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No 156 April/May 2013



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GUIDE**

**4 page centre
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MEADIA

A reminder that the French television program *Thalassa* will be broadcasting a special on yachting in Provence featuring Antibes. Look out for it on France3 on April 12 at 20h45 or view the replay, which should remain online for a few days.

Gourmet Deliveries and Green Riviera (see page 18) will be distributing the *Riviera Reporter* at the Antibes Yacht Show. Our cover photo is by marine photographer Ed Holt whose work will be profiled in a future issue.

We've been listening carefully to opinions of both readers and advertisers and so we hope you like the *Riviera Reporter's* new look. Golf is probably the most Anglo-oriented activity on the Riviera so we're happy to now have an expert on the team in the person of Nick Kent. His personal knowledge of the game, local courses and the people who run them has resulted in a new golf supplement in every issue. English is the predominant language in Pro Shops and Clubhouses along the Coast so if your favourite course doesn't yet distribute, promote or advertise itself in this magazine, why not have them contact us to arrange it? You can also follow Nick on twitter.com/RivieraGolfer

The Yellow Pages' public service and community numbers are now on the E-Directory at *RivieraReporter.com*. Over the past year our main site has risen to Google Page Rank 4 with almost 60,000 unique visitors and a fourfold increase in page views since this time last year.

A warm welcome to our new advertisers. Readers should remember that it's thanks to all our advertisers that this magazine can continue to publish and serve. Without these "Reporter Supporters", as we call them, you wouldn't be reading this free magazine.

Our long-term advertiser, Nicky Cooper has sold The Cutting Shop in Antibes and after a summer break will be opening a new hair salon in another town. We'll keep you posted.

Our next issue comes out during the Cannes Film Festival (see page 29). **Mike Meade**

Cover Photo: Cannes
© Ed Holt Photography
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QR: Download this issue to your iPad or Smartphone by scanning the QR code.

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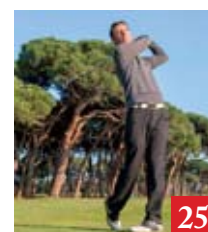
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MOVING ON THE RIVIERA GET IT RIGHT P37

le FLASH

Have it your way

A shocking report has dealt a blow to France where it hurts the most: in the cuisine. "In the land of gastronomy, fast food has become the king," *Le Point* wrote. Last year, fast food sales in France topped €34 billion, and surpassed traditional service restaurants for the first time. After the US, France is McDonald's second largest market with a €4.35 billion turnover in 2012; rival Quick saw sales up by 5 percent. The report also states that Gauls are the world's second biggest consumers of pizza (again after the US) scoffing down 1.6 billion last year, in addition to the 3 million sandwiches they ate.

€409

the amount per month women in Nice earn less (nearly €5000 a year) than a man doing the identical job and with the same skill level.

Featherweight division

Looking to start a fight? Saturday April 6th is World Pillow Fight Day. To find the one closest to you or to learn how to organise your own *bataille de polochons*, see <http://2013.pillowfightday.com>

Are you on board?

SNCF boss Guillaume Pepy has announced a crackdown on what he called "incivility" on trains and at stations. Such behaviour, he said, is "particularly bad in France" ... and the PACA (that's us) one of the worst areas for it. Examples of fines: feet on seat €45, playing loud music €45, smoking €68. One penalty seems a bit odd: €60 for leaning out of a train window ... not very easy on modern trains.



Royal: 47? 59!



Deneuve: 59? 69!

SMOOTH OPERATORS

BORN TO BE CHIC. Everyone knows that French women dress better than their British sisters. Now it turns out they have the secret of looking on average seven years younger than they actually are.

It must be true, British females have said so.

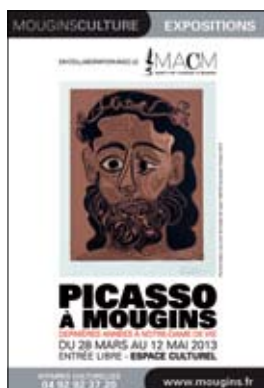
Those taking part in a survey were asked to look at photos of French women and guess their age. Segolene Royal, 59, was thought to be 12 years younger, Catherine Deneuve, 69, looks 59, and Juliette Binoche seems 41 rather than 49.

The ladies surveyed said that they thought what gave the French femmes the edge was their more intensive use of so-called "anti-ageing" creams. Madame can start sticking on the crease-filling slap at the age of 15 – on average French women start with this expensive way of holding back time five years before British women.

Given the price of these "miracle" products, they probably don't have enough cash left to spend on food, which is probably why they are annoyingly so much slimmer than buxom Brit babes.



Binoche: 41? 49!



PICASSO À MOUGINS. This year commemorates the 40th anniversary of Pablo Picasso's death at Notre-Dame-de-Vie in Mougins. The last twelve years of his life here are celebrated in this exceptional exhibition, including an extraordinary biographical display of photographs by his

confident and renowned photographer, Lucien Clergue. Organised by the Mougins Classical Art Museum (MACM) and the City of Mougins, *Picasso à Mougins* runs until May 12th and is open every day from 10h-12h30 and 14h-18h. Free admission. Visitors to the exhibition are offered a reduced admission to the MCAM. Info: 04 92 92 37 20.

La Nuit des Musées
(nuitdesmusees.culture.fr)
falls on Sat May 18th.
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FRANCE

Goldie Locks

KEYS seem to be more trouble on the Côte d'Azur than anywhere else. If you don't lose them yourself, then the family who have rented your place for the summer will do the job for you. If you lock yourself out in Cannes, then it's usually cheaper to rent a suite for the night at the Carlton than to call in an out-of-hours locksmith. A couple of incidents reported to us recently show how seriously a locked-out resident can be ripped off. One lady, who is not in the first flush of youth, found that the key had jammed in her (rented) apartment door just as she was about to leave for a few days Up North. It's natural for a bit of panic to set in, she couldn't leave the place open, her train was due to leave later that day.

She found a locksmith in the Yellow Pages, who came round and fixed the problem in no time, replacing the lock cylinder and handing over six keys after the lady in question had signed various bits of paper she did not take the time and effort (poor eyesight) to read.

He left with a cheque for €850 for a job that was later independently priced at €150. The lady, who tells us she is proud of her fighting spirit, took the bill and her sense of injustice to the *médiateur*, who is something like a Trading Standards Officer in the UK. She was confident she could seek redress under the legal offence of *abus de faiblesse*, which is



designed to protect people who are in a weak position for any reason – desperate, ill or old. She was told she shouldn't have signed the papers (one of which turned out to be an "estimate") and that nothing could be done.

A second incident reported to us with less detail involved a man who had locked himself out late at night and was charged €1300 for the out-of-hours service of another *serrurier*.

In both cases the locksmiths thrive and continue to operate legally. Hopefully these dreadful cases of exploitation will help readers to avoid being skinned alive – call a friend, ask for advice; don't act hastily, do all the paperwork before the guy gets out his gold-plated tool kit.

Time is on their side

FIGURES just out show the wide age gap that still exists in France between

retirement ages in different trades, despite reforms in 2003, 2008 and 2010 that tried to level the playing field.

Doctors, lawyers and similar professionals retire on average at 63.7 years, private company employees can expect to retire at 61.9 years, public sector employees who aren't actually desk-bound – a nurse, for instance – pack it in at 58.4 and train drivers (historically a very active and potentially dan-

gerous job, but when did you last go to work on a steam loco?) can happily start a second career backed by a pension at 55.1.

Pumping us dry

THE fact that France is not a consumer-led economy was brought home to diesel-driving staff on the *Riv Rep* by the reaction to the proposed rise in tax on *gazole* to bring prices into line with petrol at the pumps. This is seen as a "welcome shot in the arm for French refineries struggling with overcapacity" rather than a hefty kick in the goolies for Joe Motorist.

The move, proposed by the government's auditor at the end of March and supported by the French environment minister, is likely to run in to opposition from France's diesel carmakers and vocal professions such as farmers and truck drivers, experts reckoned.

But not much of a whimper is expected ➤

from those ordinary civilians who have brought diesel-engine vehicles to take advantage of lower fuel prices.

France's diesel imports account for €10 billion of the country's €61 billion energy deficit, but it produces too much petrol.

Diesel accounts for 80% of road fuel used in France. One litre of diesel costs €1.42 on average in France while petrol costs €1.62 – in the UK it's the other way around.

Diesel has been favoured by motorists and therefore carmakers on the basis that it offers greater fuel efficiency and lower carbon emissions.

But the "good fuel" argument has been questioned after the World Health Organisation suggested last year that diesel fumes can cause cancer.

A "Back to Gas" move is likely to take years however, and the government said no decision would be taken before a committee on environmental tax policy submits proposals in the coming months, after which the government would consider including measures in France's 2014 budget.

Nice to meet you

NICE is looking for volunteers to act as "greeters" to the city, a scheme first tried in New York some years back with success – Lynn Brooks wanted to share a slice of the Big Apple she loved with visitors in a personal way, not so much as a guide as an enthusiastic friend.

In Nice, volunteers must be willing

to give up half a day a month to singing the virtues of their city by the sea, taking visitors to places they themselves find special, rather than dots on the tourist map. They are also expected to be able to express with warmth and perhaps a touch of humour what makes Nice a great place to live. (Perhaps you can talk about the widening of the Promenade at Quai des Etats-Unis, which will start in November at a cost of €2 million.)

Speaking a foreign language would be helpful for the volunteers, but not we think essential, as many of the people using the service will be from other French cities. However, native English-speakers, Italians, Germans and Spanish who know French and love this very individual city would certainly be welcomed as ambassadors by the Nice Tourist Office, who are organising the initiative.

You can join up at nice-greeters.com

Spot Mairie, spot on

IT may not be able to help tourists but Nice's *Spot Mairie*, the world's first virtual city hall launched in February can do lots of other tricks. Located at Nice Etoile (Level 0, next to the City of Nice kiosk) on Avenue Jean-Médecin, the *Spot Mairie* cabin is open during the same hours at the shopping centre (Mon-Sat 8:30am to 7:30 pm). *Spot Mairie* offers similar services as if you went in person to city hall – from a marriage or birth registration to getting a street permit for a move (see page 38), to declare lost ID or registering your

association. Some 30 services can be done sitting in the cabin while speaking to a remote agent. Speaking from Paris, Jean-François Balcon, Head of Cisco's Business Development Collectives in France told us he was encouraged by the public's reaction. "In just three days since its launch, we've already seen 20 calls a day from Spot Mairie, and these were with legitimate questions. This is phenomenal."

See RivieraReporter.com for more.

Red alert

TRAFFIC light cameras are spreading fast – there are more than 20 operating in the Alpes-Maritimes, and the Marseille area has almost as many.

Drivers from outside France are often taken by surprise at the speed at which traffic lights tend to change here – there seems to be much less "amber" time.

The punishment from a motorist who chances his or her arm and decides to *griller* a red light is not insignificant – usually 4 points off the licence and a €135 fine.

Drivers should inform themselves of the location of the radars by consulting "Emplacements" at radar-feu.com. A driver must be aware that the line *en pointillé*, or little arrows, in front of the lights mark the place where you must stop. If you cross this line you are likely to be "flashed" even if you are not moving forward. The authorities say that these "flashes" will usually not count as a contravention, but it is best to not try out this alleged leniency.

NO MORE LINE UPS. As Nice Mayor Estrosi demonstrates in Spot Mairie, you speak directly with a remote agent who can advise you on procedures and help you fill out forms, which can be printed in the cabin. Photo: Cisco/HK Strategies



Could it be *au revoir* to lower *gazole* prices at the pumps?



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Wet, wet, wet

THE ladies on the bus moaning about the weather are right for once – since last September there has been a remarkable, and it is hoped temporary, change in the climate of what we shall call Eastern Provence. We did not settle here to witness moss growing on roofs as if we were living in an Irish bog village.

The Mediterranean climate is marked by two distinct dry spells, one in summer and another in winter, which is why we usually have the luxury of two “springs” after each of these episodes. But since the back end of September 2012 it's all gone terribly wrong.

Here are the monthly rainfall figures (in millimetres) recorded at Nice since the weather broke last autumn:

September	137.4
October	139.2
November	180.9
December	68.8
January	109.6
February	89.0

March's rainfall had already exceeded 190mm as it headed into its last week.

This adds up to more rain than falls on Manchester in a year, and apparently it's all to do with the odd

position of the high-altitude jet stream that has brought such severe winter weather to parts of northern Europe, most significantly the UK.

Our part of the world is well used to torrential rain converting dry riverbeds into raging rivers, but after a day or so it usually all calms down. Here the rivers have been flowing all winter, and they will continue to do so as new springs appear in the high land to our north. Most mud and silt deposits have long been washed away, and so one can see rivers arriving at the coast – the Siagne at Mandelieu and the Loup at Cagnes for example, with water as pure blue-green as if it has just issued from a glacier.

How does this effect Riviera residents – apart from having to tolerate the jibes of sun-seeking friends who have come to stay in search of sun and go back home as pale as they arrived? Vigilance is needed for any sign of subsidence or other earth and rock movement on or near the property in which you live, and make sure you read the small print of any insurance policy you have covering damage to buildings.

Here's to a scorching spring. ■

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WISH YOU WERE THERE?

Of Britain and the British with Patrick Middleton

M&S: No shirts, sandwiches or chicken tikka massala for Nice

Back in 1992 this magazine welcomed Marks and Spencer to Nice (*Reporter* 39, cover) and this very British retail presence was welcomed with enthusiasm by many readers, including some French women who had frequented the Marble Arch store and others (they were known as the most persistent shoplifters after the Iranians). The company's deputy chairman, then a Monaco resident, declared that they were "pioneers in this kind of global retailing". Alas, that pioneer trail came to an abrupt end when group profits plummeted and soon wholly-owned stores were closed across Europe (though I recall coming across franchises in Gibraltar and Bermuda). The Nice branch was shuttered in 2001. Although another expat paper has said it was "a huge success", it in fact performed rather badly – much of the food and clothing had little appeal for most French and management was not always up to a challenging task.

Then in 2007 company chief executive Stuart Rose announced a return to Europe. Readers contacted us to ask when the Nice store would rise from the dead. A cautious PR executive told us to urge our readers "to curb their enthusiasm". Paris opened just over a year ago and has done very well, especially with food – top sellers are chicken tikka masala and BLT sandwiches – and men's clothing. Other openings are planned in the Paris area but, faced with disappointing results on the UK High street, any projects for Nice and other provincial cities are far back on the burner.

Are we happy?

I read quite a lot of the research which comes out about British expats in France. A lot of it reaches positive conclusions but these are quite often contradicted by what we read in other studies. For example – as quoted recently in these pages – psychologist Christine Haworth-Staines found that expats here were in general happier than

their stay at home compatriots. I've also read recently that, according to a survey across the country, the vast majority of them, even when admitting to problems, reject the idea of a return to the UK.

On the other hand I've come across a number of testimonies, often from psychotherapists, counsellors and similar professionals, which offer a darker picture. According to Chris Mayne, a spokesperson for the English-language helpline SOS Help (open every day from 3pm to 11pm on 01 46 21 46 46), the overwhelming majority of the calls they receive relate to issues of social isolation and loneliness. When I heard this I recalled the case of David Bromley, a 70-year old Englishman found dead in his cottage in a Normandy village where his body lay for seven months until a neighbour noticed junk mail spilling out of his mailbox. Said one villager, "He didn't seem to have much French, he rarely spoke to anyone and hardly ever went out. It must have been a grim life."

Dr Stephanie Kleindorfer, a Paris-based psychotherapist, specialising in dealing with the problems of expats, points out that "couples relocating face a huge amount of cultural shock, even in small things and that means extra stress on the marriage. People in that situation shouldn't put off seeking help." Younger people, including singles, are more likely to be more socially and culturally adaptable while the most vulnerable are later middle-aged couples who have chosen to retire here and so, in a sense, face a double expatriation. As someone has said, "Old age is another country and one we've never been to before."

