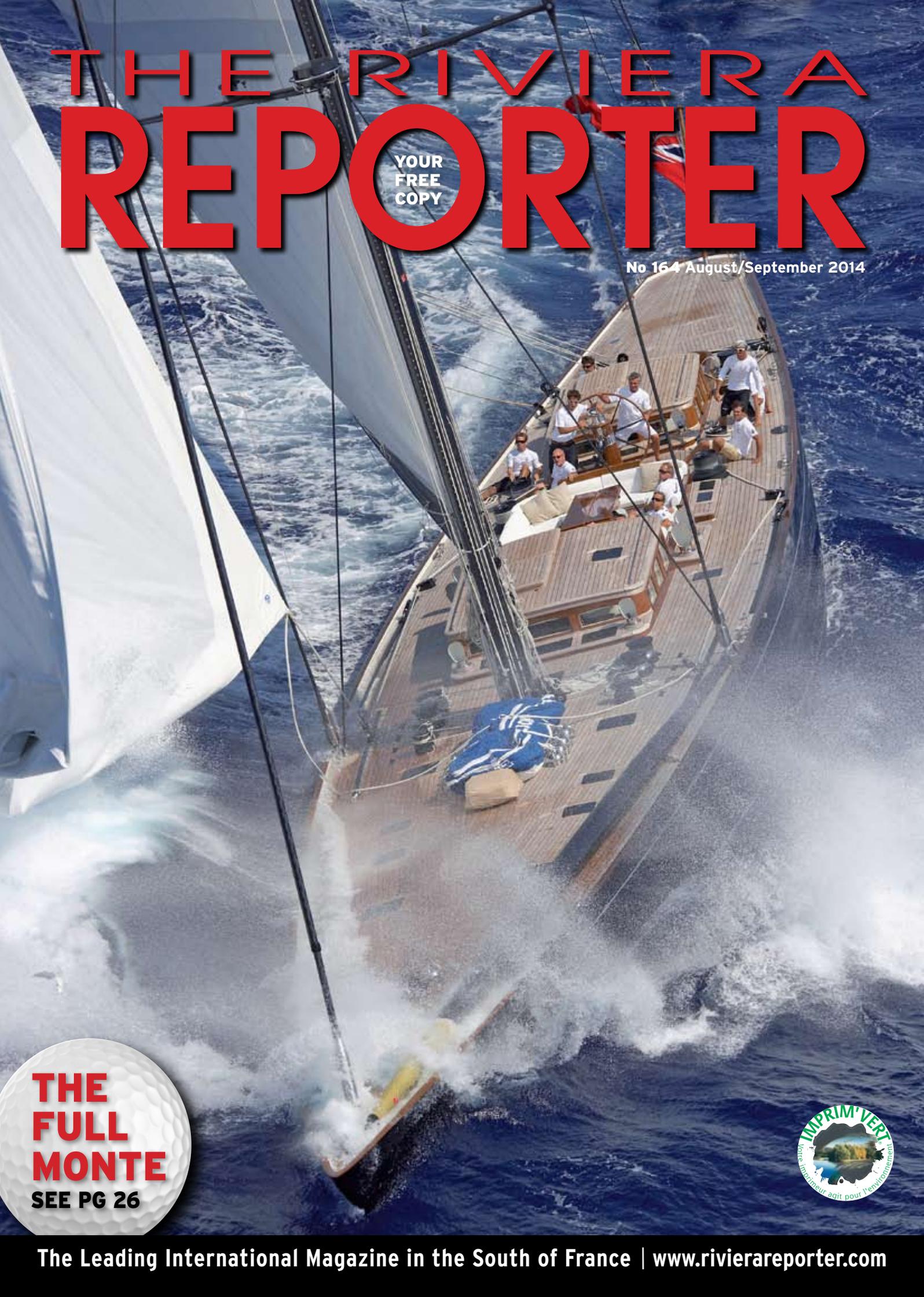


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# In this issue ...

## The Insider

I RECENTLY interviewed *M. le Bâtonnier*, M<sup>c</sup> Erick Campana, the President of the Bar in Marseille representing Wojciech Janowski, *le gendre* of Hélène Pastor, who died May 21st from gunshot wounds after being ambushed in her car outside Nice’s Archet hospital.

Claiming innocence upon arrest, Janowski declined his right to both a lawyer and an interpreter and after four days of interrogation in French while in police custody in Nice, he confessed to being the “*commanditaire*” in the murder.

*M. le Bâtonnier* maintains that a less than perfect mastery of the French language led to his client’s admission.

M<sup>c</sup> Campana, a very likable man, points out Janowski’s deficiency in legalese French. “If you ask the question, ‘*Êtes-vous le commanditaire?*’ [Did you give the order?], Mr Janowski thinks, or at least I was told, that this means ‘*Avez-vous demandé quelque chose?*’ [Did you ask for something?].”

Is it feasible that a foreigner, who has lived in France – or in this case,

Monaco – for nearly three decades, could misunderstand the question, *Êtes-vous le commanditaire?*

How many times have you suffered language-lag: It wasn’t until later when you were back at home chopping potatoes for dinner that all of a sudden it clicked, “Oh, so that’s what he was asking me in French ...”

M<sup>c</sup> Campana went on to explain that Janowski speaks French “like *Madame*” (that’s me), “no better, no worse”.

“*Oh-oh!*” I gasped. That unbound enthusiasm I had when I first moved here to master French has fizzled into a state of *my-French is-good-enough*. Like running, I need to push myself to improve.

We are proud to produce the leading international magazine in the South of France, and have never been apologetic for providing English-language material for expats ... but for goodness sake, work on your French. Your life sentence may depend on it. (For help, see *RivieraReporter.com* or page 49.) *Nancy Heslin, Editor*

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Cover photo “Lionheart” and image below: © Ed Holt/SuperYachtFocus.com



# riviera reporté

Pages for the Plages



CANNES resident Deanna Maclaren has brought out her third book with Matador, *In Bed with Mr Plantagenet*. Set in London in the late Sixties, and loosely auto-biographical, Eugenie is an office temp when she falls for the much younger David Plantagenet, a 17-year-old ice cream seller, who on the day of their marriage informs her that he is soon embarking on a trip around the world. She stays in London and, of course, becomes the famed writer at a literary mag, which leads her to the more refined man in her life, a handsome lawyer nonetheless. When David must return to London, the conundrum of lover versus friend ensues.

I am not a fan of the “liberated” (“hey, I like sex”) female character as in most cases the author falls short of making her absence of feelings credible; still, *Mr Plantagenet* has its moments.

ALSO from Matador, *Arrazat’s Aubergines*, the follow-up to *Virgile’s Vineyard, A Year in the Languedoc Wine Country* by Patrick Moon. The Cornwall-born author resigned as a partner from his London law practice in 1997 without a Plan B, and by the year 2000, he was a property owner in the Languedoc. In each book he “work-shadows” a local expert over a twelve month period – a young wine maker and a hip chef of a new restaurant – to both learn about these trades so deeply rooted in French culture but also to explore wine and food

specific in the Languedoc region. Moon has the talent of telling a story while simultaneously informing the reader.

SOLITARY *Desire, One Woman’s Journey to France* by Kim Defforge is a short narrative (106 pages, although there are no numbers) based on Kim’s road to here. Self-published, it’s editorially tough to read but for those who enjoy stories about “What brought you to France?”, there may be some value for you.

PATRICK Smith – a pilot of nearly 25 years and creator of *askthepilot.com* – clears the air for flyers of all frequencies in *Cockpit Confidential: Everything You Need to Know About Air Travel* (US: Sourcebooks). But, as Patrick tells the *Reporter*, “This is NOT a book about flying or fear of flying. It isn’t purely informational. The questions and answers are obviously crucial, but they’re blended with essays, sidebars and memoir, and it’s the latter that are the strongest parts.”

The scope of Smith’s material is captivating – airport congestion, cabin air, cockpit automation, airline customer service – and more so because he has a real gift at communicating knowledge; the account of the Tenerife crash is spine chilling.

