-faced plump one was pushed forward. She began tentatively in halting English.

"Hello, Dan, I ave beeeen phone you."

I nodded.

"You ave not voted."

At this point I was consumed by embarrassment. Was I so detached from French life that I hadn't realised there was a general election going on? Hollande's number was finally up. I hadn't even known I had the right to vote. But it was a nice feeling to suddenly matter.

When we arrived at the school I was ushered into the head teacher's office. In the corner was a curtained-off polling booth. Now was not the time to mention that in a tight constituency my Mother had once been driven to the voting station by a member of the Conservative party only to cast her vote for Labour.

"Who do you want me to vote for?" I asked.

The question seemed to flummox the Mothers. The curtain parted. I flexed my voting fingers.

"Hollande?" I asked.

Suddenly I was the funniest man alive. The surrounding Mums burst into laughter.

"It is the Eenglish sense of humour," said the plump one by way of explanation. "We love it."

"No, but who do you want me to vote for?" I asked exasperated. "Hollande or the other one?"

Again they laughed, shoving me into the polling booth, and closing the curtain behind me.

Only when I saw the ballot paper did I realise that the elections I had been brought to vote in, were for the Parent's Teachers Association. ■

To read more about the trials and tribulations of Dan Briggs see [provenceguru.com](http://provenceguru.com)

## HELPING HANDS



Mim Kay (above), President of the Bereavement Network of the Var ([bsnvar.org](http://bsnvar.org)), is campaigning for new volunteers to help with their much-needed work with the bereaved and the terminally ill.

A welcoming and supportive group of both men and women meet once a month in Flayosc, Var. Are you a good listener, sympathetic, patient, nonjudgemental and above all able to remain confidential? BNV invites those interested to come along to see for themselves if this is the kind of work that would suit them.

There is ongoing training available for all volunteers, and they pay travel and phone expenses whenever needed. For further information, contact Mim Kay on 04 94 04 78 94 or by email [Mim2Kay@aol.com](mailto:Mim2Kay@aol.com)



THE skies in Menton were blackened at noon on September 9th as 80 hectares of woodland went up in smoke in the hills above Garavan. As you may have unfortunately seen, the damage to nature has been pretty dreadful.

The Menton Rotary Club and its 61 members are joining

forces to rebuild and preserve the environment, and have decided to devote one of its most important fundraisers – the Broc Troc – to the reforestation of part of the destroyed forest.

The Broc Troc, one of the Alpes-Maritimes' largest *vide grenier*, is well known in Menton. In 2016, it celebrates its 25th anniversary January 23rd and 24th at the Palace of Europe, where both individuals and professionals will set up shop.

For information or to make a donation, contact Philippe Regoli 06 85 34 57 65 or [direction.itm@sasdiscar.com](mailto:direction.itm@sasdiscar.com)

## MONACO IN 3D

NO, you don't have to fork out €2.50 for a pair of special glasses. Monaco is participating in a reef reconstruction project that will see the implantation of six 3D-printed coral reef structures – each weighing a massive 2.5 tons – in the Larvotto reserve in 2016 to help sustain its endangered ecosystem, where a one-degree temperature rise in the seawater can cause increased carbon dioxide levels in the water and wreak havoc on the already fragile reefs.

Boskalis, the Netherlands-based maritime services company contracted by the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, is behind the installation. Says Philippe Mondielli, the Foundation's Scientific Director, "The goal is for the biodiversity in these waters to appropriate the reefs and colonize them as they do in nature."

Each reef structure – measuring 1.2 x 2 meters and taking 13 hours to print – is made of dolomite sand and will be installed 27 metres underwater.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

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# OLIVES ON THE FRENCH RIVIERA

BY CHRISSIE MCCLATCHIE

GRAPE harvest season may be well and truly over, but the shorter days and cooler nights of November can only mean one thing – olives on the French Riviera. The harvest season officially kicked off on October 27th.

When we think of olives, especially olive oil, our minds tend to drift toward our Italian neighbours, but there is a thriving culture for this small oval fruit here on the Côte d'Azur. Many olive groves of the region are found next to the grapevines of our local vineyards and it's at this time that they boast ripe fruit, ready to be plucked from trees and made into oil, tapenade, or eaten simply au naturel (after a bit of

time resting in brine, of course!).