Dr Nicolas Priestley, a British psychotherapist working in France, says that incomers from the UK seem especially prone to mental problems, notably clinical depression: "Certain factors increase the risk in that group. Separation from family and familiar social networks can be destabilising. They also find that their previously acquired social and cultural experience is often irrelevant and their established

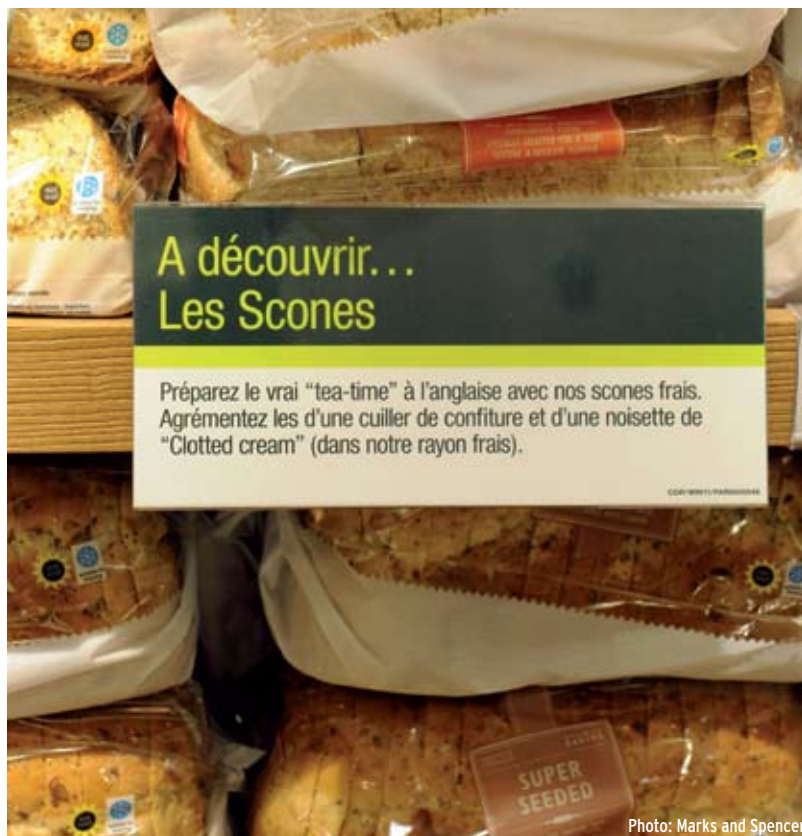


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Photos non contractuelles, G. Martinez.

identity in Britain is of reduced significance. Of course, France itself is not the problem but there's no denying that mental health problems might surface because of the stresses entailed in living as an expat." Any comment from readers on all this would be welcome. And a useful website – counsellinginfrance.com – where common problems are discussed and there's a listing of psychotherapists and counsellors across France.

If your Chardonnay dream turns sour, where next?

So you're one of those who've found that living in France hasn't brought the happiness you hoped for so where can you move to? Well, if you're relatively young – it's more difficult for oldies, unless they've got significant fluids – think about Australia, a country I would have happily settled in had I discovered it earlier in life. What's it got going for it? Above all, leaving aside the tourist brochure stuff, it's the people. As *Spectator* columnist James Delingpole wrote after a recent visit, "I've never before been so welcomed, so well loved, so generously entertained and felt so

instantly at home. And no – this isn't like the ready smiles with little meaning that often greets a visitor in the US. There's a genuine friendliness to newcomers in Australia that's an integral part of the culture." Not long after he operated on my broken shoulder my surgeon Dr Jean-Christian Balestro of Archet 2 in Nice upped sticks and moved to Sydney where he's now wielding his scalpel at the city's North Shore Hospital. He's got no regrets and hopes to stay. He quickly learned the truth of my distinction between French attitudes ("étranger, danger") and those prevalent in Australia ("you're a mate until you prove otherwise"). My advice to him (which he would have had no difficulty in following) was simple: "Don't be pompous and show you've got a sense of humour."

Dr Balestro, as a highly-skilled professional, was very welcome in Australia but the country has a need of people with a wide range of competences – from engineers and agronomists to hairdressers and bakers. Of particular interest to the under-thirties is the Holiday Working Visa programme which allows young people from other countries to work in

Australia for a significant period with a strong likelihood of gaining residency or later citizenship. Quite a lot of young French have taken advantage of this possibility. But is there a downside to the Lucky Country? Well nowhere is perfect and you've got poisonous spiders, crocs

*The Côte d'Azur's first
ANZAC Day takes place in
Antibes on April 25th.
See page 24 for details.*

and sharks but they're not part of most people's daily life. And it can get very hot in summer. A certain number of Brits – "ping-pong Poms" – give up and leave. A basic reason often seems to be it's not – for example – like Surrey. They'd likely say the same here. In sum, it's a great place and a comforting PS: the country has a low level of gun crime following measures brought in by John Howard in 1996 after a madman shot 35 people in Tasmania with semi-automatic weapons. ■

To find out more see www.immi.gov.au and www.aage.com.au



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THE RUE TO FRANCE

Since not every expat is going to write a novel about their French experience that will be turned into a film, over the coming year *American Notes* will profile US citizens who work to live in France.

By PJ Heslin



Surrounded by olive trees and vineyards Lisa and Johann Pepin can barely see their Luberon neighbors and traffic on their road is so infrequent that when somebody passes the house, it makes dinner conversation.



Photo: Scott Cejka Photography

WHEN Lisa Pepin first met her husband Johann in Madison, Wisconsin at a mutual friend's party she describes it at a *coup de foudre*. He was working on a Master's degree and she was working at an ad agency. Three weeks after meeting, Johann had to return to France so a "Greek Travel Fund" that Lisa had been contributing to became a "Frequent France Flyer Fund" as a long distance relationship was born.

Both eventually moved to Chicago where he worked in finance and she worked for a PR agency. They married in 2002 and a year later they moved back to France so that Johann, who had been

raised by his grandparents, could help his grandfather with the upkeep of the family's 11-hectare farm – Les Pastras (lespastras.com)– near Aix-en-Provence.

When they first moved in, the house and the property were in a mess. The family caretaker had retired and Johann's grandfather was in his eighties. Gossip in the village, which included bets at the local bar, was that Lisa would last three months before packing it in for Chicago.

With the expertise of a childhood friend of Johann's, they discovered that truffles could be found on the property. This led to truffle cultivation as well as

harvesting wild olive trees to be transplanted on their farm and cleaning up the existing vineyard. Ten years on, their work is far from finished, meaning that almost every weekend is spent out in the fields. The combination of day jobs, taking care of the farm on the weekends, and running seasonal truffle hunting tours in English (which includes lunch: a burger stuffed with foie gras, bacon and truffles, then topped with more truffles, served with a side of truffle fries, and all the regional wine you care to drink), keeps this thirtysomething couple busy.

Johann's grandfather, now 90, rolls up his sleeves alongside Lisa and Johann



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working on the land. He was a WWII veteran and part of the French Resistance. Together they produce organic olive oil and truffle oil (it takes 30 grams of truffles to make one litre of truffle oil), which they can ship to the US (and elsewhere). Fifty percent of every bottle of olive oil sold goes to OneFamily, an orphanage in Haiti that Lisa and Johann have a personal connection to.

Despite the hard work, the charm of living in the south of France has not worn off. "I thought that one day I'd open the shutters and feel very blasé about the magnificent view of rolling hills, grape vines and olive trees. That day hasn't come yet," says Lisa.

Before moving to France, Lisa's knowledge of the country was limited. Her knowledge of the area had come from Peter Mayle, M.F.K. Fisher and Marcel Pagnol. She doubted that the Provence that existed in those novels was the authentic. "The smell of wild thyme while walking in the woods, the singular beauty of the light hitting the plane trees along the Cours Mirabeau in Aix, the simple pleasure of a really pungent chèvre and a glass of pale rosé ... It's all still here, just as described."

But not every day is filled with long walks in the country and the smell of thyme. The reality of living in France comes with many frustrations at the way the French go about being French. For Lisa and Johann, this is best exemplified when dealing with French contractors.

"Our builder never found the time to finish the work he started, though he did manage to find the time to take our check to the bank. I'd estimate that a full six months of the ten years I've been here has been spent waiting in vain for people who promised to turn up to do some sort of work. I'd love to tell you that I'm used to it by now, but the truth is that it's just as frustrating as ever."

Lisa says that the Anglo-American Group of Provence (aagp-provence.com) offers many activities to help integrate such as hiking trips, a book and gourmet club and several other options while sharing the company of other English speakers.

She wishes, though, her language skills were stronger. "I feel that my French should really be much better than it is after ten years here, but I think it just may be good enough to pass the test for French citizenship, for which I plan to apply this year."

A far away from what the town gossips predicted a decade ago.

See RivieraReporter.com: *A Day Away: Truffle hunting at Les Pastras* for more. ■

Talking Tax
CPA George Donnelly talks **US Tax Revisions for Americans living and working on the Cote d'Azur at RivieraReporter.com, keyword "USTax"**



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ON YOUR MARQUES . . .

by Nick Kent



"One of the major changes for this year's show is that for the first time helicopters will be available to buy."

Director, Steven Saltzman



IT would be easy not to like a guy who turns up late and spends most of the interview speaking into at least two telephones, but Steven Saltzman is not that guy.

After all, this charming but busy man has a lot on at the moment, being a key part of the team running Top Marques Monaco as it celebrates its tenth anniversary.

The show's slogan "See it, drive it, buy it" is not addressed at me or most ordinary

mortals. It is at Top Marques in April that the privileged enthusiast of the fastest and flashiest things on four wheels will be treated to an incredible experience.

"We are delighted that six major brands have snubbed Geneva [the Geneva Motor Show, a highlight of the motoring year] to launch their new models – it's a real vote of confidence," says Steven in between battling off another call.

"One of the major changes for this year's show is that we will be extending the 'drive it, buy it' theme to 'fly it, buy it' – for the first time helicopters, a useful form of transport in a country without an airport, will be available to buy."

Naturally, this being Top Marques, we're not talking run-of-the-mill choppers here. "AgustaWestland will be having the machines seen in *Skyfall* at the show."

The mention of the latest

James Bond movie brings together a number of strands in the story of the staging of Top Marques 2013. The theme of the show is James Bond, the monster movies concession now celebrating a different birthday: 50 years of high-class action. Steven's father, Harry Saltzman, was there at the beginning, the producer brave enough to take an enormous gamble on turning the Ian Fleming spy novels into movies that were exceedingly expensive to make.

Mind you, the original budget for *Dr No* might not reach to the pie-in-the sky that is an AgustaWestland 007 whirlybird. "You'd need €3 million – and that's just for the small one."

"The interiors are designed by Karl Lagerfeld," he adds, in a tone that implies you're getting a bargain.

Top Marques does seem to have become a magnet for the mega-rich and the people who want to sell to them. Alongside the supercars, the superboats and the supercopters are vintage Rolex



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Submariner watches, handcrafted books and other ritzy gewgaws – bringing together 200 exhibitors in all.

At the top of the list of attractions has to be the chance for a serious buyer to jump into the latest creation by Koenigsegg, like the Agera S Hundra (pictured), and blast it round part of the iconic Monaco Grand Prix circuit. If there is enough room in your cheque book for all the noughts – Koenigsegg of Sweden make the world's best and most hairy sports cars, but getting your hands on 1000 horsepower of hand-crafted megacar will cost way over a million euro.

"The show has a unique pulling power – it is a 'live' exhibition like no other where you can try the world's

finest for yourself," says Steven.

"I'm delighted by the way that Top Marques has established itself; nowadays negotiations with the State over such matters as road closures run smoothly.

"It wouldn't happen without a dedicated, highly professional team that swells from seven to 100 by the time of the show's launch.

"Now, Nick, it's been a pleasure. Let me show you out."

An abrupt way to end an interview? Maybe, but in Steven Saltzman's hands it turns into an elegant gesture of farewell. ■

Top Marques Monaco 2013 is at the Grimaldi Forum from April 18-21. Tickets €50 from topmarquesmonaco.com

Monaco Murmurs by Molly Brown

THE chilly grey mood of winter was brightened by the great news that Monaco's 2012 revenues were over €900 million and the government is in the enviable position of beginning 2013 with €3-4 million in the bank. Also, the new MC Channel and Twitter, in both French and English, are up and running; the new geriatric centre in the Rainier III clinic and the new Lycée Technique, built on land originally the old railway station, were both officially opened by HSH Prince Albert last month and the 474 students and 73 professors moved into the new state-of-the-art building on March 4th ... so everything in the garden is lovely. Even the five hives of bees in the Apolline Gardens in Fontvieille increased their production of honey from 50kg in 2011 to 80kg last year and as a reward are to be moved to a quieter part of town during the work on the commercial centre, which may not be an easy task! The first day of spring is really when

the mimosa trees bloom and clouds of birds sweep across the skies ... tulips in the Casino gardens, chocolate Easter eggs ... and the Monte-Carlo Rolex Masters tennis tournament, which is not only a major sporting event, bringing thousands of fans from tennis clubs as far away as Marseille, but the favourite venue of the professional tennis players. It has also become a popular social occasion, a rendezvous of tennis greats and their fans in an unrivalled setting, the Monte-Carlo Country Club, where they can lunch in style on the terrace overlooking the central court where Rafael Nadal, an amazing 8-time winner in Monte Carlo and winner of the Brazil Open in February, will be defending his title for the ninth successive year.

Read more about Monaco and its tennis history at RivieraReporter.com, keyword MCTennis

Photo: SBM

Meet the neighbours

IF you fancy going somewhere really exotic and different for a minibreak, try Liguria.

The Italian province that borders the Alpes-Maritimes is a world away from Côte d'Azur, especially if you venture a little way inland.

Although the coast boasts a jewel in Bordighera and a shopping heaven in San Remo, many casual visitors are put off by what seems to be a jumbly coastal sprawl. Turn up the valleys and an unspoilt world of beautiful villages and stunning land-

scapes opens up before you. Here you will eat delicious fresh food at half the price you're used to paying in France and be treated as an honoured guest.

The *contadini* – proud to be “peasants” – work the land and seem still to be able to carry vast paniers up the steep terraces well into their eighties.

Probably the best way to really get to know this hidden gem is on foot, and there is no better guide to the region than Lorenzo Gariano.

Lorenzo spent his childhood in Liguria, then moved to the UK to find work. He used his training as a horticulturalist to build a successful interior garden busi-

ness. Now back in his beloved homeland, he has turned a lifelong passion for hiking into Walking Liguria, which takes it's clients mostly from the UK, although he has a loyal following amongst English speakers from the 06 and 83.

Lorenzo makes a most absorbing walking companion as has seen the world from places that most mortals can never tread. He was the third Italian to have completed the awesome Seven Summits, climbing the highest mountain on each of the seven continents.

He has a host of accommodation options available in the village of Poggi near Imperia, from a well-equipped studio he owns to an *agriturismo* where you can sip the owner's excellent Vermentino wine while gazing out to see from a hilltop terrace. With his perfect knowledge of English and Italian, and understanding of the local cultures and traditions, you are assured of a very professional, caring and attentive guide.

Lorenzo is happy to accompany the less energetic on motorised tours of the region, with visits to historic harbours, magical villas, and hillside restaurants. What is amazing is how much ground you can cover even on a day trip over the border.

Another bonus of a trip to Liguria is the chance to buy plants, from a pot of basil to lemon tree, at very reasonable prices (the main commercial activity at this end of Liguria is growing plants and flowers). Booze and fags are both considerably cheaper than in France, but you are warned: fuel is more expensive.

Check out walkingliguria.co.uk

Trolling along

WHAT would we do without the Scandinavians! Me and my chums enjoy the challenge of beating each other to the cheapest of the cheap when it comes to flights to the UK, and I've lucked out by wising up to the deals from Norwegian for their Gatwick shuttle, which kicked off at the start of April. Use Bravofly.com to find you the best prices, but don't be surprised if low cost sometimes equals odd hours. **NK**



Walking Liguria has a loyal following amongst English speakers from the 06 and 83.

HELPING HAND: Lorenzo Gariano guiding on Monte Mongoie.