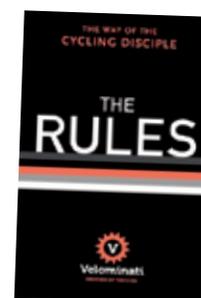
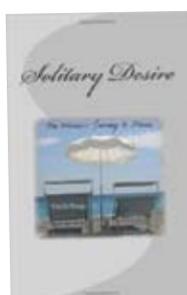
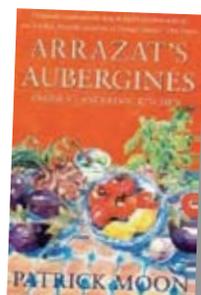
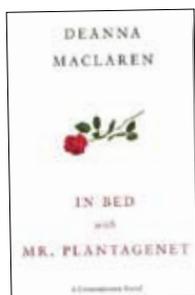
THE engaging Fogas cast is back (see *Reporter* 158), as Julia Stagg delivers the next instalments in her Pyrenees-

based series with *The Parisian’s Return*, *The French Postmistress*, and *A Fête to Remember* (UK: Hodder& Stoughton). As Julia explains, “I planned to write five books, each with the name of a French institution – like Boulangerie and La Poste – within a commune. The French words posed a few problems for the English so that’s been changed, otherwise each story follows a different character in the village of Fogas.”

*The Parisian’s Return* is entertaining, especially for cyclists, and relatable, as we empathise with the French who are seen as outsiders by fellow countrymen because they are not from “here”.

AND on the subject of cycling, *The Rules: The Way of the Cycling Disciple* (US: Sceptre) by The Velominati is like “a two-wheel fight club” listing 95 points of etiquette – from kit to body hair and mechanics to mentality – to be obeyed at all times. Example: Rule #7 Tan lines should be cultivated and kept razor sharp; Rule #12 The correct number of bikes to own is n+1, where n is the number of bikes currently owned; Rule # 25 The bikes on top of your car should be worth more than the car.

As I worked through the 288 pages, even with an Ironman under my belt, I felt my face redden at the realisation that I am someone who rides a bike, not a cyclist. **N.H.** ■



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## Go figure: July 28th

EVERY year the association *Contribuables Associés* uses official OECD figures to calculate Tax Freedom Day, when the weight of public expenditure is lifted from taxpayers' shoulders.

Provisions for 2014 indicate that 56.7% of the nation's generated wealth (the GDP equivalent to 207 working days) will go to the French state, mostly to finance "social costs" such as national health cover, retirement pensions and unemployment insurance, but after July 28th, the average French earner has settled his tax bills and starts working for himself.

Forty years ago, in 1974, the figure was only 39.3%. With increased life expectancy and little change in the retirement age, the day falls later and later in the year.

*Contribuables Associés* spokesperson Benoîte Taffin warns that taking buying power away from consumers reduces the profitability of businesses and adds to unemployment. "It's urgent we bring France's tax regime back into line with most other modern economies," insists Taffin; Prime Minister Valls agrees but admits that the necessary reforms won't be easy.

Tax Freedom Day in France ranks third among OECD countries after Denmark (August 2nd) and Finland (August 4th). In Italy it's earlier, July 7th, but the Swiss only work until May 2nd to meet their national expenses. The British think tank Adam Smith Institute calculates that this year the UK's magic date fell on May 28th.

## The tax that never was

EARLY in July the socialist government



proposed a five-fold increase in the €1.50 *taxe de séjour*, a local "tourist tax" paid by hotels per person, per occupied room (the rates vary from €0.20 to a maximum of €1.50, depending on hotel grade and city). This city tax is usually integrated into a hotel's quoted room price (this is not the case, however, with rates found through third-party online travel sites).

Raising the tax up to €8 brought an outcry from the hospitality profession. In an interview with *Nice-Matin*, the hoteliers' association president Michel Tschann said, "Every day there's a new tax and now we're spending more time counting beans than looking after our clients."

A few euros may not seem to matter in the great scheme of things but one hotel owner in Nice made a hard case: "We're a family hotel with 50 beds running an annual average of 80% capacity. We hand the taxman about €21,900 a year in tourist tax. If the increase were to be applied this would rise to €116,800 a year. And that's only if we maintained present levels of occupancy, which we probably wouldn't."

Money tourists have to shell out in

tax is money that will not be spent with restaurants and private beaches. As one backpacker travelling through France said, "Eight euros a day is my food budget."

Some Socialist Party stalwarts agreed, like Foreign Affairs Minister Laurent Fabius, who went so far as to call the measure "dangerous", while others, like recently elected Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo, suggested that the tax for Paris hotels be €10 a night per person, even higher than the proposed national average.

On July 16th, the National Assembly voted against the *taxe de séjour* increase. Finance Minister Michel Sapin and Junior Budget Minister Christian Eckert then surrendered to the "wisdom of the assembly" and postponed a final decision until 2015.

Paris, by the way, has long been the world's most visited city until, that is, last year when the City of Light was surpassed by both London and Bangkok. Taxing tourists more isn't going to fool anyone.

## The paper chase continues

ON May 26th the Nice **CONT PG 7** >



# ON THE RECORD

**Craig Glenday, Guinness World Records Editor-in-Chief, makes a stop in Nice**



Craig Glenday, has met an astonishing range of astonishing people, been to amazing places and seen amazing events, but the story that he still dines out on is meeting and befriending Michael Jackson.

ON June 21st, to kick-off its Jazz festival, the city of Nice entered the Guinness World Records. Some 1660 participants in matching blue T-shirts assembled in the Promenade du Paillon to form a saxophone and, at 6:15pm, Guinness World Records Editor-in-Chief himself, Craig Glenday, proclaimed Nice a world record holder for the largest human saxophone.

We had an opportunity to chat with the 41-year-old Scotsman.

**RR:** *How do you explain GWR's public fascination for over nearly 60 years?*

**CG:** We're a bit like Peter Pan in that as soon as kids (and particularly boys) hit a certain age, they're enthralled about how amazing the world is and consume all they can about it voraciously. Luckily, the Guinness World Records book has selected and curated all the world's most amazing people, pets, natural wonders and so on, so it's there in one easily digestible chunk.

Also, people like seeing their name in print, so for the many thousands – indeed, millions – of people who take part in record attempts each year, it's a chance for immortality. To see yourself

in the record books!

And it's important to note that in the Google era of opening up a browser and being flooded with a tsunami of data, and data of varying quality, Guinness World Records provides a filter that separates the facts from the speculation and opinion. You can trust us – I know the world's tallest man is 8ft 3in because I measured him. But if you put the question out to the world wide web, you can get 10 answers to the same question.

**RR:** *Why did the name change in 2000?*

**CG:** The company was started in 1955 by the Guinness Brewery as a promotion to sell more stout, effectively, but by 2000, the new owners, Diageo, decided to sell off their non-core products – so anything not alcohol related. We were put up for sale and bought by Gullane Children's Books, who owned *Thomas The Tank Engine*, but in the process, Diageo insisted that we could no longer be called the Guinness Book of anything, so a compromise was reached that allowed us to keep the Guinness name.

**RR:** *GWR receives 1000 record-setting applications a week and yet only 8% a year of these actually produce a world record. How do you decide which to follow-up on?*

**CG:** We don't have to be in attendance at every attempt – not with 1000 happening every week! – so we ask for video footage, photos, independent witness statements, press clippings, log books, credit card receipts, and so on to help us validate the achievement. If one of these vital pieces of evidence is missing, we usually have no choice but to reject a claim.

There was the case of an organist who attempted the longest playing marathon and piped away on his church organ for

more than a day non-stop. In the end, when he submitted his evidence, we found that the witnesses he'd chosen were his own parents. So, not independent! We had no choice but to reject his claim. (He actually then went on to petition Her Majesty The Queen but not even she could get the decision reversed!)

We also get a lot of "record" claims that aren't records, the most popular being "I can lick my elbow". There's simply no superlative involved, so these go straight into the rejection pile. If it were the most elbows licked, or the fastest elbow licking, we'd give it more consideration – but we'd still reject it, so don't bother!