The Alpes-Maritimes is home to the Cailletier variety of olive, better known across the border as Taggiasca – for the pretty village of Taggia just next to San Remo. Yet here in the 06, the variety flourishes, not just in unison with vines but also independently. I was surprised to learn just how much artisanal olive production exists in our department.

The Cailletier is recognised for being mild and fruity, producing an olive oil that offers almond and artichoke aromas. It's a tasty seasoning for your salads, especially a *salade niçoise*. Tapenade is another typical food of Nice made with olives, anchovies,

salt and olive oil. Without the fishy ingredient, the same dish is known simply as *pâte d'olive* (olive paste).

In the hills behind Nice, the Bellet vineyards at Domaine de la Source is one of France's smallest. Here, you can taste olive oil, tapenade and sweet or savoury olive paste from organic olive trees on the estate alongside their wines during a visit. Domaine Saint-Jean, Domaine de Toasc, Domaine de Vinceline and Clos Saint-Vincent produce and sell an olive oil as well.

Just as the wine from Nice has its own appellation (AOC Bellet), the olives of Nice and surrounds fall under the AOP Olive de Nice and AOP Huile d'Olive de



Nice. This appellation covers the majority of the Alpes-Maritimes, extending from the Grasse hinterlands down to the coast in Menton. The olive oil from this appellation is very highly regarded and demand completely outstrips supply.

Here are a few suggestions: The Moulin d'Opio, circa 19th century, proposes a guided tour of both the traditional and modern mill, as well as a tasting of their produce. In Grasse, Huilerie Sainte Anne dates back to 1706



Other vineyards that boast olive groves in the region, include the Abbaye de Lérins on the Île Saint Honorat off Cannes, Domaine Saint Joseph in Tourettes-sur-Loup and the Vignoble de Hautes Collines de la Côte d'Azur in Saint-Jeannet. The latter lays claim to what must be the oldest olive tree in the region at (apparently) 2000 years old. Still bearing an impressive amount of fruit each year, the owner claims the tree in question dates back to the Roman era.

The local olive industry, exclusive of vineyards, is thriving: over 300,000 olive trees are declared within the department.

The very useful "Routes des Oliviers des Alpes-Maritimes" from the *Syndicat Interprofessionnel de l'Olive de Nice* outlines six suggested olive routes. Centred around Grasse, the villages to the east and west of the Var valley, in the hills behind Nice and the route from La Turbie to Sospel, this map highlights the array of artisanal producers in corners of this region least expected.

Many of the local producers sell their wares at produce markets; however, if you can head out into the countryside a world of olive mills, olive groves and gourmet treats await.

and offers tastings and a tour of their picturesque site and authentic mill.

Across in Colomars, the Oliveraie de la Sirole may only have started in 1992, but their restaurant, L'Oliveraie, is a local institution and offers traditional cuisine, using their homemade olive products.

A small exhibition devoted to olive cultivation and olive oil fabrication can be visited alongside the olive mill in the pretty town of Contes, just behind Nice.

If you are looking for a complete olive immersion, Maison Saint Joseph in Sospel is a bed and breakfast surrounded by olive groves, so you can taste and stay. Be sure to phone ahead.

Don't forget, Saturday November 28th marks the *Portes Ouvertes des Moulins à Huile des Alpes-Maritimes*, when local olive mills throw open their doors so that you can discover the secrets to olive oil production.

*Bon dégustation!* ■  
For more on Nice olives, see [olivedenice-aop.com](http://olivedenice-aop.com).  
Chrissie McClatchie is an Australian wine specialist who has been living in Nice for the past seven years. Follow her travels at [rivieragrapevine.com](http://rivieragrapevine.com) or on Twitter @RivieraGrape



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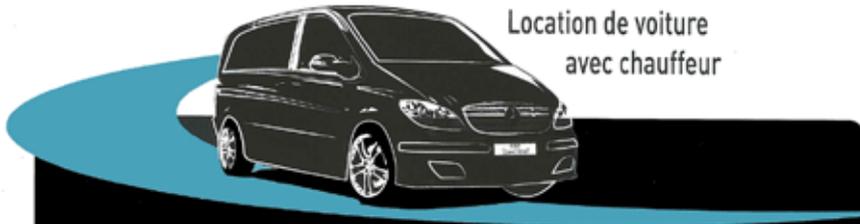
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# we've got mail...