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Summer stunner

SCANDANIVIAN Airlines will add a twice-weekly rotation from Nice to Göteborg (Gothenburg) to its summer schedule. The flight will run from July 5th to August 16th, leaving Nice at 11h50. Return flights from Gothenburg depart at 8h30. Flight time is about 2h30. Fares start at €108 one-way and €211 return.

Directly from Nice, SAS also serves Stockholm, Copenhagen, Oslo, Bergen, Stavanger, Trondheim and Helsinki.

Europe's most punctual airline and member of the Star Alliance Group, SAS is the 8th most important carrier from the Riviera. It carried 240,000 passengers on direct flights from Nice to Scandinavian destinations in 2012, principally through its two main hubs, Copenhagen and Stockholm, which also connect to North American destinations by the polar route. After Chicago, New York and Washington, San Francisco will soon to be added from Copenhagen. **MM**

Why I love to lounge

MANY will recall when you dressed in your best clothes to fly, got to the airport not that long before take-off, strolled through security ... and the flight cost you a fortune. Low-cost airlines and 9/11 changed all that.

There is a way to return to those heady days (except for the exorbitant flight costs of course!) if you are a British Airways Club cardholder with access to the Club lounges (Silver and Gold card members and their guests).

On our recent return to Nice from Gatwick, having profited from the exclusive check-in line, followed by fast track security, we headed for the Club lounge (turn to your left after security, past the shops and take the lift up). Greeted with a friendly smile at the reception desk, we were registered and shown into the lounge which overlooks runways and aircraft taking off and landing (interesting, particularly for distracting fractious children).

If you want to freshen up before starting the day, you can leave your hand baggage in one of the lockers and make use of the

shower suite, which features high-quality cosmetic products.

We were taking a mid-morning flight, so the comprehensive breakfast was very welcome – fresh fruit juices, eggs, bacon, sausages, beans, toast, cereals, choice of Danish pastries and accompaniments, tea, fresh coffee ...

Instead of fighting to find or keep a seat in the main concourse, we relaxed in easy chairs by the window and took our pick of the wide variety of newspapers and magazines on offer. For those among you with an umbilical cord to your laptop or tablet, there is free Wi-Fi.

Unfortunately, (or fortunately!), bad weather conditions delayed our flight so we had the pleasure of sampling lunch as well: a selection of sandwiches on different breads, excellent refrigerated self-service salads, desserts and coffee, all accompanied by free wines, spirits and mixers.

There are lots of benefits to flying with BA but access to the Club lounge turns the usually tiring, sometimes unpleasant travel experience into an agreeable comfortable wait for your plane. **Stella Cox**

See ba.com/travel for club card details. ■



Why your patch needs the X Factor

BY JAMES HARTLEY
DIRECTOR, ENGLISH GARDEN GROUP

DESPITE repeated deluges this winter, my typically contrarian instincts would have me bet on a hot summer. What better way therefore to banish the depression brought on by seemingly endless low-pressure weather fronts than by discussing the sensible use of drought-tolerant plants in the garden?

We live in a region that thankfully delivers water with only rare restrictions on its use, but the unavoidable truth is that good water management is becoming an issue of ever-increasing importance. Chances are that just because we haven't seen much in the way of hosepipe bans here, doesn't mean we won't in the future. I was struck, during a recent visit to several of our growers in Italy, by the intensification of their efforts to collect and recycle their water runoff. One of the largest plant producers in Northern Italy aims to increase their efficiency at water collection from 98% (up from their current 95%) by 2015. Notably, this has several advantages for them, outside of simply being environmentally aware: The water they collect is already loaded with nutrients from the plant pots, and with the correct adjustment, allows them to reduce not only their net water consumption from sources, but also the net application of fertiliser. This last issue is one that here on the Riviera we would do well to take heed: recent reports indicate rising levels of nitrate and pesticide pollution in the groundwater throughout the region, and this cannot simply be fobbed off on agricultural practices. Some of the worst affected areas for pesticide pollution are densely habituated touristic regions. A case of effluent from the affluent?

In the past I have been slightly dismissive of drought-tolerant garden design, having seen so many poor examples. However, while some things such as rolling expanses of lush green lawns are obviously going to have to be limited (or excluded), there is no reason why a garden cannot be stunning and yet still adhere to the principles of paying keen attention to the use of water in the

garden to the extent that it heavily influences landscape design. There is even a specific word to describe it: Xeriscaping (derived from *xeros*, the Greek word for "dry"). This was coined originally by employees from the Department of Water in Denver, Colorado, who have also gone to the trouble of registering a logo for trademark – so they really must be serious!

"A balance must be struck between one's desire for drought tolerance and the demand for flowers and lush growth."

Many US garden centres have adopted an "X"-rated scale for plants, from X to XXX, designed to indicate the water needs of a particular plant – something that I do not think will be long before it is adopted here in Europe. Note that there is a subtle but important difference between natural landscaping and xeriscaping in that the former only selects plants based on those that are native to the local area while the latter goes further and places the focus of the general landscape design on water conservation.

The process starts with the design, crucial when trying to achieve these goals and combine them for a beautiful result. Careful planning includes examination of the site conditions and aspect, widening the palette of plants than can be used. Select your plants by first dividing your initial choices into groups and the garden into zones: different areas in a landscape receive different amounts of light, wind and moisture. To minimise water waste induced by the need to water for the thirstiest in a particular area when required, group plants together with similar light and water requirements, and place them in areas that match these needs.

Returning to the subject of lawns, this is typically one of the highest water users, several alternatives can be used, but if lawns are to be retained the alternative to the classic turf grass is Bermuda grass (also known as "warm season" grass). This is much more resistant to drought and will remain green through the summer season with perhaps half the water used on classic turf grass. The downside is that it will be brown while dormant, and this is nearly half of the year.

Preparation of the soil is also crucial, as our soils here are poor and calcareous. While some plants will always grow well on natural soils (notably the natives), others will need good amounts of organic amendment in the form of compost to ensure water is retained and that the plants root deeply as quickly as possible.

Evaporation is a major factor in water loss in the landscape, and astute application of mulches and composts not only minimise moisture loss, but also provide a buffer that absorbs nutrients that would otherwise be leached away, to provide later for hungry plants. Organic mulch can take numerous forms, from cocoa shells to shredded wood and bark, but several other materials such as leaves or straw can be used although these are perhaps less practical or less aesthetic. Be sure to spread sufficient depth when applying a mulch, as too thin a layer has little effect and will just wash away: generally 5cm is recommended. That said, several prominent proponents of dry gardening recommend gravel in place of organic mulch since they find the organic much too rich for drought-tolerant plants, and this practice is gaining in popularity. The most important tip: if and when you water, do so deeply and infrequently to encourage the plants to develop extensive and deep

roots. I cannot understate this and I visit gardens time and time again where the watering controller is set to drip the beds for 15 minutes every day. With an automatic sprinkling system in use, be sure to adjust the controller monthly to accommodate weather conditions, and the addition of a rain sensor to shut off the device when it rains is usually a very inexpensive add-on that can be fitted to most controllers to reduce water wastage.

Good practices at the nursery cannot be overlooked either. Take roots for instance: Plants that are naturally drought resistant will often have roots that exceed the 1:1 root to shoot ratio, meaning that having good sized containers at the nursery will give these plants a much better chance of a good establishment as they are not stressed on arrival. Also, nursery workers should keep these trimmed at all times (which goes against the commercial practice of the biggest plant equalling value for money) for the same reasons. Overwatered drought-resistant plants are far more likely to develop fungal problems: I think almost everyone will have experienced dieback in Lavender and Rosemary at some point, so this should not come as a shock.

Refraining from using the plants with high water demands will keep your garden healthy and your water bill down. There is a wealth of information online about what plants to use but the first step is to just look for plants that thrive naturally in the local environment. Outside of the obvious cacti and palms, there is Oleander, Arbutus, Berberis, Ceanothus, Potentilla, Cotoneaster, Artemisia, Yucca, Rhus, Pistacia, Cistus and Juniperus. A wide list of minimal-water perennials includes Lavender, Rosemary, Santolina, Sage, Nepeta, Penstemon and Perovskia. ■






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HOW TO MAKE A WALL FLOWER

By Nick Kent

IT'S spring at last and everything in the garden is looking rosy. Or is it?

What about that bare garage wall that has defied all attempts to clothe itself in creepers on account of the fierce summer sun?

Send for Maryse and her gang at Green Riviera (green-riviera.com) and she'll show you a true wonder of art and nature combined. Using Sphagnum moss as a growing medium and a cunning and invisible system of wire supports and drip-watering, the wall can be instantly covered with an astonishing vertical garden, providing a green, flower-strewn vista where before was uncompromising concrete.

Maryse Moizan takes her inspiration from a Breton childhood in a home where both mother and father were serious amateur gardeners.

"I have always wanted to work with plants," says the gentle and pretty 48-year-old, who has a home, workshop and showroom on one property near Valbonne village.

"I know people who had created 'vertical gardens' in Paris, and I have worked and studied hard to adapt that concept to the Mediterranean.

"The Sphagnum moss, *la sphaigne* in French, has unique qualities that make it ideal for this very special kind of plant display."

Maryse works with the moss in its dry form. It looks and feels like a cross between hay and string, and seems completely inert. After the framework has been constructed, you have something that looks like a large mattress stuffed with light-brown dead moss. No beauty prizes for the moment.

The miracle occurs when plants are carefully chosen and embedded, water is added and the mossy threads are soon turning a deep emerald green as they come back to life.

In place over a wall, the vertical garden will absorb and store rainwater like a sponge. It acts as a thermal buffer in summer, reducing heat penetration to the home, earning lots of ecological Brownie points by radically cutting the use of air conditioning. It's a superb sound insulator. No fertiliser is required as the moss generates its own.

I asked Maryse if the structure could cause damp to enter the protected wall. "No danger of this, as there is a gap between the vertical garden and the wall," she replies.

Maryse has learnt from her years spent in California and the UK that the concept of service, as expected by the British and particularly the Americans, is not always readily available in France, and she wants her company to change that. "After we



have installed one of our gardens we will be ready to perform routine maintenance, or if needed to train a client's gardener to look after it properly.

"Not much work is required, but over time some plants will die and need replacing, and the drip watering system has to be checked regularly as limescale can build up and block the tiny tubes."

Green Riviera can also provide you with a green roof, for an outbuilding with a flat or slightly sloping top, for example. On a

A "living wall" can magically transform an interior



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photo: Thierry Ameller / Superyachtimages.com design: kingdesign | smac.com

flat-roofed residence, the heat absorbed by the plants will dramatically cut summer temperatures in the rooms below.

Living walls can work to stunning effect in interiors – even on yachts. But lighting and siting is everything. “We have to be very, very careful when positioning an indoor vertical garden; if not enough light is provided the plants will suffer, so specialist lighting is often required. This can produce beautiful effects.”

A more modest investment in a living wall appealed to the cook in me – the hanging herb garden. Terrace space

in my flat is limited, and I would love to have this creation of Maryse on the outside wall by the kitchen. She tells me that thyme, the recumbent form of rosemary, chervil, marjoram, mint and a host of other herbs (strawberries too!) thrive in this special environment. But one herb that doesn’t get along in this mossy heaven is the capricious parsley.

Green Riviera are also introducing a form of art that looks alive, but isn’t.

Maryse showed me examples of framed “pictures” composed of moss and plants, beautifully natural to the eye and touch.

I sensed this was a piece of South of France frippery that would have the shelf life of crab salad. “Lovely, but how long do these last,” I asked. “They will still be as perfect in 10 years,” said Maryse (pictured left with examples). But how? Advanced plant technology makes it possible to replace the sap of certain plants with a preserving fluid, apparently.

Another miracle.

Green Riviera will make the Antibes Yacht Show (April 18-21) come alive with their exterior and interior living walls. Not to be missed. ■



Interior “hanging gardens” often need special lighting

THE VATMAN COMETH ... on board

DURING the Mitterrand years, France learned just how fiscal greed could be catastrophic to a vital and mobile local industry like yachting. A socialist-inspired tonnage tax saw Riviera yachts fleeing to more tax friendly havens like Spain and Italy; by 1984 Riviera ports had emptied of their largest clients. Faced with industry lobbyists, the government of the time made a spectacular U-turn and many of the big yachts returned thanks to the action of yachting professionals like the Voisin family.

The lesson was learned but perhaps too well in the view of other EU nations with a current interest in attracting megayachts and the megacharter business that comes with them. Most Mediterranean countries apply VAT to charters originating in their waters and reduce the tax by a forfeit to compensate for the time a yacht is expected to spend outside their national boundaries. The forfeit varies considera-

bly from country to country with some applying as much as 95% and thus reducing the tax burden on charters to only 5% of the normal rate of VAT; other countries apply 40 to 60% coefficients.

Surprisingly, France has been the most sympathetic by applying zero TVA in some specific cases, which is not appreciated by our Mediterranean neighbours. In the words of Thierry Voisin at a recent conference on the subject, "We can't expect to have this situation forever. Our best bet is to negotiate the best deal we can with the authorities in Paris." The conference gave Thierry its unanimous backing to defend the interests of the profession with the administration. Negotiations won't be easy, but Voisin's past experience will be indispensable in procuring the most favourable rate possible.

So what now? The prudent option for the moment is to apply French TVA to charter fee estimates and hope for a



Thierry Voisin, right, addressing VAT issue during an industry conference.

welcome surprise when the penny drops. Our advice to charter captains is to work through reputable brokers such as Blue Water (bluewateryachting.com) and Thierry Voisin (thierryvoisin.com). ■

Mike Meade

For useful links on this subject see our website, keyword "VATYacht".



*On Friday April 12th at 20h45,
France3 television presents a
Thalassa special on the yachting
impact on Antibes.*

france 3 .fr

Old and Feeble

By Michael Healy

I'm referring to the French annual Boat Tax – the *droit de passeport* – for residents in France who on January 1st each year own and/or operate a foreign-flag vessel over 7 metres long or with motorization over 22 fiscal HP (about 180HP real). The deadline is April 1st, and the proceeds (€39 million in 2011) go to coastal conservation. Note that Britain is about the only country not to tax yachts (a luxury), obviously not needing any €39 million.

The keys to avoid paying more than a token amount are *vétusté* (decay) and *faible puissance* (low power). The *droit de passeport* is based on the overall hull length and the combined fiscal Horsepower of

the motor(s). In 2012 it was adjusted to penalize high power but compensating with a reduction in the length calculation. But the real benefit is the generous reductions for old age (*vétusté*) of both hull and motors: 30% for over 10 years; 55% for 20 years; and 80% for over 25 years. My own "classic" motor-yacht is just under 9 metres, attracting hull tax of €105, less 80% = €21. The twin vintage Perkins engines are rated at 7HP each, making €315 for the pair. Deducting 80% reduces this to €63. Total tax €84, giving me the right to complain about France should I wish. Those residents who do not pay their taxes should keep their mouths shut.

Any resident boat-owner uncertain about his *droit de passeport* obligation (also for Jet-Skis) should contact the *douanes* before the yacht is boarded at sea or in port. On the Riviera this would be the Cannes bureau at Quai Pantiero (r-cannes@douane.finances.gouv.fr - 04 93 06 56 00 or see douane.gouv.fr).

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BUSINESS

Minding Your Own Business

By Peter Johnson

WITH the first wafts of warm spring weather, ease out the deck chair, open a cold beer, watch the breeze idly flicking through the budding daffodils at your feet ... and WAKE UP. It's tax time ... again! Forms will hit the doormats in late April and the usual filing deadlines apply: end of May for paper declarations and up to mid-June for internet (depending on where you live). Contrary to what the French government may say, taxes have gone up. Obviously for the higher earners in excess of €150,000 per annum this was already out there, but there are all kinds of smaller measures that will affect everyone.

Overtime taxed: Hollande overturned the Sarkozy "travailler plus, gagner plus" measure. From August 1st 2012 overtime is taxed like normal salary.

Dividend tax: only 60% of dividend income is taxable, that hasn't changed, but *in addition* there was a second abatement of €1525 for a single person, €3050 for a couple. Hollande has done away with this.