**RR:** *You set a world record by stretching a Curly Wurly 0.9m (3ft) in three minutes. Where do you keep your GWR certificate?*

**CG:** I'm lucky enough to have experienced record breaking from both sides of the fence, and I knew before I started handing out certificates that it's truly a special thrill to receive one ... to know that you're the best in the world at something, even if it's only for something as trivial as stretching a Curly Wurly. At GWR, we don't place value judgements on record holders – all record breaking is relative to those taking part, so stretching a candy bar might be as important to me as running 100m is to Usain Bolt. I know that this might sound a bit ridiculous, but who's to say one achievement is any more worthy or acceptable than another? Knowing that I was listed in the book alongside the likes of Olympians, Oscar winners and ocean rowers gave me a real buzz.

And the certificate? Before I moved home, it had pride of place in my downstairs toilet for all my guests to see, but now it's by my desk. It's still thrilling to know I've been the best at something – even though the record's been beaten twice ... ■

*For the full interview with Craig Glenday – including how Craig, Michael Jackson (in his last public performance), Beyoncé, and a children's choir were on stage together singing "We Are The World" – see RivieraReporter.com*

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## FRANCE IN THE NEWS

Commercial Tribunal put *Nice-Matin*, its affiliated Publinice-Services distribution company and the advertising sales arm Eurosud Côte-d'Azur into judicial control. Jean Icart and the GXP Capital holding company have failed to come up with a promised €20 million to refloat and restructure the ailing publisher.

Weeks later, on June 13th, the administrators opened the company to alternative takeover offers and four press groups have shown interest, including the Lebanese billionaire Iskandar Sifa.

The court would like to make a decision before the summer break but in light of the broken promises from the Hersant family, which has owned the title until now, and from GXP Capital, hard cash will need to be put on the table before a takeover bid is accepted.

The company has yet to be declared officially bankrupt and two administrators have been appointed by the court to look at options and to seek investors. *Groupe Nice-Matin*, with 1100 salaried jobs hanging in the balance, is heavily in debt and has been in deficit for the past several years. In the meantime the paper is being allowed to continue publishing at the request of the staff's *Comité d'Entreprise Exceptionnel*.

To our many friends and colleagues at *Nice-Matin*, we hope their futures will look more promising at *la rentrée*.

### I'll be watching you

IN 1989, "Every Breath You Take" by the Police hit the airwaves and became a

number one hit. Thirty years later it could be the theme song for the city of Nice – and police would still be in the picture.

For the size of the city, Nice has the most CCTV cameras in France with 915 public *vidéosurveillance* cameras.

Faced with a rise in violence and poorly controlled immigration (recently from Africa), Mayor Estrosi maintains that the system, which he personally instigated in 2010, is a necessary instrument for preventing and prosecuting street crime; police are in agreement, as 70 officers man the city's surveillance network 24 hours a day.

In a typical example, the mayor cited a montage from several cameras, which had followed two suspects, first filmed grabbing a bag from a parked van before then making off on a scooter. As they raced through the busy narrow streets, they were filmed by camera after camera until they were finally stopped by a waiting police patrol when leaving the *voie rapide*.

Security conscious Estrosi claims that *vidéosurveillance* now accounts for solving as much as 36% of street crime: "Last year, 720 suspects were caught *in flagranti* thanks to CCTV. Without the cameras, many crimes would never have been prevented or solved."

The French are characteristically protective of their personal privacy so giving some of it up for the sake of

security doesn't sit well. A common worry is that the tapes will be kept on file and used for less worthy reasons.

Officials say that these suspicions are groundless. A tape is never kept for more than ten days unless the authorities request it for investigative purposes. The cameras are constantly monitored but, except for judicial authorities, no one – not even the victims of crimes – can be shown the tapes until a judge's order allows it. In 2013, these orders were requested 703 times.



Photo: Pierre-alain dorange

"Even a police officer requires permission to obtain a tape," according to Marcel Authier, the Alpes-Maritimes director of public security.

Investigators were able to retroactively follow the killers of Hélène Pastor from the main train station to a nearby hotel and later to the Archet hospital where the Monaco heiress and her chauffeur were shot. No camera is thought to have been close enough to record the ensuing crime in precise detail however.

Surveillance cameras are often used in real time to assist with traffic flow, handle emergencies and for accident prevention. Recently a monitoring officer saw a small child wander away from his mother, towards the tramway. Within a few minutes a police patrol was alerted and brought the toddler back to his worried mum. ■

# SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW FRANCE & THE FRENCH?

See how you score in the *Reporter's* Summer Quiz



Photo: Egon Steiner



Photo: Jac. de Nijis / Anief / Nationaal Archief



**1. How many official regions make up modern-day France?**

- a) 29
- b) 21
- c) 26

**2. And how many departments?**

- a) 79
- b) 100
- c) 92

**3. Which of the following is NOT a French overseas department?**

- a) New Caledonia
- b) Mayotte
- c) Guadeloupe

**4. Which department is unlucky enough to be saddled with the number 13 on its licence plates?**

- a) Tarn
- b) Hautes-Alpes
- c) Bouches-du-Rhône

**5. The Pompidou Centre in Paris was named after a former French president. What was his forename?**

- a) Claude
- b) Georges
- c) Charles

**6. How many sites in France are on UNESCO's World Heritage List?**

- a) 22
- b) 37
- c) 56

**7. The number of French inhabitants of Arab or African descent is ...**

- a) 3 million
- b) 4 million
- c) 5 million

**8. The poet Baudelaire lived in which century?**

- a) 18th
- b) 19th
- c) 20th

**9. In 1888, the Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh moved to which southern French town**

- a) St Rémy
- b) Avignon
- c) Arles

**10. Brel, Brassens and Bécoud were all ...**

- a) Painters
- b) Singers
- c) Actors

**11. How many wolves are estimated to have colonised southern France?**

- a) 200
- b) 500
- c) 1000

**12. In which year did the euro become the operating currency of France?**

- a) 2001
- b) 2002
- c) 2003

**13. How many of the European Union's 28 states have the euro as their official currency?**

- a) 16
- b) 18
- c) 20

**14. Because of its shape, mainland France is often referred to as the ...**

- a) Cube
- b) Hexagon
- c) Rectangle?

**15. The average life expectancy at birth in France for women is ...**

- a) 79
- b) 81
- c) 85

**16. We are currently in which French Republic?**

- a) Third
- b) Fourth
- c) Fifth

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## 17. The Prime Minister of France is ...

- Manuel Valls
- Lionel Jospin
- Ségolène Royal

## 18. She is a national emblem of the French Republic, an allegory of liberty and reason, and a portrayal of the Goddess of Liberty. What is her name?

- Maryelène
- Marianne
- Joan of Arc

## 19. Which musical duo recorded a version of the *Marseillaise* set in a lavatory that featured the chorus *Ou est le papier?*

- Flanagan & Allen
- Flanders & Swann
- Chas & Dave

## 20. The founder of the Chanel fashion house was called ...

- Chloë
- Zoë
- Coco

## 21. How many *coups* (blows) were there in François Truffaut's first feature film?

- 300
- 400
- 500

## 22. On July 3, 1940 a British Navy task force under Admiral James Somerville crippled the French fleet at which North African port?

- Tangier
- Tunis
- Mers-el-Kébir

## 23. Which French footballer had aspirations as a philosopher?

- Zinedine Zidane
- Eric Cantona
- Lilian Thuram

## 24. Does the French word *amende* translate into English as ...

- An almond
- A change
- A fine

## 25. Choucroute is a dish from which French region

- The Vosges
- Alsace
- Normandy

## 26. Brigitte Bardot's first film was ...

- And God Created Woman
- Crazy for Love
- Invitation to the Castle

## 27. The highest point in the Alpes-Maritimes, the Cime du Gélas, is how high?

- 3143 metres
- 2780 metres
- 3398 metres

## 28. A TGV holds what world speed record for a train. Is that record ...

- 465.5 kph
- 501.6 kph
- 574.8 kph

## 29. The late comedian Coluche's real name was ...

- Michel Colucci
- Dominique Calache
- Paul Cloche

## 30. Napoleon Bonaparte was born in which Corsican town?

- Bastia
- Calvi
- Ajaccio



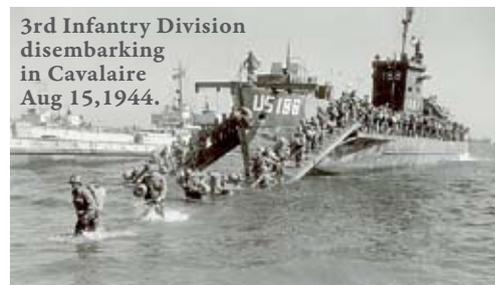
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	22. c	21. b	23. a
	20. c	22. c	24. c
	19. b	23. b	25. b
	18. b	24. c	26. b
	17. a	25. b	27. a
	16. c	26. b	28. c
	15. c	27. a	29. a
	14. b	28. c	30. b
	13. b	29. a	
	12. b		
	11. a		
	10. b		
	9. c		