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## HIDDEN MEANINGS

I HAVE been following the Tour de France for many years (next year it's from July 2nd to 24th) but have never before noticed the clever hidden graphic in the logo. The R is a man on a bicycle and the yellow spot, which I have always seen as the sun, is also his front wheel.

*Peter Caine, St Tropez*



## FLOOD OUT

HERE is a status report two weeks after the flood and mudslides. The storm was so bad that a nearby river burst its banks and all areas near to it; areas with underground rivers or areas with a “run-off” from the hills behind (like us) were swamped in a high water and mudslide and many cars were washed away doing much damage as they were propelled downwards.

Telecommunications: We still have no landline telephone or internet/Wi-Fi. France Telecom/Orange estimates another week before full service is restored. Meanwhile, Burton can make calls, send and receive texts and emails with his mobile phone but Jackie's service has been seriously disrupted. She has received no emails since October 3rd on any of her four addresses. She cannot access her database so all email addresses and phone numbers not on her mobile are also not available.

Apartment access: We are told that our elevator/lift/ascenseur may not be repaired until perhaps December. We must climb 6 flights (120 steps) each direction or 240 steps round trip. And with high ceilings here this is a lot for us, particularly with shopping. Exercise? Fatigue?

Cars: Our two classic convertibles/cabriolets were both engulfed by the mudslides and cannot be saved. They are both write-offs. Jackie's Pinin Farina

designed Peugeot 306 and my Mercedes E-Class are gone. Meanwhile a very good friend has lent us his wife's car while she is away for the next three weeks. After that we will have to hire a car until the insurance claim is paid out.

Possessions: The mudslides invaded our three basement areas, and all our cherished memorabilia, art, books, etc. are lost, together with many other items and paperwork we had stored there. Although all the water has been suctioned out by large trucks, the mud remains.

Insurance: President Hollande visited our area and proclaimed it a Natural Disaster Zone, which should permit claims to be resolved in three months. We shall see. The amounts will also need negotiation. (A bit of dark humour: our insurance broker's office was flooded and his computers and records lost. He will now need to claim against his own company!)

Our apartment: The kitchen sinks were blocked from far below by the mud and it was only due to the perseverance of our plumber and his long “snake” that we can now use it again. The electric flickered on and off several times during the storm and our kitchen fridge has not started again, so we had to throw away much food and all frozen items. So far no mechanic will come up to the top but we will persevere.

Our car park entrance: Has been fixed giving us the required security again (the gate was knocked off its hinges by cars propelled along by the flood).

Life and Death: We are healthy and safe and (relatively) dry, but stressed. Fortunately our electric has stayed on. A neighbour in the very next building was attempting to return home during the storm; his body was found on the beach the next morning, near to two cars that were washed out to sea. 21 people died. The high water/mud line on my garage door was 1.5 meters/5 feet.

Strangely there was no flood from the sea so beach restaurants were open the next day!

*Burton and Jackie Gintell, Cannes, 18/10/15*

## BIG BROTHER IS STILL WITH US

THERE are hundreds of surveillance cameras in Nice. Parisians and Londoners

have often complained about the CCTV cameras, which have been filming many central streets and public areas in recent years. In the light of recent events this much-decried “invasion of privacy” seems more and more necessary. We'd better get used to being followed by Big Brother everywhere we go.

The bad guys have the upper hand because we live in open societies. We can freely get on or off a train or bus, go to the theatre, sit for hours in a café, watch a sporting event. It's part of what we call “freedom” and it's what makes our lives worth living.

Terrorists are taking this from us. We have to find ways to win the fight.