Capital gains tax (on investments): we already know that the base was increased in 2011 to 19% flat-rate plus 15.5% social charges (*prélèvements sociaux*), now gains will be taxed at 24% plus 15.5%, or 39.5%.

Personal allowance: the 10% personal allowance on salary will see the upper cap reduced from €14,157 to €12,000

per annum, so if you earn €130,000 your 10% personal allowance will be effectively capped at 9.23%.

Extra child: for each child you have the tax rate gets better, but the progressive gain per child previously capped at €2336 per child has been reduced to €2000/child.

CSG deductible: the funny line on the tax return where you can deduct part of your previous year's CSG (social charges) from your taxable income. This drops from 5.8% to 5.1%.

Income tax on dividends and capital gains on investments: you've probably had the incomprehensible (!) letter from your bank sometime in late February and binned it as too complicated. Previously your bank interest and investment income could be taxed at source by the bank under the *prélèvement libératoire* system. This was a flat-rate tax of 24% and was of particular advantage to higher rate taxpayers. Now, the interest is to be added to your other income and will be taxed at your marginal rate of tax, notwithstanding the banks will still take an "advance" on the tax due

amounting to 21% for dividend income and 24% for interest. The following year there will be a reconciliation and the higher rate taxpayers will pay the balance due. **For a single person with less than €50,000 dividend income or less than €25,000 interest (or double these amounts for a couple) it is possible to request the old rate of 24% under the *prélèvement libératoire*/taxation at source. Ask your bank.**

Real estate capital gains tax: after all the bad news we already had last year (see previous issues), another little gem from the French tax office: all capital gains of more than €50,000 will be subject to an additional tax of between 2% and 6%, effectively, bringing a possible upper rate of capital gains tax of 25% (plus *bien sûr* social charges at 15.5%).

I bet that cold beer's gone horribly warm now and it's suddenly started pouring with rain! ■



RIVIERA FIT

Be Your Child's Fitness Role Model

By Colette Kent



It always amazes me how much energy children have: they run, jump and skip for hours. We too were once like that, but over the years our "oomph" has subsided and staying active has become a chore. For parents, it's often hard to find time away from a busy schedule to fit in any fitness regime. The solution may be to include your children in your exercise time and have fun together.

Advantages of exercising as a family

- No need for childcare
- Parent-child bonding time
- Establishes a routine
- You all benefit from being active
- You become a positive role model for your child

The little sponge that is a child's brain soaks up our patterns and behaviours. When your child sees you exercising regularly he or she is learning that this is a way of life rather than some unpleasant undertaking. So set an example by incorporating physical activity into your daily

lives: walk instead of drive to the *boulangerie* or climb the stairs rather than waiting for the elevator (most buildings here are only 6 or 7 storeys). Let your kids see and hear how much you like an active lifestyle and he or she will grow up with the notion that exercise is fun and something you willingly do on a regular basis.

As an added motivation, children who are active day-to-day learn to respect their body (and thus gain confidence) and will be more aware of the importance of eating healthy to maintain energy and provide that extra get-up-and-go. They are also more likely to remain active adults, so the stage for a healthy lifestyle for years to come is set.

The ex-factor: In today's world of too much tech and short attention spans, children sadly have more interest in sedentary entertainment from TV and tablets to Facebook and video games. For expat kids, an attachment to an iPad or iPhone may be even stronger if language isolates them from integrating at school and making friends. So being active with your child not only strengthens muscles, but also

your relationship, which is essential for expat families living away from relations. Whether it's riding your bikes, swimming in the sea or a parent-child fitness class, any time spent doing a physical activity together has large benefits for you both: a child will feel more at ease taking about school and friends, you can mutually share some of the challenges of living in a foreign country, and a busy child is less likely to be bored and seek attention in other ways. Walk and talk; it can be that simple. There are plenty of activities you can do.

Benefits of regular physical activity for a child

- Builds confidence
- Controls weight
- Reduces risk of depression
- Improves mood
- Better sleep quality
- Helps build bones and muscles
- Strengthens immune system
- Reduces time in front of a screen
- Teaches discipline
- Develops focus and coordination



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Infants

Yoga. Try a Mummy & Me yoga class. These usually focus on post-partum exercises for mum and baby can sleep alongside or be involved in the activity. Suggestions: Espace Bien Naitre (espace-bien-naitre.fr), FitHub (fithub.net) or Maman Bulle (maman-bulle.fr).

Pushy parents. This class (pictured right) is performed outdoors with your child in the stroller. Power walking interspersed with strength exercises is a great way to get your daily dose.

Young children

Play together. Have some fun making an obstacle course or playing tag, guaranteed to exhaust everyone.

Afternoon at the park. There are wonderful public parks which often have a children's play area. Work up a sweat pushing your youngster on the swing while doing squats in between or even lunges while the child goes up and down the slide. Fly a kite in the Valmasque near Mougins or walk around the 7 hectare Parc Phoenix (parc-phoenix.org) in Nice.

Swim. The public swimming pools offer decent and well-priced facilities for families. While you're supervising your child you can workout, too: walking or aqua jogging with a foam belt against the resistance of the water. Performing squats, lunges and treading water is also a great workout. Nautipolis (nautipolis.fr) the Aquatic Centre in Sophia-Antipolis, offers *Bébé nageur* for 6 months to age 4.

Group Fitness Classes. Find parent and child fitness classes, and meet other fit-minded parents. There are a several: Kidooland (kidooland.com) in Vallauris; Nice's Le Kids Club (lekidsclub.com); and Prune et Libellule at 14, boulevard de Lorraine in Cannes.

Dance. On a rainy day, turn on some music and dance together around the living room.

Cycle. Lots of bike paths provide safe trails for you and your child. Jump on one of the free Vélo Bleu bikes and pedal along the Promenade together or perhaps you can jog while your child cycles (with a helmet) along.

Teens

Fitness, dance or yoga classes. Take your teen to one of your classes and they'll like that they are being treated like an adult. Fitlane (fitlane.com) has 7 local clubs in the region.

Rollerblading. Rentals are available on the Nice Promenade (please wear protective gear) and this can be entertaining for everyone.

Golf. There are lots of driving ranges and golf courses around (see page 25) and the younger you start, the better.

Sign up for a charity run or volunteer together

for any one of the hundred organised events in the Alpes-Maritimes and really take in the atmosphere. La Niçoise (a 2.5km walk, part of the Nice Semi-Marathon April 21st) is open to all. ■



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Steve Wright ANZAC DAY IN ANTIBES

A FIRST ON THE CÔTE D'AZUR.

Steve Wright, a retired Royal Australian Navy officer with ten years service, was a Quartermaster gunner with active service with United Nations Integrated Task Force, as a peacekeeper, Mogadishu City, Somalia 1993. He's also a member of the Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association, and also Vice-President of the Association Internationale des Soldats de la Paix, based in Lyon. Steve (above, second from left) came to South France for a holiday six years ago from London, and stayed on as a yacht chief engineer officer.



Steve is organising the first official ANZAC Day (that's Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) ceremony on the Côte d'Azur. There will be two services on April 25th: a 40-minute dawn service commencing at 5am and the main hour-long service starts at 11am. Refreshments will be available after each ceremony at the Quay's Pub (6 Blvd Aguilon, opposite Blue Water's office). He's calling on not just Aussies and Kiwis but and the general public to show their support "of the core values that makes France, Australia, New Zealand and Britain great nations". For more see "ANZAC: a call to all nations" on our website.

Nicolas Palthey IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME.

Nicolas Palthey is following in the steps of his sister Alexandra ... all the way to Haiti. In 2011, as part of a volunteer project at school, Alexandra chose to go to Haiti for three weeks and help put a roof on the Saint Pius X School in Ducis. The 17-year-old set up an *association loi de 1901*, *Nourrir Les Enfants Haiti*, and raised €2500. (See Reporter 144).

The latest scoop chez les Palthey, is now that the roof has been fixed, the next priority is clean drinking water. This is exactly where younger brother Nicolas, 16, comes in.

"Nico" goes to the IBS in Provence and for his school project is designing a Biological Water Filter for the same school in Haiti, which has 420 students, and no drinking water. This filter uses all natural materials and can be installed within the convent walls next to the infirmary

and the school. There exists an underground water source that is not safe, and filtering this precious water would allow these school children to have access to clean drinking water.

Nico's trip to Haiti is June 14th and his goal is to raise €5000 to help build the water filter. He already raised €1630 for building materials with a *vide grenier*. He fixed up toys, cleaned up old objects and clothes that were donated, people gave small

change without buying anything. His follow up *Nourrir Les Enfants Haiti* fundraiser is April 21st in Valbonne. Every euro made will go directly to Haiti. Nico will have a lot of balloons around his stand and a picture board (above) showing the school children and how his plan can help them survive. He really feels he can make a difference by saving lives. For donations (tax deductible), contact nourrirlesenfantshaiti@gmail.com



A STROKE OF LUCK

How the Côte d'Azur became a golfing paradise



Image: Golfplus.fr

SINCE the first golf course sprang up on the Riviera in 1891, this sunny corner of the Continent has offered players an ideal environment to practice this sometimes infuriating but always fascinating sport.

Today there is a wide choice of courses to suit players of all levels, be they a veteran rabbit enjoying a gentle Thursday morning game with his mates on one of the nine-holers between Valbonne and Nice, or the svelte young powerhouses of the Ladies European Tour blasting their

way around the championship courses at Fayence.

I've been playing golf in the Alpes-Maritime and the Var for 15 years. A fifty-something 18-handicapper, I've passed the stage of club-flinging frustration and, although I may not yet know "the inner peace that is known only to a man who has given up golf" (to paraphrase P.G. Wodehouse), I have learned to live with my shortcomings and to enjoy every minute of a match.

With this issue, the *Reporter* launches its new golf coverage. When I asked the mag's Big Cheese why golf had never darkened its pages in more than 25 years of publishing, I was told that no one on the team had ever been interested in the game. Well that has changed and I hope to bring to each issue golfing news spiced with some attractive offers from our many and varied Riviera courses. ■

You can also follow the latest on twitter.com/RivieraGolfer Nick Kent

TEES, FEES & PHONE NUMBERS

1	Biot	04 93 65 08 48	€79	12	Claux Amic	04 93 60 55 44	€75 (€55 until Apr 14)
2	Old Course Cannes-Mandelieu	04 92 97 32 00	€90	13	Royal Mougins	04 92 92 49 69	€175 (incl. buggy)
3	Cannes-Mougins	04 93 75 79 13	€120	14	Beauvallon	04 94 96 16 98	€80
4	Grande Bastide	04 93 77 70 08	€65	15	Esterel Latitudes	04 94 52 68 30	€65
5	Monte Carlo	04 93 41 09 11	€120	16	Roquebrune	04 94 19 60 35	€69
6	Opio-Valbonne	04 93 12 00 08	€80	17	Saint-Andréol	04 94 51 89 89	€75
7	Rivière	04 92 97 49 49	€120	18	Sainte Maxime	04 94 55 02 02	€75
8	Saint-Donat	04 93 09 76 60	€79	19	Taulane	04 93 60 31 30	€85 (until end May)
9	Provençal (9-hole)	04 93 00 00 57	€40	20	Terre Blanche	04 94 39 90 00	€170 (incl. buggy)
10	Victoria (9-hole)	04 93 12 23 26	€35	21	Valescure	04 94 82 40 46	€75
11	Villeneuve-Loubet (9-hole)	04 93 22 52 25	€28	22	Golf Club St. Tropez	04 94 55 13 44	Prices on application.

A GRAND OLD LADY

with a few facelifts

THE character-packed face breaks into a smile and the eyes shine with pride.

"This is the soul of the Old Course," says Jean-Pierre Martin, pointing at a centuries-old umbrella pine that seems to thrust through the very walls of the venerable clubhouse.

"The trees are what makes this course, and they always come first. This one, it hasn't been touched except to lop off dead branches."

So it's the clubhouse that has to make way for the tree, and they have been living that way for 122 years. The Old Course, as it always been known although the International Golf Club Cannes-Mandelieu (golfoldcourse.com) is its official name, is the most ancient of all the Riviera courses, and it is because of this that we have chosen to make it the subject of the first of the Riviera Golfer course profiles.

Jean-Pierre is the club captain, and has been a member for 37 years. "The club has a very international feel, many of the

350 members are English-speaking and of course we always have a warm welcome for visiting players."

It has been estimated that 60% of the rounds in a year are by played by English-speakers.

"Nearly all of the 45 competitions we will be holding this year are open to non-members who have a handicap certificate from their home club, or are members of the French Golfing Federation.

"There are three sorts of competitions, ludique – more for fun than anything else, serious stroke play events and what we call the prestige tournaments, which are usually sponsored and can run over three days with a grand dinner at the Carlton or Majestic for the prize giving."

All this would have pleased the man who first drove a ball down these links-like fairways, Grand Duke Michael of Russia, exiled by the Czar and wandering Europe in search of sporting challenges. In Scotland to shoot partridge and grouse, he



THE RIGHT STRIPE. Grande Duke Michael (left) with a "spoon", the precursor of the modern 3-wood.



stumbled upon St Andrew's, and like so many who came after him, he was smitten by the love of golf.

The Grand Duke's chief residence in exile was in Cannes, and it was here, by the sea, that he recreated his vision first seen in the birthplace of golf. It became an instant institution, and noble society quickly gave the Old Course a cachet it has never lost.

There have been changes through the years, as the original 9 holes was turned into a full 18, then a further 9-hole course, the Grand Duke, was added, but they have not altered the character of the place. As the player today marvels at – and sometimes swears at – the magnificent pines that line the fairways, he or she can picture himself on the coast as it was centuries ago, for this is the way the foreshore looked all the way from the Esterel to Le Suquet, before the builders moved in.

"The life of the club took a big leap forward when new owners took over 14 years ago," says Jean-Pierre. "Since then there

have been numerous improvements to the course itself, many of which, such as those to the drainage and watering systems, than are not immediately noticeable.

"Our trees are beautiful, but they present problems, particularly where roots intrude on the fairways and in some cases greens, and these have to be dealt with expertly so as to retain good playing surfaces but safeguard the health of the trees."

Jean-Pierre is keen to stress the importance of what he terms "course management", referring not to an individual player's approach to the course, but to the smooth running of rounds. "It is true that sometimes the course is quite busy, and having two par threes following the opening par 4 could lead to players bunching up if it wasn't for the magnificent work of the Starter.

"I don't think that a strict disciplinarian approach by Starts and Course Marshals does anyone any good, and we prefer a gentle approach to maintaining order and smooth play.

"We want visiting players to experience the warmth of welcome that is taken as a matter of course by our members."

Having sweated buckets lugging my clubs up hilly courses in the hot days of the Riviera summer, I appreciate the easy walking offered by the Old Course. I raise my eyes to the lovely San Peyre hill that dominates the western part of the course, which once was the home of a hermit, and I know that if this course had been laid out within the last 20 years some sadistic course designer would have found a way to put a tee on the top of it.

The improvements Jean-Pierre mentioned are nowhere more noticeable than in the public areas of the clubhouse, the restaurant and bar have been transformed from dowdy Scottish mock-baronial into a light and airy style, linking with the lovely terrace overlooking the 18th fairway. As you would expect, the food is excellent, created by a chef pinched from one of the grand establishments just up the coast.

And to think all this might have been replaced by a sea of tents and caravans if the Old Course hadn't come through victorious in a match in which the stakes couldn't have been higher – life or death.

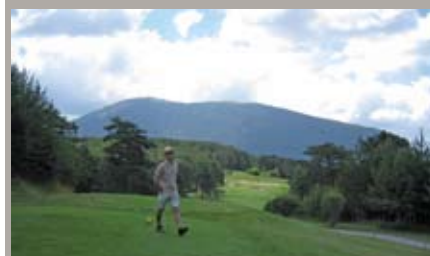
In the early Sixties the start of mass tourism and the universal entitlement to annual holidays recently established in France cast a dark shadow on the sunny

fairways of Cannes-Mandelieu. The camping site of La Pinède had overflowed onto the course, and play no longer became practical – the course closed.