# THE CHAMPAGNE CAMPAIGN

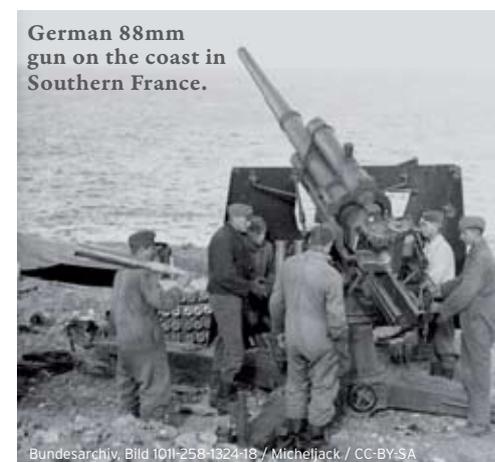
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Jean de Lattre de Tassigny walking through a liberated Marseille.



3rd Infantry Division disembarking in Cavalaire Aug 15, 1944.



German 88mm gun on the coast in Southern France.

Bundesarchiv, Bild 101-258-1324-18 / Micheljack / CC-BY-SA

BY PJ HESLIN

EARLIER this year, on June 6th, the sacrifices of those who participated in D-Day, seventy years ago, were memorialized. On August 15th, however, an equally important military operation was launched in our very backyards – Operation Dragoon. For some reason, Operation Dragoon doesn't get the same notoriety as its big, brawny brother, Operation Overlord. I think it gets the historical short shrift because the scope and scale of Operation Overlord turned other WWII battles into second acts, and there is little proof today that a major battle under Operation Dragoon even took place: Normandy still has abandoned German bunkers and cemeteries for the soldiers who lost their lives but there is little evidence of the war here.

That is until Jean-Loup Gassend released *Operation Dragoon: Autopsy of a Battle – The Allied Liberation of the French Riviera August-September 1944* (USA: Schiffer; \$60). Gassend has spent the last decade researching the subject, and the 560 pages with 874 photos will appeal

to both history buffs and residents in the region (a French edition is also available).

Gassend, 31, tells me, “As a teenager in France, I started collecting WWII objects and soon realized that the stories told by the people giving them away were more interesting than the items themselves. And as most of these local historic accounts were completely undocumented, I decided to find out everything possible about the Alpes-Maritimes during August and September 1944. I left no stone unturned, sending out hundreds of letters, spending money, researching archives, digging, etc, to uncover this ‘Champagne Campaign’, the nickname often given to the liberation in the Cannes and Nice areas.”

Gassend's book is fascinating. Initial plans for the Operation Dragoon were conceived at the Tehran Conference in December 1943. Fresh off a major Soviet victory at the Battle of Kursk, Stalin was granted a second front that he had been demanding from Britain and France, but where this second front would be established was up in the air. American military leaders pressed for an invasion of France as early as possible but Churchill wanted to keep pushing

up into Italy and chase the Germans through the Balkans. From the beginning, Churchill was opposed to a new front in France but still hoped that the Italian campaign would receive sufficient support.

When plans for Operation Dragoon (originally called Operation Anvil) were passed, Churchill sent a letter to Roosevelt to express his concerns of splitting up forces in the Mediterranean. He wrote: “The splitting up of the campaign in the Mediterranean into two operations, neither of which can do anything decisive, is, in my humble and respectful opinion, the first major strategic and political error, for which we two have to be responsible.”

Churchill's reluctance towards Dragoon wasn't just strategic but political. He had hoped that a successful invasion of Italy could keep Eastern Europe out of Soviet control. Despite these farsighted Cold War concerns, Operation Dragoon was given Allied approval.

Dragoon is also notable for the significant help that the French Resistance provided in the operation.

To say that joining the French Resistance was dangerous is ridiculously reductive.

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Those who did could look forward to living in the bush in hidden camps under difficult conditions. In fact, the name given to the French Resistance in the Var and the Alpes-Maritimes is the *Maquis*, which means shrub land. Since the *Maquis* were not viewed by the Germans as regular army but as terrorists, the rules of warfare did not apply to them. This meant that if caught, they could be shipped off to concentration camps, tortured or shot in the street. It also meant friends and family could suffer the same fate.

**70th Anniversary of Operation  
Dragoon commemorations  
See page 47**

Before Operation Dragoon the Germans controlled the coastal cities but the same could not be said for small inland villages like St Jeannet, 20km northwest of Nice, where the *Maquis* organized sabotage operations such as blowing up electrical lines or bridges, or setting fire to factories that supported the German war effort. *Maquis* support during Operation Dragoon was so effective that a 1985 Army Report about the operation concluded that "guerrilla assistance was exploited more than ever before and proved to be an invaluable asset".

Another significant part of Operation Dragoon was that it was the first time Free French troops were led by a French commander (Jean de Lattre de Tassigny) once the Allied forces were on French soil.

The battle started at 0430 hours August 15th, 1944 when paratroopers and then later glider troops were dropped in the area of Le Muy (15km northwest of Fréjus). Due to bad weather some of the

paratroopers landed near St Tropez and Fayence but, since resistance was light, they were able to capture the Draguignan and Le Muy regions by August 17th.

One of the reasons for this rapid advancement was because when the Germans occupied a territory they used reserve units, often composed of untrained soldiers – and at the end of the war, this included very young, very old, wounded or very foreign German military. Reserve Division 148 was no exception to this rule. Most of the men of Reserve Division 148 came from the German province of Silesia which has a divided ethnicity. Some Silesians considered themselves German at the time, while others considered themselves Polish and could not even speak German. One former German commander of the Division complained after the war that he "was very disgusted that he had commanded such poorly trained and disciplined troops".

Before the main invasion took place, a joint US-Canadian Special Forces unit took the Hyères islands on August 14th, neutralizing German guns that could threaten the American naval forces.

Once the Hyères islands were secured, three American divisions reinforced by the French First Armoured Division landed on Alpha Beach (Cavalaire-sur-Mer), Della Beach (St-Tropez) and Camel Beach (St-Raphaël). The beaches were selected because of lessons learned from D-Day and Italy; lack of surrounding high ground, fortified by German bunkers hopefully meant an easy landing. With the exception of some problems with mines, this proved to be true. The heaviest fighting was at St-Raphaël where one of the planned

beach landings had to be aborted due to heavy German resistance. Once on shore, the troops fanned out east towards Cannes and Nice, and west to capture the important ports of Toulon and Marseille.

The saddest chapters of the Operation were the executions of men and women that occurred as the Gestapo fled just before Allied forces arrived in various towns. The Villa Montfleury Massacre in Cannes, and the execution of more than 24 Resistance members in Nice in the Ariane district, are particularly tragic. As published in *Reporter 140* (see *The Story of Hélène Vagliano* on our website), Maureen Emerson wrote of the latter:

*"On the 15 August, Hélène and twenty-three other prisoners were collected together and driven in the direction of the Ariane quarter behind Nice ... On a piece of land in front of a sheer rock face and bordered by a small river, the group was lined up to face the water. Watched with horror from behind closed shutters by a local farmer and his daughter, the Germans set up their machine guns across the river from the prisoners. All twenty-four died that day. On Hélène's right fell a priest who had been arrested for burying two Resistants shot by the Gestapo. On her left, a young blonde girl who had acted as nurse to the Maquis."*

On August 21st, Tassigny was able to capture both Marseille and Toulon, almost simultaneously. The official surrender happened five days later, opening up two important ports for the war effort. Rail lines were quickly repaired and Southern France provided nearly a third of the supplies necessary for the Allied war effort by October 1944. ■



The Monaco Yacht Show, from Sept 24th to 27th in Port Hercule, is the only yacht show in the world exclusively for superyachts for sale of at least 25m.