*Kenneth Braden, Menton*

## WHITE FLAGGERS

IN light of recent events, my fellow Americans who are so quick to vilify the French for being “white flag specialists” would do well to remember that talk is cheap. American territory was never occupied by a merciless foe so we don't know what our reaction would have been. Unlike the French, no Nazi officer has ever held his pistol to the head of an American child to subjugate its parents. At the moment, France is showing exceptional determination, resilience and courage in the fight against an extremist menace on French territory — a menace that threatens us all. They are also paying the price. *Merci, et Vive la France!*

*Kurt Wells, Monaco*

## HUNTING ACCIDENTS

THERE'S no sympathy in our household for hunters who shoot each other [issue 171, pg 5]. They reap what they sow. Far too many dog walkers and mushroom gatherers are victims of their bloody “sport”. Couldn't they leave us at least one day a week to enjoy the outdoors without risking death by firearm?

*Lynne Heath, St Vallier*

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### POSTING HOPE

I TRIED not to watch too much of the coverage on the Paris shootings, not because I wasn't profoundly concerned, but rather to avoid the graphic images. Instead, I followed social media, and wanted to share two posts. The first is on YouTube: "I won't give you the gift of hating you" – Antoine Leiris. The second is a Facebook post from Isobel Bowdery, a South African who survived the Bataclan concert hall shootings:

"You never think it will happen to you. It was just a Friday night at a rock show. The atmosphere was so happy and everyone was dancing and smiling, and then when the men came through the front entrance and began the shooting, we naively believed it was all part of the show. It wasn't just a terrorist attack, it was a massacre. Dozens of people were shot right in front of me. Pools of blood filled the floor. Cries of grown men who held their girlfriends' dead bodies pierced the small music venue. Futures demolished, families heartbroken. In an instant. Shocked and alone, I pretended to be dead for over an hour, lying among people who could see their loved ones motionless. Holding my breath, trying to not move, not cry – not giving those men the fear they longed to see. I was incredibly lucky to survive. But so many didn't. The people who had been

there for the exact same reasons as I – to have a fun Friday night were innocent. This world is cruel. And acts like this are supposed to highlight the depravity of humans and the images of those men circling us like vultures will haunt me for the rest of my life. The way they maliciously aimed and shot people around the standing area I was in the centre of without any consideration for human life. It didn't feel real. I expected any moment for someone to say it was just a nightmare. But being a survivor of this horror lets me shine light on the heroes. To the man who reassured me and put his life on the line to try and cover my brain while I whimpered, to the couple whose last words of love kept me believing the good in the world, to the police who succeeded in rescuing hundreds of people, to the complete strangers who picked me up from the road and consoled me during the 45 minutes I truly believed the boy I loved was dead, to the injured man who I had mistaken for him and then on my recognition that he was not Amaury, held me and told me everything was going to be fine despite being all alone and scared himself, to the woman who opened her doors to the survivors, to the friend who offered me shelter and went out to buy new clothes so I wouldn't have to wear this blood-stained top, to all of you who have sent caring messages of support – you make me believe this world has the potential to be better, to never let this happen again, but most of this is to the 80 people who were murdered inside that venue, who weren't as lucky, who didn't get to wake up today and to all the pain that their friends and families are going through. I am so sorry.

## LETTERS

There's nothing that will fix the pain. I feel privileged to be there for their last breaths. And truly believing that I would join them, I promise that their last thoughts were not on the animals who caused all this. It was thinking of the people they loved. As I lay down in the blood of strangers and waiting for my bullet to end my mere 22 years, I envisioned every face that I have ever loved and whispered I love you. Over and over again, reflecting on the highlights of my life. Wishing that those I love knew just how much, wishing that they knew that no matter what happened to me, to keep believing in the good in people, to not let those men win. Last night, the lives of many were forever changed and it is up to us to be better people, to live lives that the innocent victims of this tragedy dreamt about but sadly will now never be able to fulfil. RIP angels. You will never be forgotten."

*Debbi G., by email, Nice*

### YOU WANT BACON WITH THAT?

I WALKED out of a restaurant in the UK recently because my "full English breakfast" did not include bacon. I asked why and was told "because of our Muslim customers". I pointed out that there weren't any and even if there were, nobody forces them to eat bacon, so my choice is being driven by the perceived choice of another culture.