The local political decision-makers had to make a choice between the inevitable spread of modern tourism and the preservation of what had become part of the history of the Riviera. The first grass tennis courts in France had been in Cannes, but they had long since disappeared under a wave of development. Would it be the same for the Old Course? In what was considered in some circles an elitist decision, the powers that be came down on the side of golf, and a large sigh of relief echoed round the famous fairways.

And so we come back to today, when we can give thanks to those who created and nurtured a course than is fully in harmony with the natural landscape it has helped to preserve. Here's to the next 120 years. ■

NEWS ... NEWS ... NEWS ...



Looking down from the tee of the short par 4 sixteenth towards the well-protected green, the Lachans mountain rising imposingly behind.

When I hear the news in April that Chateau Taulane has opened for play after its winter rest, then I know spring is truly here, and that summer won't be too far behind.

Taulane, half an hour above Grasse on the Route Napoleon, is a breathtaking gem that I can't afford to play often. It is a relief to escape the summer fret on the coast and enjoy a course set in a cradle of mountains at nearly 1000 metres altitude.

The course was the first in France to be designed by Gary Player, and every hole is a test of a golfer's skill. As you play through this 30,000-acre paradise of pine forest and lakes the thought always strikes – why isn't there anyone else here?

Yes, you will lose balls. But as you look up to the magnificent mountain of Lachens that dominates the paysage, you won't care a bit.



Thomas Vander Clock was a junior at the club before going on to pro school then returning to the place where he first picked up a club.

TIPS FROM THE PROS

One of four pros at the Old Course, Thomas Vander Clock shares with **RIVIERA GOLFER** some interesting practice drills



1. Putting short

Afraid of knocking the ball 10 feet past the hole, we dribble it up so the ball turns away from the hole or stops tantalisingly short.

2. Tip

Insert a tee peg into the side of the cup just below the surface. Your aim is to hit the top of the tee peg. The exercise will get you rolling the ball firmly at the hole.

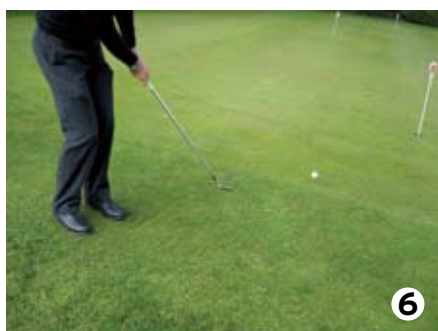


3. Missing your target

You're concentrating like mad on a nice pendulum putting rhythm in a needle match when you find the ball is missing the target left or right. You're not hitting the ball out of the dead centre of the putter.

4. Tip

Find the true centre of the putter by holding it upright between finger and thumb, then with the other hand tapping a ball against the blade (3). A tap anywhere apart from true centre will make the putter blade turn. Once you have found it, tape a coin over the centre spot (4). Now make some practice putts. When you hit off centre now the ball will fly off at a wild angle.



5. Facing a green-side chip

You've been practising your chips. You know to play the shot smoothly almost as if you were putting, while keeping the wrists firm but you still end up miles past the hole.

6. Tip

Too many people aim at the hole. Forget it. Pick your line then aim at the place you want the ball to land – in this case on the very edge of the first cut. You will think you've under-hit until you look up to see the ball cosying up to the pin.

THE OLD TREE HOUSE

"This is the soul of the Old Course," says Jean-Pierre Martin, club captain, pointing at a centuries-old umbrella pine that cohabitates with the clubhouse. "The trees are what makes this course, and they always come first."



Picture This: HOW TO BE A PAP

By Mike Meade

FESTIVAL season is fast approaching and with it an opportunity to create some lasting memories with unique, out of the ordinary shots with a little bit of effort.

Access limited

First, look around and don't concentrate on one direction. With a bit of practice you'll see many opportunities to shoot colourful street performers, extravagant limousines, outrageous outfits and a bay full of yachts. There's more to the Festival than the stars and more to the Grand Prix than the drivers. Cinema posters and GP billboards are part of the scene so integrate them into your shots rather than trying to avoid them.

Crowds are part of the atmosphere too and they can often be used to good effect without detracting from your main subject. Use a crowd as the background or foreground of the Festival building or the racetrack to add realism to your shots.

Even some hotel lobbies are off-limits to the public during the Cannes festival but if you go to the back entrance of say the Majestic or the Carlton just before red carpet call, you can snap close-ups of celebs making their way to their cars. The airport is also a good place but there are so many paps in permanent position at Nice during the major events that you may find Cannes-Mandelieu a better bet. If there's a limo waiting at the terminal then a star's likely arriving by private jet.

Some photo calls happen in public areas like a beach or in front of a hotel. If you see a milling crowd of paps have a closer look and take a few pictures of your own.

Never be pushy. If you're lucky enough to find yourself in a one-on-one situation with Jenson Button or Anne Hathaway, remain calm and polite. Look them right in the eye, show them your camera and ask, "Do you mind?" Some amateur snappers in Cannes have built up impressive personal archives of cooperative stars this way over the years.

A little night light

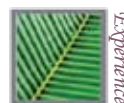
At night turn off your flash and try to use available light. Consumer cameras don't have strong enough flashes to carry very far but night-time venues such as the red carpet in Cannes or the pit lane in Monaco are very well lit by the television stations which provide you with free lighting of the highest photographic quality. In more discrete situations, such as shooting into hotel or restaurant parties from the street, a flash will usually spoil a shot by reflecting off the windows. Pump up the ISO to a point where you can ➤

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*There's more to the
Festival than the stars .
Look around you and go
for atmosphere.*

shoot without the flash and try to use no lower than 1/60 second to freeze some movement. High ISO (see your camera's manual to learn how to set it) comes with a down side – a more pixelated image. But you're much better off with a pixelated image of Emma Watson or Lewis Hamilton than with motion blur that will make them unrecognisable.

Many consumer range cameras have swivel screens so remember to use yours for more than just viewing your results. Swivel the screen downwards and hold the camera high to shoot over the heads of the crowd. Look for unusual angles too. If you're in the second row of a crowd, sometimes crouching down and shooting up between the feet of the people in front can produce a striking shot. Follow fast movement by "panning" rather than shooting fixed. Following along with a race car will keep the car sharp while blurring the background.

Legal limits

Professionals know this and you should too. While you are free to photograph almost everywhere in France with some exceptions (military installations, courtrooms, etc) you are not free to do what you wish with every photo you take.

If you happen to get a shot of a publicly known musician, sporting figure or celebrity who is there for his own professional reasons such as a photo call or entering a screening, then you can do almost anything you like with the photo including displaying it in a photo exhibition or selling it to news media. You cannot, though, use it for commercial purposes. These people make their living from their identity and their image is their professional property. It can't be used to endorse a product without their permission, to present a political opinion without their consent, or for scurrilous reasons of any kind.

While there is some wiggle room for the images of celebrities, there are even stricter conditions concerning the private lives of citizens. In France, a man has the right to bring his mistress to the Monaco Grand Prix without risk of their photo being shown publicly where his wife may see it. France respects personal priva-

cy and while many of us find that a hindrance to our professional lives, it's also a deference we should appreciate. Crowd scenes are fine but specific shots of a couple canoodling on the Croisette should go no further than your private collection.

It's a good idea to download a release form (like the one linked to this article on our website). You'd be surprised how many people will sign it if approached with a smile and a friendly tone. Getting a release from your subject means that you can use the shot in a much wider context than a merely personal one.

Riviera residents have a front row seat to some of the world's most photographable events. Happy snapping. ■

Photo Op #2

The main subject of your photo must be a reflection or a subject seen through a reflection: a mirror, glass, water, eyeglasses, metal or anything that reflects.

This issue's challenge is "reflections", a classic with photo clubs because it teaches you to look beyond the obvious. You can use any camera, including a camera phone. No superimposing with image software like Photoshop but you can use software such as GIMP (it's free) to tweak and crop your image in any way you like. Email questions and your results to: photos@rivierareporter.com



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The Hollywood Reporter

The ultimate source for the film industry, THR, as it's known, publishes daily during the Festival de Cannes, and offers a free app for reading the magazine with a subscription. There's also a free THR festivals app, which updates news daily during film festivals around the world.

Scan QR code to access app links on our website.



Sky Sports F1

The Sky Sports app is free but you'll need a suitable Sky subscription and VPN connection if you're out of the UK (see HASEurope on page 21 for both). There is no better app for following Formula One than Sky Sports F1. In fact, now that Formula One is no longer broadcast on BBC or on any free-to-air French channel, this may be your only choice. Every race is streamed live online with a choice of outside and in-car views, race and championship positions, replays and interviews. This is absolutely the best app there is for F1 fans and an iPad must-have.

F1 2011

Don't let this app's name mislead you. If you'd like to get behind the wheel on the Monaco course but can't quite afford either the latest F1 car or the speeding fine then try F1 2011 by Jump Games (€0.79) on iPhone or iPad. The Monaco track hasn't changed since 2011 so you'll see the familiar Rascasse corner, the slowest hairpin of the season, the noisy tunnel and the chicane as you race past the yachts in the harbour. That is if you can do it without crashing. ■



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THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Internet in the home is changing the way we watch TV. Not only can we "time shift" to see our favourite show when we want, but now we can "place shift" and view it where we like.

By Huw Williams

THERE has never been so much choice of viewing on the box, wherever you may be. Geographical borders are no longer an obstacle to watching your favourite soaps and series from back home, even if you missed them the first time around. So how is it all possible? The answer lies in the convergence of two technologies: Traditional distribution systems broadcasting TV via dish, cable or aerial while the other streams content over IP via the internet. Here we will try and demystify the technology and concentrate on the features available that give you more control over what you watch, and when.

■ **Terrestrial TV (DVB-T)**

This is the French TNT equivalent to the British FreeView (about 20 channels) essential for brushing up or maintaining your French but many programs are also broadcast in *version originale*. The VO option can be accessed via the menu on the TV or TNT decoder (may vary with TV).

■ **Satellite TV (DVB-S)**

Transmitted from a satellite orbiting in space to an area on the earth's surface very much like a shadow called a "footprint", access to the beam is possible outside the targeted country. To receive British TV on the Riviera you need a dish of at least 85cm to get the full range of channels but even with that size of dish in really rough weather you can get picture break up.

For the likes of the British, Satellite



TV has been further enhanced with FreeSat offering even more channels. Important recent changes to their satellites however means that bigger dishes will be needed to receive all UK channels as the beam will be more focused on the UK. We are estimating 90cm to 1m20 dish size, but anything above a meter is subject to building regulations and your neighbours can object to you installing it on the roof.

If you watch UK FreeSat and you can no longer get Channel 5 or 5 USA, which have moved already onto the UK focused beam, you may need to look to changing the dish.

For Scandinavian channels, you will now need a 125cm dish, for German 65cm, and Italian 65cm, depending on the size of footprint the beam covers. Many have free to air services but most are encrypted. These can be made

available by using the carriers' card.

Distributing Satellite TV around a house is relatively straight forward, the one restriction being the distance between the receiving antenna and the TV, as the signal degrades over great distance on copper cable (known as attenuation). As the price of copper increases, copper cable is gradually being replaced by fibre optic that does not suffer from the same attenuation.

■ **Cable/DSL (DVB-C)**

These services are typically provided by companies that supply internet connectivity. The TV content is delivered via a cable and they generally deliver up to 200+ channels, generally including a number of "foreign" TV channels and current affairs or news.

Traditional services delivered by internet

■ **Place shifting**

This wonderful marketing phrase encompasses both traditional and internet technologies and allows you to watch your television across the internet. For example, if you have a TV in the UK, you control it in France and watch it on your TV, PC, Mac and even iPad. For this, you will need to have a dedicated TV set top box in the home country and a good internet connection in both places.



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This is also an option if you have an apartment and cannot install a dish, or if you do not need a permanent TV installation. The other advantage is that if you have a TV in the UK, you can receive all the services it provides, so if it supports BBC iPlayer, then you can receive that too.

■ Video on Demand

This manifests itself in many different guises: TV catch-up services like the BBC iPlayer, streaming services like Apple TV, or on-demand film services like Netflix and Love Film. The key here is to make sure your network is up to scratch – at a minimum it needs to be wired between the TV and internet modem.

Several services supplied via the internet, like BBC iPlayer, may have geographical restrictions. VPN makes it look as if your connection is coming from another country. There are

many available, the aptly named "Hide my Ass" being typical. Ideally you would use a router to manage the VPN connection.

■ Streamed TV

In some countries, like Russia, TV services are almost all now provided across the net. These provide a range of bundled TV channels like SmartSat TV. This currently provides 26 British/Irish channels, 13 Scandinavian channels and 45 Russian channels. The range of channels will increase over time and this provides a low impact way of getting foreign TV in France. This service does not require a VPN.

So just what is on the box? The answer is more than you'll ever have time to watch, whenever or wherever you are. ■

See wirelessandweb.co.uk for more.



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How the other half dump

On my regular strolls through Cannes, I am often astonished to find what appear to be the contents of whole apartments left out in the street (above), presumably for the ever-efficient *Allô Mairie* to clear away. Even more surprising, these cast-offs often contain items of beauty, or indeed value. I found myself rummaging through this collection which had appeared overnight in my *quartier*, as if I were a privileged version of one of the rubbish-dump scavengers in *Slumdog Millionaire*. I found a pair of impeccable Limoges coffee cups and saucers, a fine earthenware pot support and a serviceable stainless steel terrine mould before my anxiety about being spotted by the neighbours overcame me. I presume the current vogue for "everything new" has made offering such items for auction unprofitable.

"WALTER WALLCARPETING",
RivieraReporter.com forum

Great Service at Nice Terminal 1

I must give a big word of appreciation to the team of

youngsters manning the various service desks at Nice T1 one recent Friday night.

We arrived at 21h30 to find that the battery in our car in the P2 parking had died. As we couldn't face sorting out the *depannage* we decided to get a taxi home and sort things out in the morning. We had already paid so we needed to get a new ticket for the car park. As we were nearest to the Business Centre we asked in there first; the charming young lady sent us to the Information desk opposite arrivals.

They sent us to the parking booth just outside where another very helpful young lady said don't worry we have a battery charger and can fix it straight away. We went back to the car, lifted the bonnet and within 2 minutes a chap arrived, got the car started and then accompanied us out to make sure we were OK. This all took no more than 25 minutes after the plane landed. Very happy customers!

GRAHAM,
RivieraReporter.com forum

Winter Fuel Allowance

My thanks to Patrick Middleton for a recent article about the Winter Fuel Payment.

I am pleased to say that my wife, Joyce, and I have just received £150 each.

BRIAN LOVELESS,
by email

French TV Licence

I never watch French TV so do I have to pay the licence?

JEFF, by email

The payment known as the redevance is required of all those who possess a television set and has nothing to do with which programmes they choose to watch. The only viewers who don't have to pay this levy are those who are exempt from the taxe d'habitation with which the redevance is now conjoined. This year it's been hiked by €6 and now stands at €131. Penalties and fines are imposed for late payment or deliberate evasion (see impots.gouv.fr).

F1 on which one?

What happened to Formula One on French television? It's gone from BBC too. Help!

JON DURGEN, by email

It's gone for good, unless you're a Canal Plus subscriber. See the Bon App page for another solution.



Cancer Support

I am part of the Cancer Support Group 06 for English speakers located in Mougins. We have monthly group meetings in Mougins at the Tzanck Clinique in the conference room of the *Centre Azuréen du Cancerologie*, which is next to Clinique Plein Ciel. The meetings are the first Wednesday of each month at 15h30 and everyone is welcome to join us. The website www.csgo6.therivierawoman.com shows a how to find us. (We're on the same road as the Mougins School.) There is paying parking on the premises.