Photo: © Monaco Yacht Show.

# EVERY BLOKE NEEDS A BOAT

BY MOLLY BROWN

THE summer holiday season is upon us. The roads are on red alert as two-thirds of the French population leave town. It is a tradition, like the lunch hour and the siesta ... and when you cannot beat them, you join them. An urgent business meeting? Try calling again in September. No one is around, including the medical fraternity ... not the best time to have a heart attack, or give birth. Happily, Monaco's new prince or princess is not expected to arrive at the Palace until some time around the Fête Nationale in November and that will certainly be something to celebrate. Everyone is delighted and Monaco's Madame Defarges are merrily dusting off their knitting needles. HSH Princess Charlene has been busy all year, encouraging schools around the world to teach children to swim at an early age and the Palace swimming pool will perhaps need a shallower addition. Lucky students in Monaco learn to swim at Stade Louis II and there is a very diverse summer programme, Passport Sport and Culture, with a choice of 30 classes in art, music, drama and various sports, including underwater diving.

With falling revenues for the last three years, *Société des Bains de Mer* brought in a new casino manager and a "new look" to fit in with "today's more casually attired clients" last year, with gaming

tables on the terrace for smokers and noodles on the side for Chinese gamblers, resulting in a 21% upturn in its gaming business for 2013-14; but in spite of advertising widely in China and South America, SBM saw only a 2% rise in the hotel sector, which now includes the Meridien Beach Plaza. SBM's operational deficit was "a little less bad" (an €11.8 million deficit compared with a €32.7 million shortfall the previous year) with profits from the sale of 400,000 shares in Wynn Resorts and better results from their 50% holding in Betclac (widely advertised on the Grand Prix circuit) seeing a net income of €17.3 million against a loss of €50.7 million last year.

To finance their controversial €600 million project, more SBM shares had to be sold. The government agreed and is now only a 60% majority shareholder. The "temporary" shopping centre in the Boulingrins gardens will now be large enough to house 24 luxury shops, not just the boutiques being moved from the Sporting d'Hiver and Hôtel de Paris. The hotel is closing on October 8th until the end of the year for work on the interior, partially reopening with 44 rooms for three months in the New Year, to appease employees protesting against the 3-year closure.

MONACO is in the fast lane, fighting for pole position in the 21st-century race for survival and already well placed with an extra large Yacht Club for the latest extra large yachts and a railway station big enough for not one but two of SNCF's new, extra large trains! While regretting the seemingly uncontrollable building frenzy, one has to admire the way Monaco re-defines itself and adapts to the needs of each new wave of foreign residents and hopefully the economy will continue to weather the storms. However, windstorms are not so easy to control and the new Odean Tower penthouse was deemed too dangerous for a distinguished group of residents wishing to sample the widely advertised 365-degree view. Monaco is protected from the mistral by surrounding hills ... but if you put your head above the parapet ... a risky business, or perhaps a floor too far.

This year's successful International Festival of Television in June spotlighted not only the hottest stars, producers and writers of popular TV series, but the 1984 Nobel Prize winner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, here for the worldwide screening of the film celebrating his life, "Children of the Light", which the Peace Foundation hopes will inspire young people to fight for peace and freedom. The spotlight is now on Port Hercule, which will be a Mecca for boat lovers as the Monaco Yacht Show, bigger than ever this year, puts 110 super and megayachts on show. The most important event after the Grand Prix attracted 33,730 participants last year and €1.4 billion of yachts were lined up for sale, so for those in the market for a newer, larger and grander yacht, this is the place to be (Sept 24th-27th). ■

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## Education for all

THE Charity Association for the Right to Education – Child CARE Monaco – organises events in and around Monaco to collect money for the funding of projects worldwide; last year they opened a girls school in India.

This fall, Child CARE Monaco is holding the first Lady's Charity Vintage Car Rally, which takes place on Sunday September 21st. This is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to spend a glamorous day driving some amazing vintage cars from Monaco to the *arrière pays Mentonnais*, before doing a loop by the Grand Hotel du Cap Ferrat for tea time.

But before you tie your Hermès scarf à la Grace Kelly, President and founder Martine Ackermann tells us, "Only ten days after announcing the event we were already fully booked."

Sorry ladies, you'll have to wait until next year. In the meanwhile, you can sponsor a child for €139 a year or contact Martine about becoming a volunteer.

See [childcaremonaco.com](http://childcaremonaco.com)

## MONACO FINDS ITS WINGS



The Stelios Philanthropic Foundation and Mr Foyle, right, each donated €5000 for scholarships to help train future pilots. Photo: ©Ed Wright Images

THE view from Sir Stelios's terrace in Monaco is shelves apart from Charing Cross Road, London, home to Foyle's flagship bookshop. I am here to meet chairman Christopher Foyle, raconteur of all things, to discuss the newly-formed charity Monaco Wing of the Air League, of which he is President.

"I grew up in the spirit of books, my grandfather had a wonderful collection of 10,000 leather-bound books, but I had aspirations in aviation. My father decided to take up gliding as a hobby, and took me up to the London gliding club in Dunstable when I was 13. He died a year later, so I carried on where he left off. Fifteen years later I got my pilot's licence."

Foyle developed a yen to doing something in commercial aviation. "In 1977, I started an aircraft leasing company and then founded

Air Foyle. We were a turnkey contract airline operator, and over thirty years I applied my cargo principle to passenger aircraft. I was introduced to Haji-Ioannou Stelios in 1993.

"During the first two years Stelios was technically a tour operator who owned airlines. At that time, he felt that until he got larger, it made sense economically to buy into an existing airline system. EasyJet was painted on the planes, he was selling the tickets, he was making profit or loss, but the airline actually operating the aircraft was with my company, although the only way passengers would have known this is that on boarding passes and safety cards in the back of the seats, it read 'operated by Air Foyle Passenger Airlines'."

Foyle founded the Monaco Wing in November 2013 to act as a chapter of the Air League in the UK (he's Deputy President), which encourages "air-mindedness" by awarding scholarships to young people to pursue a career in aviation, either as a pilot or engineer.

"A candidate of any nationality in Monaco or the Alpes-Maritimes will be offered a rung on the aviation ladder in France or Monaco, as we do in Britain.

"And should we ever have surplus funds, we will assist financially the Air League in the UK. There are a lot of wealthy Brits down here – approximately 2600 British nationals resident in Monaco – and they may want to give something back to their mother country." ■ **N.H.**

Look for the Monaco Wing website end of October.

# SCENTS AND SENSIBILITY

BY JOE DZIEDZIAK

A PROCESSION of flowers lines the drive to the Arthes perfumery, a property of 36,000sqm in Bois-de-Grasse, where the air is rich with the sweetness of Provence: freshly bloomed rose and jasmine, blackberry brambles, vanilla vines. It's a place where the beauty of the landscape is outshined only by the garland of aromas it produces. Even with your eyes closed, you'd know you could only be in Grasse, the world capital of perfume.

The Arthes Group (*groupe-arthes.com*), founded in 1978 with the mission of providing a bouquet of quality perfumes at low-cost prices, has swiftly blossomed into one of the leading perfumeries in France, and in 2013 saw a 9% rise in sales against a decline in the country's perfume sector of -0.2%.

Now, after investing nearly €1 million over the past two years, the newly renovated Arthes factory in Grasse, which employs a staff of 100, is churning out more than 120,000 bottles of perfume daily; they are present in a hundred countries worldwide including top international markets in the US, Asia and across Europe. What's more, the factory is making room for its new cosmetic workshop that will produce make-up and other beauty products to pair with their perfumes. From their seven fully automated filling lines to the glimmering row of maceration tanks, and from the new scent development laboratory and the labelling and shipping stations, the Arthes factory is completely equipped to be a leader in today's highly competitive perfume market.