Absurd. I don't expect to get bacon in Tel Aviv or Jeddah but in the UK I do. PC rubbish!  
*P. Michaels, by email*

*See page 46 to learn about your rights in restaurants in France.*

# Seven things that may have happened to you at a restaurant ... but are actually illegal

Last month, a customer filed a complaint with the police against a bistro in Draguignan that refused to sell him a hot drink after 5pm. Nice-Matin journalist Benoit Guglielmi spoke with Marc Ghioldi, a Nice-based lawyer who deals in consumer law. "Remember," says M<sup>e</sup> Ghioldi, regarding these laws, that "a judge has the ultimate power to assess the facts in each case."



## 1. After hours

**The scenario:** It's 7pm, *apéros* are being served on the terrace. I sit and order an espresso. "Sorry, we don't serve hot drinks at this hour."

**What the law says:** "According to Article L.122-1 of the Consumer Code it is a refusal to sell except for a "legitimate reason" (ie the coffee machine is broken). Restaurant owners are liable in this case to a €1,500 fine, and double for repeat offenses."

## 2. Expecting someone?

**The scenario:** I'm taking my sweetheart to dinner. At the back of the room, in a quiet corner, there's a round table, not reserved. This is the last available table and seems ideal for our evening tête-à-tête ... but it's set for five. The waiter politely refuses to seat me.

**What the law says:** "As in the previous example, it is a refusal of regulated sale by article L.122-1 of the Code of consumption, so illegal."

## 3. One for the road

**The scenario:** The bistro terrace is sunny. I

sit with a book, while sipping my strawberry milk. Time passes (the book is good) but the waiter soon pushes me to a calcium overdose, order another or free up the table.

**What the law says:** "This case is very common but unregulated.

There is no requirement to consume/order more, provided you can justify having already ordered once. So consider keeping the bill. In 1987, the DGCCRF (General Directorate for Competition Policy, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control) estimated that 'the obligation to renew consumption, which is not explicitly provided for in any text, is a tolerance that may be justified by a manager of a café that is lacking space, especially during peak hours.' However that opinion has no legal value."

## 4. Bringing your own snacks

**The scenario:** I sit at a bar, order a soda and take a sandwich out of my bag. The waiter makes a face and refuses to let me eat my snack on the premises.

**What the law says:** "The bistro is in illegality, unless a sign outside of the establishment clearly states this."

## 5. Drink per person

**The scenario:** There are three of us at the bar, but without a penny between us. We order a water with syrup and three straws. The barkeeper says we have to order three drinks.

**What the law says:** "The law is silent on this case. The bistro cannot deny you your syrup (that would be, again, a refusal to sell), but it may deny you the straws or additional glasses. And if the presence of non-consumers causes him damage (lack of space, customers waiting for a table to eat), then he can ask you to leave the premises. Also note: it's possible non-consumers can be charged if 'droit de couvert' is clearly displayed on the menu outside."

## 6. Get it to go

**The scenario:** The famous risotto was very filling. It was worth trying this small wine producer, and I paid for the whole bottle ... but I have to drive.

**What the law says:** "If you do not finish your bottle, the restaurant has no right to refuse you from taking it with you, however, they can charge you the price of the deposit. The same goes for food: the restaurant cannot prevent you from taking your leftovers, but they are not required to provide doggy-bags. Note however that the law 'Grenelle 2', starting from January 1st, 2016, will charge any restaurant owners who produce 10 tons of waste a year. They will now have an economic incentive to offer a doggy-bag."

## 7. Baby on board

**The scenario:** It's been a few months since baby left the maternity wing. Grandma is not available and the nanny is off this weekend. I want to try a new restaurant. Except, you know, "the stroller will get in the way of the waiters." And the diapers, they smell ... and a baby that cries ...

**What the law says:** "A restaurant cannot deny you from entering as this would be a case of discrimination falling within the scope of Article 225-1 of the Criminal Code. Penalties can be up to three years imprisonment and a €45,000 fine.

"Parents can be asked to leave if their child is making noise that disturbs other clients, but a ban cannot happen before the disturbance." ■

## november



### SWEDISH XMAS FAIR

Sat Nov 21 & Sun Nov 22:  
The Christmas fair is held at Villa Ingeborg, 40 avenue de Verdun, Cagnes-sur-Mer.



### COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF THE RIVIERA ANNUAL DINNER

Thurs Nov 26: Annual dinner.  
Details on: [commonwealthclubriviera.com](http://commonwealthclubriviera.com)



### SWEDISH CHURCH VAR

Sat Nov 28, 11h: The first Advent, Swedish Church service in Belgentier, Var, with lunch. €35.

### FRANCE-ETATS UNIS

Mondays, 16-17h30: English study groups at Holy Trinity Parish Hall, Nice, organized by Jacquie, animated by Jacquie and Kimberly. Tuesdays, taught by Andy, 15h30-17h.

## december



### SANTON FAIR

Until Dec 24, 14h-18h:  
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### BAM

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Fri Dec 4 & Fri Dec 18, 15h-17h: Friendship Club.  
See [bam-monaco.org](http://bam-monaco.org)

### POLITICAL WINE: WHO IS HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON?

Wed Dec 2, 18h30-20h: With Democrats Abroad at the Bazar Café (5 rue de France, Nice). Presenter is Joseph Voelker. Price: order at least 1 drink at the bar. This social is open to all our members and guests. You'll find the full listing of Political Wines at: [democratsabroad.org](http://democratsabroad.org).

# christmas markets



Fête de la bûche in the autonomous Commune Libre du Safranier in Antibes

## cannes

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## menton

Fri Dec 4 to Sun Jan 3

This year's theme: "Scandinavian Christmas". The market is open 10h-19h. Discover toys, jewellery, olive wood objects, musical instruments, essential oils and candles, and then of course chocolates, nougat, sweets, foie gras, waffles, mentonnaises specialties and Christmas trees ... at its usual place along the Esplanade Francis Palmero. [tourisme-menton.fr](http://tourisme-menton.fr)

## monaco

Fri Dec 4 to Sun Jan 3

At Quai Albert 1er. Chalets selling regional specialties for the gourmet, a skating rink for kids of all ages and lots of entertainment. Market is open daily from 11h-21h and until 22h on Fri and Sat. Dec 24 it closes at 19h30 but it's open on Christmas and New Year's Day from 14h30-22h. [mairie.mc](http://mairie.mc)

## mouans sartoux

Sun Dec 6

From 9h-18h: 250 exhibitors will be on hand with crafts, toys, jewellery, homemade cookies, honey, chocolates, foie gras, wine, cheese ... a plethora of ideas for Christmas gifts and decorate tables during Christmas and New Year. Throughout the day, singing competitions and games for children lead to Santa's surprise arrival and giving out candies and small gifts. Sat Dec 12, from 19h, the Fête de la Lumière is at place des Anciens Combattants. Information at the Tourist Office: [mouans-sartoux.com](http://mouans-sartoux.com)

## nice SEE PG 11

Fri Dec 4 to Sun Jan 3

Daily 11h-20h (21h Fri & Sat) at Place Masséna. 60 chalets, selling a wide range of handicrafts mainly Christmas products, a signature Ferris Wheel, amusement park and skating rink with 1-hour sessions from 11h (bring gloves and ID; €5). Place Masséna and Place Garibaldi will have free shows and activities for younger audiences on weekends and school holidays. All shapes and sizes of real Christmas trees for sale on the Prom the week before Dec 25th. [en.nicetourisme.com](http://en.nicetourisme.com)

## sainte-maxime

Sat Dec 12 to Sun Jan 4

Visit Santa in his magical village under a 700m<sup>2</sup> heated tent (free entry). Kids can post letters to Santa and get their photo taken with the man in red Dec 23 to Dec 25. Open daily from 11h-18h30, except Christmas and New Year's day (14h-19h). [sainte-maxime.com](http://sainte-maxime.com)

## valbonne

Sun Dec 20 to Thurs Dec 24

With more than 80 exhibitors (daily from 9h) offering gift ideas for the holidays. Performances, workshops and activities for children, a petting zoo, photos with Santa Claus. At Place des Arcades and in village streets. Free entry. [tourisme-valbonne.com](http://tourisme-valbonne.com)