Our contact info is Anne Sookhoo cancersupporto6@gmail.com or Marilyn Deegan marilyn.deegan@wanadoo.fr
SARAH,
RivieraReporter.com forum

What EcoCrew can do

EcoCrew Association is a French registered charity (Identification R.N.A.: W061003120) following an inspiration of Sheila Goddard, owner of Environmental Yacht Services. Our efforts are aimed at the Super Yacht industry, and the cruising community, crew, owners and all active companies such as suppliers, brokers, agents, but most spe-

cifically the crews who operate these large or small vessels. We have identified a significant amount of waste of good quality reject clothing and other items that are quite simply discarded, lost, stored away, or thrown away to the bins. This often happens when yachts are sold, renamed, change style or renew uniforms. Until now there has not been (to our knowledge) a collection and distribution service, or any type of solution to embrace and manage this matter. Many yachts (for security reasons or other) do not like to distribute named uniforms locally, and would prefer to destroy or bin them. Crews change often; sizes are not always compatible. Inventories are often neglected leading to further purchase and extra stock. Many items are simply discarded quickly and simply for convenience with little more thought to whom it could be useful.

To protect yachts' privacy, clothes with logos are sent to Eastern Europe and abroad. We work closely with established charities such as *Proget-to Missioni onlus* (Italy) and the Red Cross in France and Italy. Other clothing without yachts' logos and other items are given to local charities. A full traceability of items is re-

spected and close working contact with our associate charities is maintained to ensure fairness and equal share.

Basically although we are faced with the opportunity of helping the underprivileged to benefit from these excesses and certain spoils of the fortunes of a very closed shop and self-indulgent industry, we are also able to offer the industry a structured and logical solution to this valuable cargo of waste.

At the Antibes Yacht Show, Sheila will be conducting a seminar about the new *Marpol* regulations which now control waste and discharge disposal more rigidly due to continuing marine damage. Enforcement of the new regulations will be more rigorous and it is important to be prepared.

DAVID GODDARD
EcoCrew, by email

See contact details and more on our website, keyword "EcoCrew".

Pub Quiz: name the department next to the A-M

British expats living in the Var do obviously crave for some of those quintessential items only easily available in good old Blighty, proper pork sausages, English bacon, a proper pork pie and of course fish and chips with Sarson's vinegar. Sophie Peysson, owner of the Café de la Tour (a *Riviera Reporter* free distribution point) in Les Arcs recognised she could fulfil that fish and chip requirement and for the past few years has provided that traditional British fare every last Friday lunchtime of the month, resulting in a substantial client base of both British and French customers.

Ever the opportunist, Sophie knew from her premises being used occasionally to host English pub style quizzes,



Photo: Morio



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that perhaps this was something else that could become a regular monthly event at her restaurant. Obviously setting and putting on a quiz would have more than stretched her comprehension of English, but she had a couple of customers who could help her and asked Jim North and myself to take on the project.

So the English pub-style quiz is now a regular monthly event being held on the first Friday of every month. We have taken the concept of the quiz, providing a 50 question quiz was simple, but we've have added a twist for the

end of the quiz session, an adaptation of the old television quiz, *Play Your Cards Right*.

MIKE MILNER, by email

Photo Challenge

I would like to thank you for posting three of my photos on your site's photo gallery. I feel so proud! PS: I promise not to send all my family albums.

CATHERINE MACHARIA, by email

There were several other entries to last issue's call for a photo taken from your home looking out. Well done to you

and the others, and special mention to Susan Battersby who shot some spectacular skies seen from her apartment in Monaco (left). See page 30 for the next challenge.

That's for today or tomorrow?

Most of us here have noticed that ideas of punctuality vary from country to country. I see this was confirmed by a trans-European study carried out by the Louis Harris polling organisation, which concluded the Dutch are the most punctual of all – one in two claiming to be always on the dot. They are also the most likely to complain of tardiness in others.

The French are often the last to show up but are the most tolerant of unpunctuality in others. Even among business executives delays in turning up for appointments of as much as 20 minutes are seen as "acceptable" – compared with an average of only 7 minutes in the UK.

BRIAN M, by email

Menton's English Library

According to the Riviera

Reporter the information relating to the Menton St John's library has been incorrect since the closure of the Church. Books can be purchased for €1 at the Residence de Louvre on a Saturday morning from 10h-11h30. Coffee and cookies are also served in one of the lounges for a small charge. Maybe you could correct this information in the Yellow Pages; although the telephone number for the padre remains the same plus there is a Sunday service at a small nearby church.

K. M. WRIGHT, by email

We have moved the Yellow Pages on to our website's E-Directory and are glad to post all updated information there. Scan this QR code to go directly to Yellow Pages. ■



WRITE TO US: Letters to the Editor can be sent by post (see page 50) or email to info@rivierareporter.com

Unless specifically marked "not for publication", letters may be published in our Letters pages and may also be added to our website forum. Names are withheld when requested but please note anonymous letters will not be considered.

How not to put a foot wrong in France – especially if you're a woman

GÉRALDINE Lepère (right) lived in England for two years but always felt that she didn't belong even though she spoke good English. Back in her native Grenoble (which, rather surprisingly, claims to be the provincial city with the largest number of expats) – she launched the site commeunefrancaise.com to help British *expatriées* facing a problem similar to the one she'd experienced in the UK.



Here's some of her advice:

- Forget your Anglo-Saxon notions of punctuality. Arriving *l'heure pile* will only irritate the hosts since they'll likely not be ready for you. You can be up to 20 minutes "late" without risking raised eyebrows.
- You're invited for *l'apéro* in someone's home. Don't bring a bottle of Beaujolais, it's a low-grade wine. Only a really good bottle would impress.
- Don't dress up too much to accept an invitation. "Nothing too eye-catching ... just simple, sober clothes of good quality and a decent coiffure."

- Remember you can't over-greet or even say goodbye too much in France. Tiresome as those handshakings and kisses might be if you skip the rituals you'll be put down as *une sauvage*.

- Anglo-Saxon women from a culture in which almost any word or gesture can be construed as "harassment" may misread the social style of French men. Visiting another couple, an expat woman may feel uneasy and (hubby too) when their host remarks, "*Vraiment, tu es ravissante ce soir*". Remember, here it's just a standard courtesy. ■

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YOUR MOVE: GET IT RIGHT

All you need to know about changing base on the Côte d'Azur

By Nancy Heslin

RECENT research from Bosch Power Tools claims the average Brit moves house about eight times in their lifetime (and, as indicated in a separate study, spends more than five years with a hanger) for a total cost of £28,952, or £75,972 for Londoners. Most Britons move 52km and settle for good about 100km from where they were born. This means that throughout their average life span, removal vans drive about 400km, packing and unpacking their boxes.

There's more changing house in the US, where about 1 in 6 Americans move each year and, according to the Census Bureau, the average American moves approximately 14 times in his or her lifetime, while Canadians move about 10 times, and Japanese only four.

Regardless of where you fall in to the statistics, no matter which country you are moving in and no matter what distance, there's no escaping the fact that moving is the third most stressful life events after death and divorce.

It's not just the logistics of moving from Point A to Point B that's taxing, there are boxes to be packed, internet providers to be switched, car registration to be changed, new schools to be looked at – and just what do you do with the kids on moving day? You can't put them in a crate.

Putting it all in perspective, Roy Cox, well-known in the removal business on the Riviera, offered this: "A specialist antique dealer once said that possessions are only things and they will not love you back." ■



STEP 1: GET ORGANISED



- Make a list of jobs that need to be done in weeks leading up to move.
- Get several quotes and then book movers in advance.
- Get rid of the clutter before moving. Three piles: Keep, Maybe, Bin.
- Remember that you may be limited in volume of what you can put in rubbish. Plan to put out a little each day.
- Don't forget to get meter readers in both new and old places. Arrange for electricity before moving.
- For a list of who to inform about your move and when, see *RivieraReporter.com*, keyword "MoveFrance".
- Make sure kids and pets are looked after on moving day. It will be stressful enough ...

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So you have decided to hire a removal company for a large local or international move ...

Questions you need to ask.

- Choosing a removal company to entrust your most valuable and sentimental belongings to is not an easy task, particularly since many appear to offer a very similar service. Firstly you should **ask your friends and colleagues** who they moved with and if they have any recommendations. If that fails, look in the *Riviera Reporter*.

- You should begin by **obtaining 3 written quotations** as removal costs can vary greatly, but do keep in mind that the cheapest is often not the best.

- When making the initial phone call to request a quotation, for an international move it is prudent to **use a firm that is affiliated with the Le Déménageur Spécialisé- Chambre Syndicale du Déménagement**, British Association of Removers (BAR), Federation of European Moving Associations (FEDEMAC) or

Association of International Movers (AIM) and preferably with a good knowledge of, and experience in, France. You may also ask for references from previous customers who have had a good experience with the company.

- When talking with the surveyor, it is **critical that you identify and show all items which are to go**, including contents of any attic, garage and garden shed. Ask "How will you pack my belongings? What packing materials will you use? How long will it take? If you have special requirements such as transport of pets or cars, can they handle this? Ask that **all the promises they make are put in the quotation**.

- When you receive a quotation, **read it carefully**. Does it cover all of your requirements? Does it allow specific delivery dates (a cheaper groupage service can take months for delivery)? Does it include any special requests such as be-

spoke individual crates for fragile artwork or furniture? Does it include costs for any extras required such as outside elevators? Does it acknowledge any access difficulties or just say something like "assumed good access and ground floor delivery"? Does it include parking permits and any special permissions (elevator)? Do all the quotations offer the same service?

- If you need storage, you should also **question the storage facilities** being offered to you. How secure is the storage? Is it alarmed? Will your goods be containerised? Is it a solid brick building or a metal building where temperatures can vary more dramatically? Are there competent warehouse staff?

- Remember that **service quality can vary dramatically between companies**, whatever is promised. Check what you are told; **ask to see any warehouse before you agree** to store there to ensure the company actually has their own warehouse and it is in a good condition.

Delahaye Moving



LOCAL MOVES: DIY

Most removal companies agree, for a small, local move it's cheaper to move yourself. So if you're going from Menton to Mougins, consider this:

- Check household insurance to see if policy covers self-moves.
- Parking permits must be applied for at the *mairie* and there are often time restrictions in residences.
- Label the boxes so you know where to put them when you arrive at your new home.
- Pack to the top of the box, but not so it is bulging. Do not buy cheap cartons, they break, crush, and only cause damage.

- Don't be clever and fill a lampshade carton with books, you won't be able to lift it. Books should be packed in book boxes.
- Packing should correspond with the size and risk of the object. Regular furniture under blankets can be transported locally but high value items often require special-made cases or crates.
- Inspect access to your current and especially new address: a low bridge or tree, a tight turn.
- You can drive a 24m³ box van with a permit

But driving licence but even though the van may hold all your belongings, it's often allowed only 1 tonne (or less) of payload, including driver and passenger. Fines can be high and you'd have to get another vehicle to off load the excess weight before moving on. Tail lifts decrease permitted weight by 400-500 kg.

- Weights can and are often checked on the A8.
- Toll charges and petrol add expense to your move.

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Having lived in several countries around the world has given Linda Boersma an open-mindedness to understand her AGS International customers.

AGS MOVERS in Nice is a family-owned business that has personalized contact with its clients, to understand their various cultures and nationalities. As part of a global removal company that has no fewer than 126 locations in 78 countries, AGS takes its responsibilities seriously: paying attention to clients' needs at this important and stressful stage in their life while maintaining efficient removal solutions by air, sea or road. With an exceptional international network built over 38 years, AGS Worldwide on average, moves more than 40,000 families' belongings every year, monitoring each move from the point of departure to the final delivery destination. AGS can guarantee quality and consistently superior service throughout the world.

Linda Boersma, 48, has lived on the French Riviera for over twenty years. She's Dutch but also speak fluent French, English and German, which as she says is very useful for her job as a Sales Consultant with AGS International Movers.

Explains Linda: "We are a professional moving company that gives advice and can meet your special needs. We help you with documentation and customs, and we use professional packing material while taking great care to deliver and reassemble your furniture.

"Sometimes when moving abroad for a couple of years, you're not always able to send all your personal belongings either due to a lack of space, no need for that item in the interim or maybe you're looking for a new home and have no space at all. We have a storage facility of 1500m² and offer short-term storage.

"And I'd like to add that AGS is the first international removal group to support United Nations Global Compact: for every international removal operation, AGS plants a tree in Mali or Indonesia."

Contact Linda directly for a free pre-move survey on 06 60 27 00 28 or at linda.boersma@ags-demenagement.com. See also agsmovers.com

AN EASY MOVE is a small, hands on, family run removal company which has been looking after the English-speaking community for over 10 years. They have moved two boxes to London, a whole container to Hong Kong, a baby grand piano from one room to another. They have moved clients from Biot to Cannes, Monaco to New York and St Tropez to Edinburgh.

Felicity and David Dove aim to live up to their company name. Says Felicity, "We appreciate the stress involved and endeavour to make your move as easy as possible by listening to your individual requirements. If you prefer, we can provide female packers, organize professional cleaners, electricians, plumbers and decorators. If necessary we can also help with the setting up of utilities – telephone, internet, electricity.

Don't forget that removal companies quote by volume so the more you have the more you pay. Items you don't want can be sold or given away. Another point, if you're relocating due to a job move, find out what costs your employer will cover."

An Easy Move wear their moves on their sleeves and understand that some possessions are irreplaceable. "When David was working for one of the large UK removal companies in the hills above Menton, the last item he delivered was a large stone which he placed in the garden. When asked why she had brought a large stone all the way from London to the South of France, the lady replied that she had been sitting on that stone when her husband had proposed to her during the Second World War. They had been married for over 50 years before he passed away and there was no way she was leaving it behind!"

For more call 04 94 84 12 04 or visit aneasymove.com

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DELAHAYE MOVING

was founded in 1977 by Elisabeth Delahaye, a then 27-year-old Belgian expatriate, the first office was the top floor of a house she had bought in London. Elisabeth remains the owner and Managing Director over 35 years later. She is closely involved in the Franco-phone community in London having been advisor to the French Chamber of Commerce in Britain for over 15 years and has been rewarded by the French government for her charitable work with the Order of Merit and the *Legion d'Honneur*.

The company was formed at a time when the expatriate market was not as developed as today and Elisabeth pursued a strategy of offering individualized service, differentiating Delahaye Moving at the outset from other removal companies. Decades later, Delahaye Moving now operates globally and has offices in London, Paris, Nice and New York and



Elisabeth Delahaye recently become *President of the Société Française Bienfaisance*. She received a knighthood of the Order of the Crown by the Belgian government.

has its own direct employees, its own fleet of vehicles from small vans to 18-ton trucks and its own warehouses.

Explains Elisabeth: "We pride ourselves on the highest service level and an individual customer approach, which few can match. We also have invested to minimise the risk of damage during transport so we have a fleet of Mercedes trucks with air suspension and use only the best packing materials from thick double-walled boxes, strong tape, 5-ply paper blankets. We offer a comprehensive moving solution with handyman services, pet transport etc, and we have amazing storage facilities on the Côte D'Azur, with a bonded warehouse, strong-rooms and a temperature controlled wine storage as well as 24 hour video surveillance linked to our own server."

Contact 04 93 29 24 16 or see delahayemoving.com

M-DAY: THE PREP WORK



- ✎ A few common sense requirements you can do: defrost the fridge and dry it out, empty water from any other items to be transported, water damage can ruin other items.
- ✎ Put all the things you want to take with you in a safe and secure place: keys, passports, travel tickets, clothes etc. so that they don't get packed into a box.
- ✎ Try and find installation and technical documents for anything that has to be dismantled.
- ✎ Note any items that cannot be transported due to laws/regulations e.g. foodstuffs, weapons, and make sure they are kept separate since if a shipment is stopped and found with illegal items, you may face delays or fines.
- ✎ When moving day comes and the representative and the men arrive show them round the house, explaining all the important issues you discussed and confirmed on the quotation.

Moving in and Moving on

Living the dream on the Côte d'Azur.

What happens when you wake up?

Moving In

FORTYSOMETHING Jennifer Lamarre arrived in Roquefort-les-Pins just over a year ago with two suitcases and her French husband, who had not lived in the country since the age of three.

"I imagined life here like Peter Mayle described: chitchat with the villagers and immersing in the culture. I moved to France to meet French people, but it hasn't quite worked out like that."