So what exactly does the Arthes Group have to offer? Well, let's put it another way, what are you looking for? The wide range and crafty combinations of perfumes created in their scent labs are sure to please even the most particular of fragrance fanatics. For example, their line *pour femmes* has products for all ages and styles. *Boum*, a dynamic and trendy scent sold in an explosively fun grenade bottle, has seen "booming" success with a younger clientele, while the ever-sophisticated *Cassandra*, a floral and musky fragrance with hints of rose, continues to be a bestseller for women of all walks of life. And for the summer season, Arthes has leashed *Love Generation Leopard* (for the wild and confident) and *Love Generation Do Brazil*, "an exotic, festive perfume, for joyful and sensual young women" – two new bold and colourful perfumes just in time for summer love.

For men, Arthes offers an array of colognes, which include bestsellers *Sexy Boy* (for the manly), *La Voile Rouge* (for the

charismatic), and for the modern man, *Joe Sorrento*. And now is a particularly exciting time for men's fragrances chez Arthes. *Golden Goal Gold* and *Golden Goal Silver* were both launched for the 2014 World Cup, and scoring goals with men worldwide. In a unique fusion of football and fragrance, these two scents deliver fresh aromatic notes of bergamot and cumin that blend into woody ends of leather and vetiver to capture the excitement and bravado of the sport.

Perhaps you're looking for something a little less athletic, but more, say, organic and timeless? On this side, the Arthes Group released its *Jeanne en Provence* line in 2011, to pay tribute to Queen Jeanne I, the beloved countess of Provence who reined during the XIV century and granted villagers access to the royal freshwater springs behind the castle walls when the water supply in the village ran low.

The *Jeanne en Provence* back-to-the-basics perfumes also showcases the legendary plants and flowers of the Provençal scrubland, the same unique flora that has made Grasse the perfume capital of the world for centuries. For example, you'll detect Provençal roses, traces of *fleur de mûrier* (blackberry flower) and a plethora of herbs and spices found only in this beautiful pocket of France. Of course, all *Jeanne en Provence* products are crafted exclusively using raw materials from Grasse and nearby regions. The result is exceptional perfumes that celebrate the region's natural and historical beauty.

In the US and Australia, both Arthes and *Jeanne en Provence* products can be found at general and independent pharmacies – CVS and Walgreens, for example – while in the UK and Ireland, products are distributed through The Fragrance Shop and The Perfume Shop, both of which offer shopping online.

In France there are some 3000 outlets, but perhaps the most authentic place to find these perfumes is at Arthes's new boutique in St Paul de Vence, home of the beloved countess Queen Jeanne. Here within the medieval ramparts and in front of a quaint stone fountain, the *Jeanne en Provence* "placette" royally welcomes visitors into its chic boudoir showroom full of perfumes fit for a queen. Whether your fragrance is fashionable and cutting-edge, timeless and organic, elegant or sporty, you will witness the dedication to excellence, respect of tradition, and an embrace of modern trends and technology that makes the Arthes Group a scent above the rest. ■





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# SARL or SAS? BY PETER JOHNSON

**BUSINESS**

FOR as long as I've known, it was common wisdom that one of the few ways of actually working hard and making *some* money was to run your French business via a SARL (*Société à Responsabilité Limitée*, or Limited Company in British parlance) and take dividends out of the Year End post Corporation Tax profit. Dividends had two major advantages:

1. From a personal tax point of view, dividends received were (and still are) subject to an abatement of 40%; so if you take €100,000 in dividends, only €60,000 is subject to personal income tax (at your normal marginal rate of tax).
2. The dividends as "unearned" income were subject to social tax at 15.5%, rather than the higher rate of social security contributions afflicted on "earned" income.

For years we all worked to maximize End-of-Year profit and after paying Corporation Tax we looked to maximise our dividend take in order to benefit from the above tax rules. It was one of the Golden Rules of "how to survive in business in France".

And then along came Hollande. Suddenly dividend taking was seen as a nefarious, capitalist tax dodge, something the super rich did to indirectly deprive the State of much needed revenue. Pandering to the left-wing of the Socialist Party, Hollande decided in 2013 that a dividend from your own company was akin to salary, that is, it became a form of "earned" income, and thus from the spring of 2013 dividends were subject to the social contribution rate of a salary, so 48% – in other words, a staggering 32.5% hike over the previous regime. *Ouch!*

Indeed, we all squealed – and still are – with displeasure; small businesses now spend their time negotiating with the RSI (collectors of social security for the self-employed) on how to pay these extortionate new rates.

A way forward, for more than one shareholder, is the SAS (*Société par Actions Simplifiée*) or if there is just one shareholder, the SASU (*Société par Actions Simplifiée Unipersonnelle*).

Previously the SAS had been destined for complicated shareholdings of major

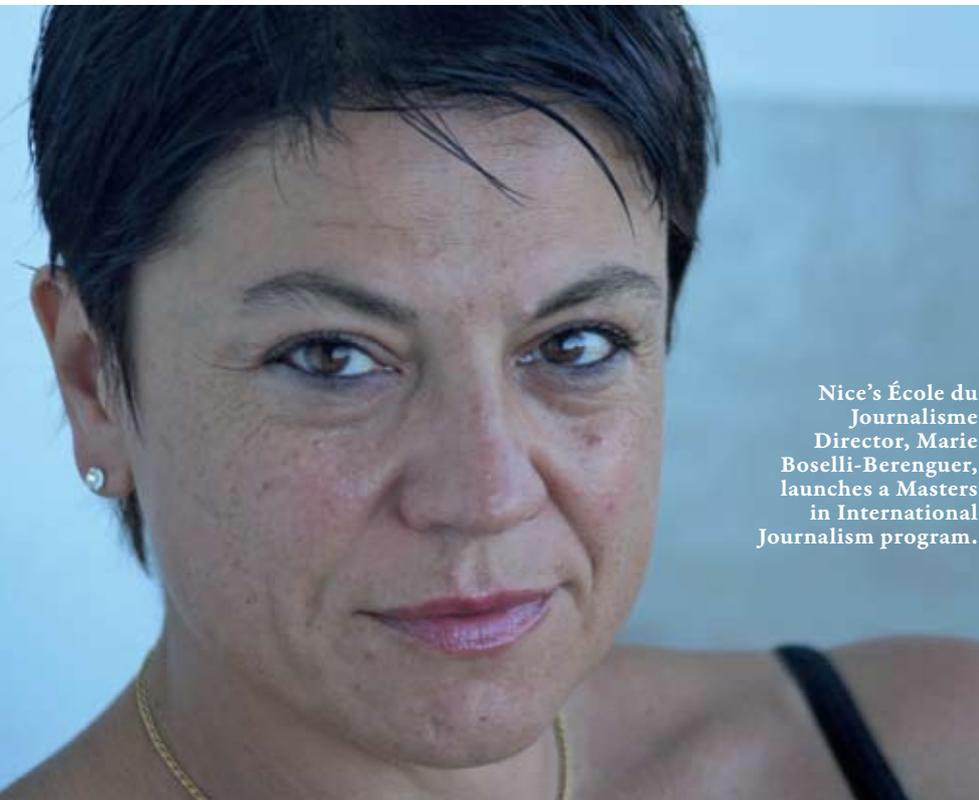
corporations, multinationals and the like of the size of Total or BNP, but since 2008 the rules governing the SAS have made it a suitable corporate structure for smaller entities, with numerous advantages over a SARL (or EURL). The most important being that the President of a SAS is considered to be an employee and as such pays social contributions on salary *per se* (ie 48%), but not on dividends (which just attract the 15.5% CSG/CRDS levy).

In addition, if the President of the SAS decides not to take any salary, there is no minimal social security contribution as there is with the Gérant of a SARL (or EURL).

Transforming a SARL (or EURL) into a SAS is not particularly complicated, but relatively expensive, as indeed is the general administration and running of it. Think twice before doing it, but if the saving is the magical 32.5% on the dividend drawing, it makes total sense. The SARL is not completely dead – for different structures where, for instance, the dividend taker is not the Gérant and majority shareholder (and not married to the person who is!) – but long live the SAS. ■

# BREAKING NEWS

Nice's School of Journalism goes international. Director Marie Boselli-Berenguer has the scoop



Nice's École du Journalisme Director, Marie Boselli-Berenguer, launches a Masters in International Journalism program.



EDJ students learn all forms of multimedia, such as print, TV, web and photography.