## vence

Fri Dec 11 to Sun Jan 3

Place du Grand Jardin showcases local producers and artisans selling figurines, pottery, jewellery, paintings, hats etc. Entertainment and performances will continue throughout the month and a skating rink will be set up from Dec 19. [vence-tourisme.com](http://vence-tourisme.com)

**SING-ALONG & FOOTBALL SWEDISH CLUB**

Thurs Dec 3, 18h: Come and sing with Åsa Söderberg and the Riviera Choir at Villa Ingeborg, Cagnes-sur-Mer. Drinks and snacks. €15.  
 Fri Dec 5-Sat Dec 6, 20h: Allianz Arena OGC Nice-Paris Saint Germain and Zlatan Ibrahimovic visits Nice. VIP tickets. Open bar. €135.  
 Thurs Dec 10, 18h: After Work at Hôtel Ellington, Nice.

 **FRANCE-GRANDE BRETAGNE NICE**

Fri Dec 4: Guided Tour: Musée des Beaux Arts Jules Chéret, Nice.  
 Thurs Dec 10: Christmas Lunch in a restaurant in Nice. Tel: 04 93 81 76 74 or see [fgb-nice.com](http://fgb-nice.com)

 **AMIAC**

Fri Dec 4: Christmas lunch at The Carlton Cannes. Reservation and prepayment required, Forms from Doug Attwood on 04 92 97 50 72 or [dougattwood@orange.fr](mailto:dougattwood@orange.fr). See [amiac.org](http://amiac.org)

 **BA OF THE VAR**

Sat Dec 5: Christmas lunch with VIAC at St Aygulf. See [baofthevar.com](http://baofthevar.com)

 **RED NOSES IN MONACO**

Running up to Sun Dec 6: The association "Les Enfants de Frankie" has helped over 100,000 needy children in Monaco and the PACA Region. Its annual *Journée Monégasque des Nez Rouge* is Dec 6, but the €2 spongy red ball for your car can be bought at tobacconists, post offices, some chemists and newspaper shops from the beginning of the month. All proceeds go to the charity, which is always looking for volunteers, members and donations. See [frankiemonaco.org](http://frankiemonaco.org)

 **ANNUAL KERMESSE**

Sat Dec 5, 10h-18h: in the Fontvieille Chapiteau, Monaco. Free entry. Tons of bargains: women's, men's & children's clothing, shoes, handbags, DVDs, CDs, English books, jewellery, gifts, kitchenware. Snack and bar open all day. Info on 06 78 63 28 01. Volunteers needed for jumble deliveries the week before: [merville@monaco.mc](mailto:merville@monaco.mc)

**ENSEMBLE VOCAL RISTRETTO: MESSIAH**

Sat Nov 27, 20h: For the second consecutive year, Errol Girdlestone will be directing Handel's masterpiece at St Paul's Church, Monte-Carlo, 22 ave de Grande Bretagne. Tickets €30. Errol has been in Ireland directing the Wexford Opera Chorus and the soloists for "Messiah" have been drawn from the WOC. The benefactor of this concert has made a commitment to underwrite the costs of future performances and is also making an effort to recruit other music lovers capable of joining him in covering the costs in the hope of establishing "Messiah" as a Riviera pre-Christmas tradition. See [ristrettovoices.com](http://ristrettovoices.com)

*For Church and Choir seasonal events see pg 33*

**AMERICAN CLUB OF THE RIVIERA**

Tues Dec 8: "In the footsteps of Cezanne". A coach trip to Aix-en-Provence. For more info, see [americanclubriviera.com](http://americanclubriviera.com) or call Jeanette on 06 48 62 39 72.

 **BAM**

Thurs Dec 10, noon: Christmas Lunch at Auto-mobile Club de Monaco. See [bam-monaco.org](http://bam-monaco.org)

 **FRANCE-GRANDE-BRETAGNE CANNES**

Sat Dec 12, 12h30: Christmas lunch at Voile Bleu restaurant at port in La Napoule. For info pls call Iris on 04 93 97 86 32 - Odette on 04 93 49 37 01 or leave a message.