Jennifer was born in Pennsylvania but after college moved to Washington D.C., where she met her husband, Eric, in 2003.

"We were both working in the capital in 2009 when the crash hit and Eric found himself out of work. We toyed with the idea of moving to France. Eric's great-grandfather had a house in Roquefort-les-pins, and his family invited us to use. So we did."

Jennifer applied for a visa at the Boston consulate and two days it was issued.

"It was so fast but then I came to France, and even though my visa allowed me to work, I couldn't be hired until I had authorization from OFII, the *Office Français de l'Immigration et de*

l'Intégration. Spouses of French nationals who come to the country are informed by letter that they must complete, much to my surprise, a four-day integration program ... which is dragged out over four to six weeks! The first half-day, you have to sign a 'welcome contract' – what they call *un contrat d'accueil et d'intégration* – and have a medical. Day 2 and 3 are full days in French, a *formation civique* and *session d'information sur la vie en France*, respectively, to learn about life in France and things like how to get a *carte vitale*. The last half-day is a *bilan de compétences* when they assess your skills and talk about jobs. They had English, Arabic and Russian translators on hand, but spouses who didn't speak the language had to also attend language classes. I received a letter stating I had fulfilled 'my contract' and obtained my *Attestation de dispense de formation linguistique* so I could finally be employed."

Jennifer fortunately had taken French up to college level, and studied three years at Alliance Française in Washington. Her background was in environmental policy and fundraising.

"I was lucky to get a full-time job editing in English with the Nice-branch of a

Swiss NGO, and I really appreciate the fact that I have a French work contract.

"I miss my family and friends in the US and go back to visit but it's so easy to stay connected these days. We have a busy life here, like we did in Washington, and this is where we see ourselves settling long-term.

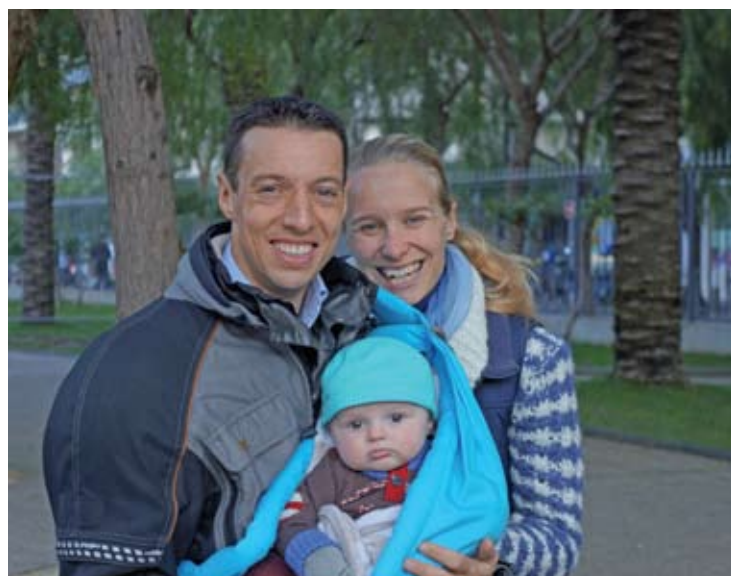
"I think, though, that you really have to want to live here. You can't just move to the South of France and get a job. Plus there's an enormous amount of administrative paperwork and with the language, it's just harder to do things, like buy a car or open a bank account even. And, as I said, I imagined we'd only have French friends and be completely immersed in the French way of life, but now we try things like the Hash House Harriers, with international members around our age. Otherwise, just how many four-hour lunches can you have?"

Moving On

JASMINA Glad was born west of Helsinki in Kirkkonummi. At age 15 she moved by herself to an island between Finland and Sweden to learn Swedish



A recent arrival to the Côte d'Azur, American Jennifer Lamarre atop San Raféu, the 12-century church in St Raphael.



"Good weather and great cycling suddenly didn't seem enough of a reason to stay," says Jasmina Glad pictured with husband Thomas and 6-month-old Elvin in Nice.

and her first university degree was in sports, exercise and health science in Stockholm.

"I have a very active family. My mum just did her first triathlon at the age of 72! By the age of 16, I was being groomed for professional football but I preferred individual sports so I focused on track and field."

She was recruited to Northern Arizona University, with a scholarship to compete in hurdles, and she finished a degree in health promotion. Jasmina returned to Sweden to get her third degree, a Masters in International Public Health and wrote a thesis on the role of banned substances in sports.

The 34-year-old talks about Canadian Ben Johnson who won gold at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. He was stripped of his medal less than 24-hours later when banned substances were found in his urine. He denied taking steroids.

"I remember feeling very disappointed and was intrigued, as that was in the early days of drug testing in sports."

While finishing her Masters she worked at International Doping Tests and Management in Sweden. Then, in 2007, Jasmina took over the anti-doping program at the International Athletic Federation in Monaco, and helped set the groundwork for the Athlete Biological Passport in athletics, which was implemented in 2008.

It was in the elevator at work of all places where she met her Dutch husband, Thomas, now 40. He had heard about "a girl who did triathlons" (she qualified twice for Ironman Hawaii), and wanted some training tips.

"We met on a Wednesday,

had lunch on Friday, dinner Sunday and moved in together on Monday."

Six months after in summer 2010, Thomas' work took the couple to Rio, Brazil, which for a nonsensical Finn, was an administrative nightmare.

"We married in Brazil but it took six months to sort out the paperwork. There was always a document or stamp missing. I just don't function like that."

They moved back to Nice in spring of 2012. Jasmina was pregnant by this time and their son Elvin was born in October, at which point her love affair with Nice was already staring to fade.

"We were so happy to be back and to have a place in the port but in the short time we were gone, prices had really skyrocketed and the area has become just too crowded. And suddenly it didn't feel like a friendly environment anymore: people peeing on the street, the noise, and the dirtiness. Did I really want to raise a child in this? Good weather and great cycling suddenly didn't seem enough of a reason to stay."

A big factor for Jasmina and Thomas was the lack of family close by and support.

"A nanny is €15 an hour here. Can you believe that? So on one rainy Sunday, we randomly looked online at houses for sale in Finland. We found one with a massive yard, skiing trails, and only a few kilometers from my family – and for half the price of a Nice apartment. My brother-in-law visited the house on Monday, Thomas flew out to see it Tuesday, and we made an offer Wednesday. Thursday he quit his job and in April I'm happily moving to a house I've never seen." ■



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JUST THE JOB

In the first of a new series featuring expats doing work normally carried but by native French, meet Father Peter Watts, a Welshman and the Parish Priest of Grimaud in the Var

By Patrick Middleton

AS a young boy growing up in Pembrokeshire Peter Watts was sometimes taken by his mother to pray in the local Catholic Church. "In fact, we weren't a Catholic family but that's the place she liked to go. At the time, of course, I wasn't clear about Church history. I realised that the Church in Wales – part of the Anglican family – had a shared faith with Catholics but at some time got separated from Rome. Anyway, from quite early on I decided I wanted to be a priest and after reading theology at university I was ordained as an Anglican. I worked in Wales, then in Cornwall – in Falmouth. As time went on, I began to feel more and more unhappy with certain aspects of the Church of England, especially in the way that unilateral decisions affecting fundamental faith and practice were taken. Like a lot of people I thought that the ordination of women would be a step that would create a new barrier between Canterbury and the ancient Churches of Rome and the Orthodox Churches at a time when it was generally thought that the reconciliation between Canterbury and Rome was imminent.

How has he come to be a Catholic priest officiating in the Var? "I was received into the Church and, to cut the story short, got to know Bishop Madec of Toulon, a Breton and so a fellow Celt. He invited me to join his diocese and eventually I became *curé* of Grimaud and just recently a Canon of Toulon Cathedral." Was it a difficult transition from Anglican parson to Catholic priest? "I have to say I received a wonderful welcome – from Bishop Madec and later from his successor Bishop Rey, from my fellow clergy and from the people of Grimaud, including the mayor. One difference, I'd say, is that the Catholic clergy are more *solidaire* than their Anglican counterparts. There aren't the same sharp contrasts of what across



the Channel is called "churchmanship". For example, one Anglican clergyman might be happy to be called 'Father', while his neighbour may recoil at the very idea."

How would he describe his parish? "Well, Grimaud has two faces, one in summer, the other in winter. During the season there's a great mixture of people amongst the holiday-makers and in winter I deal mainly with the locals. Some of these are Anglophones, often well established here, and they usually seem quite happy to speak with me in French." What exactly does a parish priest do? "Obviously, his major duty is to offer Mass in his church. In summer I celebrate four masses at the weekend, and two in winter. During the week I have a wide range of pastoral duties such as visiting the hospital and the old people's home, a certain number of house calls, catechising the children, preparing people for marriage and adult baptism. It's always gratifying to welcome an enquirer.

Currently I am preparing a former Anglican and a Presbyterian for reception into the Church. Then there are special events of various kinds. I'm always invited to join the mayor at the Armistice Day ceremonies, for example. In France, of course, the Church isn't 'established' but here, as in many places, the *curé* is treated as a significant figure within the community."

Anyone following the media must be aware that there are controversial issues in society which concern the Church, currently that of gay marriage, for instance. "Firstly, we have a duty to care for everyone and to reject anything akin to homophobia. Secondly, it seems plain to me that marriage, in its historic sacramental sense, is not open to people of the same sex. This is not bigotry, far from it, it's simply a recognition of reality." On a different issue, what about relations with other

Christians? "We have at Port Grimaud an 'ecumenical church' which is used by Catholics, the members of the French Reformed Church and more recently by Anglicans. The Reformed Church has a definite presence during the summer months with a weekly Sunday service. The Mass is celebrated twice each Sunday in French and in Polish. I've always had an excellent relationship with local Anglicans who are based at St John's Church in St Raphaël and have enjoyed a particular degree of co-operation with Ben Eaton and since his retirement with Keith Bretel. You may have noticed that people from all denominations came here for a Christmas service of traditional English carols. Once a month an ecumenical service is held at Grimaud Parish Church when one or other of us conducts the service or preaches. Our Lord prayed 'that they may be one'. Well, in Grimaud and St-Raphaël we're trying to make that possible." ■

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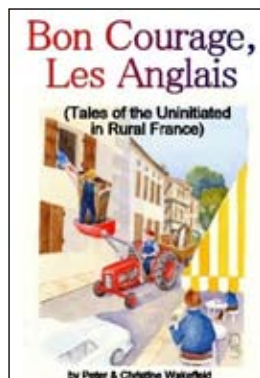
An everyday story of (expat) country folk

SINCE Peter Mayle set the ball rolling there's grown up a large literature of British expat accounts of life in France. Many of these are so much pastis-flavoured mush, useless to anyone thinking of trying to realise a Chardonnay dream. In *Bon Courage, Les Anglais: Tales of the Uninitiated in Rural France* (UK: PublishNation) Peter and Christine Wakefield have produced something really worth reading and that in less than a hundred pages.

The Wakefields had holidayed in France and decided to try living here. They then embarked on "intensive research". Eventually they opted for Bénévent in Limousin where they found a property which almost immediately won their hearts. It was in poor condition and so needed extensive renovation which they tackled with energy and enthusiasm. They couldn't guess, though, that this would have very unwelcome consequences and this aspect of their story should give some pause to any prudent intending settler in rural France.

The book's an easy read – its clear and graceful style owing much, Peter Wakefield admits, to his attendance at a writers' course in the UK. We get a chronological account of the couple's nearly five years in the Limousin interspersed with much practical advice. If you're refurbishing an old house like theirs, for example, if possible it's a good idea to buy paint in the UK as the French product is thinner and needs multiple coats. A lot of attention is given to heating and such topics on how to choose *bois de chauffage* and the right way to stack logs.

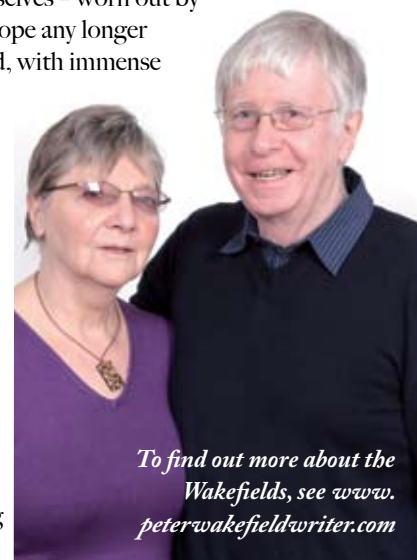
Although the Wakefields loved their time in the Limousin countryside they are very clear about the downside, and this applies equally to our own region. Winter is not like summer. By November "the streets, once so vibrant, so full of colour, are often



empty and grey while the cold and wet days can leave everyone trapped indoors for long periods". Luckily, the Wakefields quickly developed a very good relationship with the locals. They recall their neighbours as offering them "support, care and real love". Incidentally, this relationship was helped by their dogs who turned out to be "a sure-fire way of getting to know people".

So, you might say, why did Peter and Christine decide to leave their "special piece of paradise"? The reason offers an important lesson. From the start they threw themselves into the task of renovation

and repair ranging from simple paint jobs to the major undertaking of restorative surgery on a dysfunctional septic tank. Eventually they found themselves – worn out by too much DIY – unable to cope any longer with rural life and compelled, with immense reluctance, to return to the UK to be close to their children. I spoke to Peter Wakefield down the line at his new home at Rednal near Birmingham. Was re-entry into UK life easy? "I'm afraid not. We miss so much from our time in the Limousin: the people, the conviviality, the French food and, very much, the wonderful medical care we enjoyed. All I regret is doing too much DIY." ■ P.M



*To find out more about the
Wakefields, see www.peterwakefieldwriter.com*

FROM A RIVIERA PAST: The Good Medicine of Queen Victoria's Doctor

by Judit Kiraly

SOME years ago researching a university project, I came across a copy of a *Nice-Médicale* brochure, published by a 19th-century group of hygiene and public health doctors in Nice, mentioning the arrival of a most unusual couple. Dr William Allen Sturge, MVO, MD (1850-1919) and his first wife, Dr Emily Bovell Sturge, MD (1840-1885), promoted the importance of local public health, the evolution of medical practices, and public education of girls and women's rights.

William Allen Sturge was the eldest son of a prominent Quaker family and named after two uncles. One uncle, William Sturge, was a famous abolitionist; the other had a rather peculiar connection to Queen Victoria's father. Mr Allen lent money to Edward Duke of Kent and his pregnant German wife in order to travel to England, so their daughter would be born on English soil and thus she could be crowned Queen. Victoria fully paid back this loan decades later.

William Allen Sturge had two brothers and five sisters, the Sturge Suffragettes of Bristol, known for their fight for women's right to education.

Dr Sturge undertook his medical studies in Bristol and London, completing them in Paris, specializing both in pathology and in neurology. In fact, Sturge-Weber syndrome, the rare port-wine stain birthmark, usually on the face, carries his name. He met his first wife, Emily Bovell in Paris. She was one of the first seven women who studied medical courses in Edinburgh, but they were forbidden to pass their final exams and were thrown out of university by protesting male students. Emily finished her degree and qualified brilliantly as a doctor in Paris. They both started practising in London, but William was requested to withdraw his application for a hospital position because ... he was married to a lady doctor! Incredible as it may sound, being a doctor made her a woman of ill repute.

Emily's health also started to show the first signs of tuberculosis and so they decided to move to the milder climate of Nice. Here, Emily was warmly welcomed being the city's first lady doctor, and she soon had a large group of women patients. A published lecturer, she was an advocate of cleaning up Nice's streets and installing sewers. She was respected by her peers and was the first woman to receive the *Ordre des Palmes Académiques* distinction. Sadly, in 1885, aged only 45, she died of the dreaded lung disease. She was buried in the Caucade cemetery where her grave is still in reasonable condition.