**RR:** *The École du Journalisme (EDJ) in Nice offers Bachelor Degrees in both Journalism and Sports Journalism. What's the story behind EDJ?*

**MB:** We were tired of hearing the same old thing ... "It's the media's fault" ... "Journalists just aren't serious" ... so we decided to do something about it. In September 1990 we launched the École du Journalisme [School of Journalism] in Nice and for 24 years we've been applying the same principle: equip young journalists with the tools necessary to enter the workforce!

The basic idea was to have our teachers, who are journalists themselves, share the essence of their profession with the up and coming generation ... And our philosophy is successful! News media have trusted us for over 20 years and so has the national higher education. The school was recognised by the State on May 10th, 1995, and our diploma – the *diplôme visé* – has been officially approved by the Ministry of National Education, ensuring the quality of our training, since 2010. We also became part of the ERASMUS charter a year ago.

**RR:** *Registration is now open for EDJ's new Masters in International Journalism, starting September 2014. This is the first program of its kind in France. How did you get the idea, and how long did it take to turn this into reality?*

**MB:** In recent years, the number of applications for international internships has steadily increased as global mobility has become an essential part of journalism. With the internet, young people see every day how news has no borders. They'd like to go abroad, and we wanted to offer them this opportunity.

The idea of the Masters came about several years ago, but it has taken time to implement the program. We needed good teachers, courses that reflect the true nature of the job, and, above all, it was crucial to find internships and a solid partnership, like with *lepetitjournal.com*. Today we have everything you need for a successful Masters in International Journalism: teachers, pedagogy, classes and *lepetitjournal.com*!

**RR:** *Lepetitjournal.com is a daily French-*

*language news website aimed at French expats. What role will it play in the new Masters program?*

**MB:** From the get go, Hervé Heyraud, a journalist and founder of *lepetitjournal.com*, was excited to be a partner in this endeavour.

*Lepetitjournal.com* is a true partner of the Masters program. This online newspaper is present in 44 cities across the world, where Editors-in-Chief will host our students for internships during their studies. Even the numerous *lepetitjournal.com* journalists we Skyped with are enthusiastic about welcoming our students.

**RR:** *The Masters is a two-year program open to graduates in journalism and non-journalism. What would be a typical semester for non-journalism freshmen, and what percentage of the program is designed to be taught in English?*

**MB:** The goal of the Masters is to train journalists to work internationally. Students will learn specific journalistic cultures of different countries, new



technologies, the sociological psychology within a changing profession and the evolution of international economic models.

This training allows students to acquire a broad general education in line with the challenges of the 21st century but also a mastery of all journalistic practices – print, TV, web and photo.

In the first year, there are two journalism courses taught in English: a course in journalistic techniques taught by Jon Bryant, a correspondent in France for several British media; but there is also the history of major international media course provided by a Franco-Canadian journalist.

During this first year, we'll concentrate on the technical skills and functions of written press, web and television. Lectures will be focused on international journalistic culture – techniques in English, history of the major international media, freedom of the press, the world economy and international law ...

**RR:** *What can an EDJ graduate with a Masters in International Journalism expect?*

**MB:** The advantage of this training is that it allows students to work anywhere in

the world where there is free press. As well, our students are disciplined in multimedia – they can write articles, do TV reports, take photos ...

**RR:** *In 2016, the EDJ Group is set to launch a Masters in International Journalism in English, another first in France. What can you tell us about this program?*

**MB:** We are working with an elite business school in Paris that has an extensive network with international universities in China, India, the United States ... Many students in these countries want to study journalism in France because our teaching has real educational value. And, as it turns out, foreign students share a common ground: the English language. Our English Masters will shadow our traditional program, the difference being that all of the courses will be taught in English. Initially, we'll launch the Masters for International Journalism in English and then the Masters in Sports Journalism in English.

Maybe the anglophone community on the Côte d'Azur will be interested too. What a fantastic opportunity to see English speakers on the French Riviera be trained in English in France! ■ See [www.edjgroupe.com](http://www.edjgroupe.com)



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# IS IT ART? Naturally!



Photos: Lionel Bouffier

THERE'S something stirring the imagination down in the woods near La Colle-sur-Loup.

Sculptor Spencer Byles spent a year creating 34 works deep in the forest that clothes the valley of the Loup river. Now he can sit back and wait for the reactions as the word spreads and the curious search for the art that lives in nature.

I have to fess up now and say that I cheated on the search, getting a guided tour from the artist himself. After an hour on the trail I felt a strange mixture of calm and exhilaration – the spell that Spencer's creations weave on the mind and senses had got to me.

Around one corner three great rings of woven branches beckon like doors to another reality, around another, a friendly bear rises through the moss. All the works were made using "found" material gathered from the site, the only outside help brought in by Spencer was a little cable to stabilise some of the structures to insure against accidents.

From where did the impulse come to create this art, free in every sense?

Says Spencer: "Every now and then I seem to disengage from what's

expected of me and step into something outside of the norm. As soon as I do this I feel rejuvenated, transformed."

This project was the result of that inner transformation. Maybe it's an indulgence, but it's one that has been carefully and sensitively considered.

"I took one year out of my life and spent that time submerging myself in the task of 'furnishing' three chosen forests with spontaneous creations that sprang from the woodland itself and were channelled by my imagination. I didn't know what the final result was going to be.

"Members of the public may happen to come across my sculptures in the forests, but more by accident than design! Most of the work is in remote sections of the woodland and the sculptures are naturally camouflaged against the background of the forest, therefore not necessarily easy to locate.

"Their hidden quality is something that I feel is integral to this aspect of my work. Most of the sculptural works will be left to disintegrate over the coming months. Should any prove to be 'considered dangerous' for either people or wildlife then they will be removed.

"The temporary nature of my sculptures

is an important aspect of my experiences and understanding. I feel my sculptures are only really completed when nature begins to take hold again and gradually weave its way back into the materials. At this point it slowly becomes part of nature again and less a part of me."

It is a heartening and perhaps surprising fact that not one of his sculptures – 15 of the original 34 have survived – has been in any way damaged by humans. Clearly the simple beauty of the structures brings out the best in people who visit the forests – the two other sculpture sights are in woodland at Villeneuve-Loubet and Mougins.

Spencer settled in an enchanting maison du village in La Colle with his wife Paula, a teacher at Mougins school, and their daughter Alisha after a spell touring Europe to "wash our head out", as he puts it. As he travelled he worked, creating art on the move, something of a troubadour of the plastic arts.

The 65-year-old sculptor's peregrinations may be more local these days, but the spirit of adventure remains strong. His next project will involve the building of "paper landscapes" using papier maché to create installations at seven ruin sites, mostly in woodlands, 300 or so individual sculptures in all.

Is Spencer planning to exploit his creations commercially?

"I have been asked to create versions of the 'Year in a French Forest' oeuvres for villa gardens, but I don't want to get involved in that sort of relationship, the work would inevitably end up being compromised."

The last statement would sound precious coming from another mouth, but Spencer is just speaking a plain truth about the relationship between money and the sort of spontaneous art that he practices.

Long may the imagination of this Banksy of the Forest run free in our forests. ■ **Nick Kent**

*An exhibition of stunning photographs of Spencer's "A Year in a French Forest" runs until August 16th at the Espace Rose de Mai in the old village of La Colle-sur-Loup.*