 **CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

Sun Dec 13, 18h: Salle des fêtes in Bras. For details: [prvcetatsunis@aol.com](mailto:prvcetatsunis@aol.com)

 **BA CANNES**

Tues Dec 15, 12h30: Christmas Lunch at Le Clos Cosette in Vallauris. Cost €30. To book pls call Giles Williams: 04 93 94 04 56 or [britishassociationcannesinfo@gmail.com](mailto:britishassociationcannesinfo@gmail.com)

**PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S NETWORK**

Tues Dec 15, 19h-22h: "Change Management" evening seminar with Liam Forde. Joint event with Project Management Institute at SKEMA Business School.

 **PYA CHRISTMAS BALL**

Fri Dec 18: Annual fundraising Christmas Ball at the prestigious Carlton Hotel in Cannes. This year, the ball will be bigger and better than ever before, with a cocktail reception, a 3-course gourmet dinner in the grand ballroom, music from the legendary Blah Blah, prizes to be won, photobooth and more surprises in store. It is guaranteed to kick off the festive season with a bang! Dress: Black tie with a twist of turquoise. Tickets: €150/person non-members; €135/person members or for table of 10. See [pya.org](http://pya.org)

 **SUNNY BANK XMAS TEA PARTY**

Fri Dec 18, 16h30: Christmas carols for the residents at Victoria Residence by the Riviera International Singers followed by tea.  
 Sat Dec 19, 10h-15h: Sunny Bank Open House with a Christmas theme and Christmas lunch.

**"WELCOME WINTER" PARTY**

Mon Dec 21: For France-Etats Unis members and their guests at Holy Trinity Parish Hall, Nice. Reservations necessary. Jacquie: [Jacquie.berben@wanadoo.fr](mailto:Jacquie.berben@wanadoo.fr) or 06 08 36 67 58. A reminder, January 2016 is dues month. Still only €40 for the year.

**NEW YEAR'S FIREWORKS**

Thurs Dec 31: at midnight New Year's Eve at Quai Albert 1er in Monaco (along with a DJ from 21h30-3h). Fri Jan 1: At the Baie de Juan-Les-Pins, 18h.

# january

**HOLY TRINITY CANNES**

Wed Jan 6, 10:30: Holy Communion service for Epiphany. Regular Events: Every Wed, English Library at 11h and lunch at 12h30. Every Thurs Keep Fit at 10h. See [holytrinitycannes.org](http://holytrinitycannes.org)

**40TH INT'L CIRCUS FESTIVAL MONTE-CARLO**

Thurs Jan 14 to Sun Jan 24: Golden Shows - The Best Of. See [montecarlofestival.mc](http://montecarlofestival.mc)

**BA VAR**

Fri Jan 15: lunch at Bellevue, Moissac Bellevue. See [baofthevar.com](http://baofthevar.com)

**AMIAC**

Thurs Jan 21: Le Bois Doré Valbonne. Reservation please telephone Douglas Goldin on 04 92 94 02 47 or through [amiac.org](http://amiac.org)

**AGM AMERICAN CLUB OF THE RIVIERA**

Sat Jan 23: AGM and lunch at a Nice hotel. For full information, see [americanclubriviera.com](http://americanclubriviera.com) or call Jaber on 0670 30 63 18.

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### MISC

**THE FRANCE-GRANDE-  
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holds French and English classes from beginners to advanced including conversation every Saturday from 3rd October 2015 from 2pm to 5pm followed by tea and biscuits. We also organise a social event every month.  
We are on the first floor of the Maison des Association Cannes, 9 rue Louis Braille, in Cannes (behind the train station off rue d'Alsace).  
Parking free and available.  
More info: **Tel. Iris on 04 93 97 86 32 or Odette on 04 93 49 37 01**

### CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEA

Nice-based food writer Rosa Jackson offers market tours and hands-on cooking classes in English for visitors and residents. Courses range from one to five days; discounts are available for residents who sign up for several classes. For more see:  
[www.petitsfarcis.com](http://www.petitsfarcis.com)

**English American Library, 12 rue de France, Nice.** Open 10-11 and 3-5 Tues to Sat. Closed Sun & Mon. 20,000 volumes of fiction, non-fiction & press in English. Memberships from €10/week for tourists or €30 yearly (plus €15 refundable deposit). See: [nice-english-library.org](http://nice-english-library.org)

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