William decided to remain in Nice and a year later married his second wife, Julia Shirreff (1846-1926), the well-educated daughter of the MP of Worcester, who had studied nursing in London, and was the founder and manager of the Nurses Institute of Nice. Her Institute provided properly trained English-speaking nurses to the numerous British doctors who worked here during the season. Looking after the huge community of "invalid" winter residents was a medical necessity and Julia was a business manager in the true sense of the word. She ran her husband's important practice, the Gibraltar Mission for Seamen, the Nurses Institute and Nurses Home, the English Library of Nice (Dr Sturge was its President), as well as an association helping abandoned and penniless British domestics to return home. She rented the same pew in the church for decades and was a tireless fundraiser of Holy Trinity. The Sturges were close friends of Consul and Lady Harris and the Reverend and Mrs Langford, their friendship was the pillar of British society in Nice.

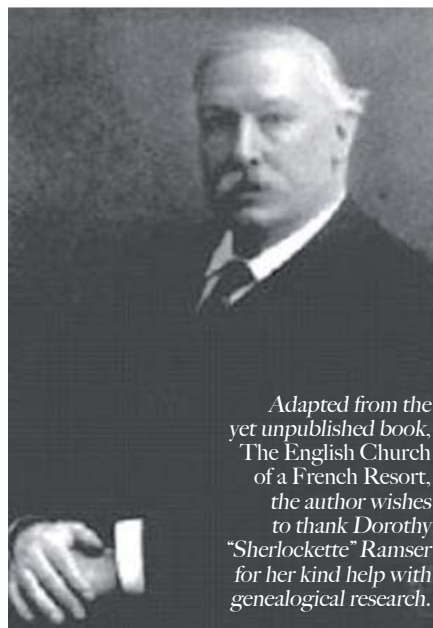
Dr Sturge was personal physician of Queen Victoria during her successive winter visits and he went to great lengths to ensure that all was done for her to be received in the most salubrious conditions. His report of the Grand Hotel ran several pages and was published in the *British Medical Journal*. The Queen also much appreciated Julia, and rewarded her with gifts generously.

William and Julia had a second passion: palaeontology. He was one of the forerunners of this new science and they travelled widely every summer to Egypt, Australia and even the US, attending conferences, visiting sites and adding to their immense collection, which became the largest private museum of its time. Their bronze amphoras and vases are now exhibited in Royal

Ontario Museum in Toronto; their huge flint collection was donated to the British Museum.

Having lived in Nice for 27 years, the Sturges retired due to his frail health in 1907, and moved to Icklingham, Suffolk. William Allen Sturge died in 1919, when after suffering from Spanish flu he developed nephritis. Julia moved to live with one of his sisters, Caroline, who was also a doctor and nursed her through her final years. She also carried on helping the District Nurse visiting the poor and was active till her final year. She died in 1926 and was buried next to her husband in Icklingham.

The Sturges are all amongst my favourite characters of the longstanding British community in Nice. They had no children and most of their private papers and photos sadly disappeared. ■



Adapted from the yet unpublished book, *The English Church of a French Resort*, the author wishes to thank Dorothy "Sherlockette" Ramser for her kind help with genealogical research.

april

PICASSO À MOUGINS

04 92 92 37 20 - www.mougins.fr
 Until May 12: The last twelve years of his life here are celebrated in the exceptional exhibition organised by the Mougins Classical Art Museum (MACM) and the City of Mougins: Picasso à Mougins. The focus of the exhibition includes a splendid linoleum cut, L'Homme barbu, produced at the home of the great master in 1962, several of his renowned Volland Suite drawings, complemented by an extraordinary biographical display of photographs by his confident and renowned photographer, Lucien Clergue. These capture different aspects of Picasso's last years of work and leisure time with his great friends and iconic personalities in his famous residence here in Mougins. Open every day from 10am-12.30pm and 2pm-6pm - Free admission. Visitors to the exhibition are offered a reduced admission to the MACM.

BAM

+377 93 50 19 52 - bam-monaco.org
 April/May TBC: A talk and guided tour around the SMA (*Société Monegasque d'Assainissement*) factory in Fontvieille. Do you see belching smoke or notice any smells? No then why not? This is a "state of the art" factory and this factory deals with all the rubbish collected in Monaco, Beausoleil, Cap Martin and La Turbie. Sensible shoes need to be worn and hard hats are supplied. The whole talk/tour will take approximately 1-2 hours. Date to be confirmed. Price €10 members & €15 non-members.

FRANCE-GRANDE BRETAGNE NICE

04 93 81 76 74 - fgb-nice.com
 Thurs Apr 4, 15h30: "Berlioz in Nice", a presentation in English by Ian Woolf.
 Wed Apr 11, 15h30: Guided tour in English of the Palais Lascaris, Vieux Nice.
 Thurs Apr 12, 15h30: Gourmet Tour in English of Roquebrune sur Argens. Holy Trinity Church Hall, 1bis rue de la Buffa, Nice.

ENGLISH QUIZ AT CAFÉ DE LA TOUR, LES ARCS

04 94 85 22 06
quizdelatour@gmail.com
 Fri Apr 5 and Fri May 3: Please email for call for entry details.

TIS THE SEASON

THE Alpes-Maritimes has over 3000km of fishable waterways and the Var even more. Some of these can be fished all year round for such species as perch, pike, carp and even eels; elsewhere, you can go after trout during the season which opens in mid-March and continues until the third Sunday in September.



A one-year licence in the department you choose is €62, or a licence which allows you to fish almost anywhere in France €85. Poaching brings a fine of €450. For clubs see peche-cote-azur.com (Alpes-Maritimes) and also <http://fedepechevar.com> (Var).

EBICA OPEN DAY

04 93 64 32 84 - ebicaschool.com
 Sat Apr 6: We are currently taking registration for the 2013-2014 school year for preschool, primary and secondary bilingual French-English education. Come and visit and see our new campus.

CATHOLIC MASS IN ENGLISH

Shirley de Jonk
sdejonk24@yahoo.com
 Sat April 6, 18h: English liturgy and hymns in English at St Paul des Nations Church (allée Georges Pompidou) Sophia Antipolis (Access 12). See www.ndsagesse.com Also (with Gospel Choir), Sat May 4, Sat June 1.

SAGESSE GOSPEL SINGERS CONCERT

06 13 58 37 69
 Sun Apr 7, 16h: Special guests Kadria, Tyndale and Aidan Thomas and the Sagesse Gospel Singers at St Paul des Nations Church (allée Georges Pompidou) Sophia Antipolis (Access 12). Free.

RIVIERA HASH HOUSE HARRIERS

www.rivierahhh.com
 A club for non-runners, runs are every other Sunday.

EPWN NICE

www.europeanpwn.net/nice
 Mon Apr 8, 12h30: Nice Buddy Lunch. What is a Buddy Lunch? The goal of the Buddy Lunches in Nice is to encourage "Out of the Box" thinking in a world of ever growing templates ...

BAM

+377 93 50 19 52 - bam-monaco.org
 Tues Apr 9, 18h30: AGM at St Paul's Anglican Church Library (down the steps at the side of the church), avenue de Grande Bretagne, Monaco. After the AGM, drinks will be served. Members only. No charge.

RIVIERAKLUBBEN/ SWEDISH CLUB

04 92 13 15 34
rivieraklubben@wanadoo.fr
 Wed Apr 10, 10h: Swedish boules championship in Valbonne.

VIAC

Graham Button 04 94 40 11 19
president@viac.fr
 Fri Apr 12: Gourmet lunch.

COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF THE RIVIERA

commonwealthclubriviera.com
 Sat Apr 13: AGM preceded by an EGM. Details on website.

AMIAC

John or Jenny 04 93 65 00 58
 Sat Apr 13, noon: The April lunch will take place at The Restaurant Cote Mougins, (2308 Avenue Marechal Juin, Carrefour de la Blanchisserie; Tel: 04 93 45 25 96). Aperitifs and Amuse Bouches at noon, followed by lunch at 13h. Price €43 Members/€46 for guests, who are always welcome. To reserve or get menu details please call.

INTERNATIONS NICE

www.internations.org/nice-expats
 Tues Apr 16: At Hotel Ellington.

RIVIERAKLUBBEN/ SWEDISH CLUB

04 92 13 15 34
rivieraklubben@wanadoo.fr
 Tues April 16, 18h: Povels Naturbarn concert with famous Swedish artists Lotta & Mikael Ramel and Backa Hans Eriksson at Espace Miramar in Cannes. Non-members are also welcome to this event. Price €50 incl. a glass of champagne. Please call for reservations.

EPWN NICE

www.europeanpwn.net/nice
 Tues Apr 16, 18h30: The Secrets of Speaking Revealed. Deborah Abbott Moulin and Melanie Gulliver will show you how you can improve your performance with tips on content and delivery, and some practical steps. At the Novotel in Sophia Antipolis, 290 Rue Fedor Dostoïevski. Members register €15 until April 5th; then €20. Guest fee €30.

ANTIBES YACHT SHOW

04 92 90 59 15
antibesyachtshow.com
 Thurs Apr 18-Sun Apr 21: Antibes Yacht Show is the only brokerage, charter and refit show in spring in the Mediterranean. Over the last 5 years AYS has had exhibitors from 14 different countries and has featured yachts from 15 to 70m. It has reached the position of being a key event in the yachting industry. There is free parking and free bus and boat shuttles to take the visitors to the show.

TOP MARQUES MONACO

topmarquesmonaco.com
 Thurs Apr 18-Sun Apr 21: See It! Drive It! Buy It! Top Marques celebrates its 10th anniversary over four days of excessiveness, luxury and sheer pleasure. 30,000 visitors expected. 6 Supercars World Premieres. More than 160 exhibitors (see page 12 for more).

POSH**PARAPHERNALIA**

sunny-bank.org

Sat Apr 20 & Sat May 18: Open house, library, posh paraphernalia, bric-a-brac, two course lunch and refreshments at Sunny Bank's The Grange 815 ch des Gourettes, Mouans Sartoux.

22ND NICE**SEMI-MARATHON**

nicesemimarathon.com

Sun Apr 21, 9h30: 21.1km departs Promenade des Anglais in front of Théâtre de Verdure.

**RIVIERAKLUBBEN/
SWEDISH CLUB**

04 92 13 15 34

rivieraklubben@wanadoo.fr

Tues Apr 23, 19h: Swedish Ukulele concert at Stillegården, 1 chemin des Caucours, Haut de Cagnes.

BAM

+377 93 50 19 52 - bam-monaco.org

Wed Apr 24, 10h30: Explore Escoffier! Learn all about the greatest master chef of all times. Guided visit round the Escoffier Museum in Villeneuve-Loubet including a temporary exhibition of Maxim's Restaurant in Paris, followed by lunch in a restaurant next to the museum. Price €35 members: €45 non-members €45. We will be organising car pooling so if you are happy to be a driver for this event, please contact bam@monaco.mc

**AMERICAN CLUB OF
THE RIVIERA**

americanclubriviera.com

Sat April 27, 10h30: arrive at Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins. Welcome glass of champagne. Tour begins at 11h in two groups so as to allow for better hearing and the ability to ask questions. 12h15 walk next door to Restaurant L'Amandier for lunch on the terrace with a spectacular view across the Cote d'Azur. The museum has a number of Picasso works and the village will have a larger collection of his works on display near the centre ville. Cost €50.

CAR BOOT SALE NICE

Elisabeth Calmes (publicity) or Susan Williams 06 30 05 61 84

Sat Apr 27, 10-16h: at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 11 rue de la Buffa, Nice. Refreshments throughout the day. Nearby parking at the Parking de la Méditerranée.

**COMMONWEALTH CLUB
OF THE RIVIERA**

commonwealthclubriviera.com

End April: Visit to the St. Cézaire caves. Details on website.

ASSOCIATION CHINE**HORIZON**

04 93 80 31 09

www.chinehorizon.com

Sat Apr 27, 14h30-19h: Spring of Tastes and Colours is organising an *atelier de cuisine* devoted to the cuisine of Northern China. Learn how to make *chausson aux légumes* and *crêpes aux oignons* at the Maison des Associations, 33 rue Trachel, Nice. Cost: Members €23, non-members €26. Eating only: €7 per plate.

may**HOLY TRINITY CANNES**

04 93 94 54 61

holyltrinitycannes.org

Every Wed, English library at 11h and Shepherd & Dog lunch at 12h30. All are welcome. Every Thurs, 10h: Keep-Fit.

**RIVIERAKLUBBEN/
SWEDISH CLUB**

04 92 13 15 34

rivieraklubben@wanadoo.fr

Thurs May 2, 10h: Visit Val Rameh garden in Menton with Swedish guide.

BRIC A BRAC

sunny-bank.org

Thurs May 2: Library, posh paraphernalia, bric-a-brac, light lunch and refreshments at Sunny Bank's The Grange 815 ch des Gourettes, Mouans Sartoux.

**FRANCE-GRANDE
BRETAGNE NICE**

04 93 81 76 74 - fgb-nice.com

Thurs May 2, 15h30: Tea, biscuits, conversation and Scrabble in English or French
Thurs May 16, 15h30: "Climate Change", a presentation in English by Frank Hartvelt.
Thurs May 23, 15h30: Presentation of *Brick Lane*.
Thurs May 30, 15h30: End of season cocktail party on the beach. Holy Trinity Church Hall, 11bis rue de la Buffa, Nice.

VIAC

Graham Button 04 94 40 11 19
president@viac.fr

Tues May 7: St Tropez Polo Club.

**COMMONWEALTH CLUB
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commonwealthclubriviera.com

Wed May 8: VE Day. Details on website.

**CANNES FILM
FESTIVAL**

festival-cannes.fr

May 15-26: See website for film schedules.

EBICA OPEN DAY

04 93 64 32 84 - ebicaschool.com

Wed May 15: We are currently taking registration for the 2013-2014 school year for preschool, primary and secondary bilingual French-English education. Come and visit and see our new campus.

AMIAI

Douglas Goldin 04 92 94 02 47

douglas.goldin@wanadoo.fr

Sat May 18: Lunch at Les Pierre Rouges, Valbonne. Please ring to reserve.

RADA

09 53 73 56 70 - rada06@yahoo.com

Thurs May 23, Fri May 24 and Sat May 25, 20h: *Strictly Sex Factor on Ice ... with Deckchairs* at Mougins School. Tickets €10, available by phone, email or from the English Book Centre in Valbonne.

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OF THE RIVIERA**

commonwealthclubriviera.com

Thurs May 23: Guided visit of Le Haut de Cagnes. Details on website.

MONACO GRAND PRIX

grand-prix-monaco.com

Sun May 26, 8h: See website for ticket info.

BAM

+377 93 50 19 52 - bam-monaco.org

Thurs May 30: a day spent with Dominique Allain in Roquefort les Pins and learn all about Raku pottery, including a guided tour of the workshop, and a chance to paint your own design on a cup/bowl. A picnic lunch is provided.

dates to note**LA TERRASSE DES
ARTS CHATEAUNEUF
DE GRASSE**

06 82 90 30 08

Fri June 28, 20h30: An evening of opera with singers from The Opera Academy of Copenhagen directed by Friedrich Gurtler. Please call for information and reservations.

**RIVIERA OPERA GALA,
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04 97 01 10 00 - 06 79 31 62 25

Wed July 17: Italian opera arias and choruses plus part of *La Bohème*. This is a reprise of the show that has been such a success each year.... our signature event: opera, gala dinner, wines and champagne under the starlight on the starlit terraces of Bastide St Mathieu, Grasse. Tickets €150 per person; or tables of 10 for €1350.

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holds French and English classes from beginners to advanced including conversation every Saturday from 6th October 2012 from 2pm to 5pm followed by tea and biscuits. We also organise a social event every month. We are upstairs at 5 rue d'Oran off rue d'Antibes (next to Parking Lamy) in Cannes. More info: Tel. Iris on 04 93 97 86 32 or Odette on 04 93 49 37 01

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The English Book Centre in Valbonne has a Stitch n Bitch (knitting/crochet/any type of needlework), a very friendly group with a range of abilities. The next meeting is Thursday April 25th at 14h, above the shop. Tues 10h30-12h: English improvement sessions. Thurs 10h45-12: French improvement sessions. Walk-ins welcome for any of these groups. Contact the English Book Centre to confirm and for info (04 93 12 21 42 - www.englishbookcentre.com).

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