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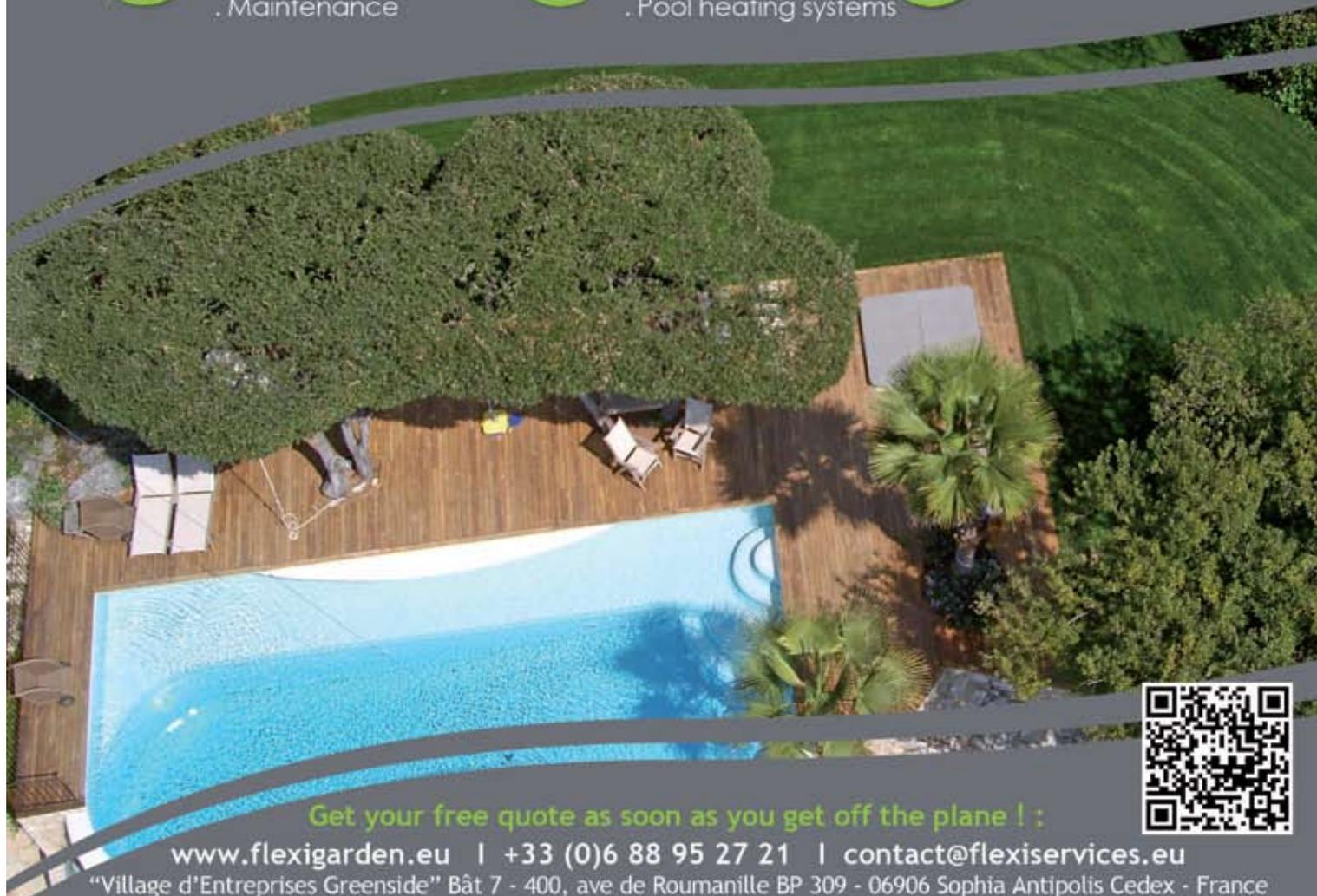
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Photo: C. Ayme/Mercantour

# Going for brocante

BY CAREN TRAFFORD

EXPERTS say that words make up a mere 7% of the way we communicate – the rest is body language, inflection and so forth. Relocate to a new country, and this ratio changes. There will come a time as you struggle to master the vocabulary of a new language, when your brain says, “Why am I doing this ... I just can’t get it right.”

Imagine then, how I felt when I arrived at my neighbour’s, early one Saturday morning, to be greeted with a torrent not only of French, but a string of completely new words thrown into the mix. And just as I was thinking I had the French lingo nailed.

It was early, 7:30am. Oliver greeted me cheerfully, sitting at his kitchen table, amidst the remnants of his breakfast. His enthusiasm was contagious, but I was already regretting the exuberant agreement that I had made the night before over a few glasses of pastis. “Come with me tomorrow,” he’d cajoled. “You never know what we’ll find – it could be the market of the season.”

Now Oliver looked up at me and tapped his watch. “Venez-vite... come on.”

I looked at his coffee machine longingly, trying to get my brain to function. He finished up his *pain au chocolat* by picking out the crumbs from the bristles on his unshaven chin and wiping his sticky fingers down the front of his chequered shirt.

“Today my friend, we are *chineurs*,” he announced. “There’s a *vide-grenier* and a *brocante* that I will take you to.”

It doesn’t take long to learn that there are two essentials for bargain seekers antiquing in Provence: to be able to get up early and to understand the patter.

The lingo of the antique-dealing world is a must. If you want to find something special and enjoy the full experience, it’s well worth learning some of the jargon to ensure you’ll end up with a treasure that you didn’t realise you desperately needed, until it’s sitting right in front of you.

First, a few basics. *Chiner* means to hunt for antiques and *vide-greniers* means “empty attics”, referring to the car boot sales that are a weekend institution in almost every Provençal town and village, generally starting around 5:30am.

The locals love emptying their attics,

and special attics they must be. You’ll find anything from plates, glass goblets, pottery and postcards to the odd roof tile and if you are really lucky, a squirrel cage made from old wine casks.

The *vide-greniers* stallholders set up along the main street and remain there, normally till early afternoon and even if you are not in the market for a piece of *bric-a-brac* (odds and ends) or *brocante* (from the word *brocanteur*, someone who buys and then sells second-hand goods), it’s worth watching vendors and bargain hunters discuss – and dispute – the prices of those one-of-a-kind “finds”.

But don’t be misled. *Brocating* is not a leisurely activity as the French have a deep regard for ordinary objects that have shaped their everyday lives.

Oliver is part of a network of dealers who comb the localities for hidden treasures, and today he’s looking for shabby-chic. He buys, restores and sells everything and anything from the 1920s to 1950s – but for him it’s essential to find pieces with a good provenance. Distressed furniture, rusty light-fittings,

anything that has a story because knowing the history increases the value of the item.

No French person would dream of buying or selling a piece without knowing its origins. Provenance (from the French word *provenir*, “to come from”), means the chronology of ownership, custody or location of a historical object. The term was originally used in relation to art works but is now used in other fields, including archaeology, printed books, science and computing.

The primary purpose of tracing the provenance of an antique is to provide the context and some circumstantial evidence for its original production or discovery, by establishing, as far as practicable, its later history, especially the sequences of its ownership.

Today, rummaging under

some old picture frames, Oliver comes across a small wall mirror. The patina – that thin greenish layer that forms naturally on some metals when exposed over time to air – is just what he has been looking for. He goes off to negotiate.

Many people equate patina with character. So, the greater the change in appearance, often as a result of a build-up of dirt, tarnish, polish, or chemical changes in the finish, the better. For many collectors, that “old look” gives the item a richer, more attractive appearance.

Israel Sack, a well-known New York antiques dealer from the early 20th century, once described the sheen to a senior female patron: “Today you are a lovely woman of 60. However, who you are today is not who you were when you were 20. The difference is patina.”

Perhaps the best-known destination to indulge one’s antique fancies is Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, the third largest *brocante* in Europe. It boasts more than 300 antique outlets and for many pilgrims who arrive here, the anticipation of the hunt for a new item is almost overwhelming, especially during the bi-annual *Grand Déballage* – the “Great Unpacking” – held four days around Easter and mid-August (this year the 14th to 17th; see [foire-isesurlasorgue.com](http://foire-isesurlasorgue.com)).

We are ready to leave. Oliver returns with his mirror wrapped up in an old piece of newspaper. “Does the mirror have a good provenance?” I ask.

“*Mais bien-sûr*,” he replies. He scratches his chin, astounded that I might even think otherwise. “It is the very mirror that Grace Kelly used at the Nice studios, when she was there in the 1950s filming *To Catch a Thief*!” ■

*Caren Trafford writes environmental books for kids – see [planetkids.biz](http://planetkids.biz) – and lives in Provence. She is happy to find architectural pieces of interest for you in Provence.*

### Fancy dipping into the world of *brocantage*? Here are some tips.

**ONE:** If you want to buy, get there as early as you can. The best items will have gone by eleven o’clock.

**TWO:** Form a view of the trader. Are they telling you any old story? It helps if you’ve bought there before – even if it was something small. They’ll likely reward your loyalty with a better discount on price.

**THREE:** Don’t be in too much of a rush. Have an idea of budget or market value by having looked at similar items. Don’t spend more than you feel is reasonable.

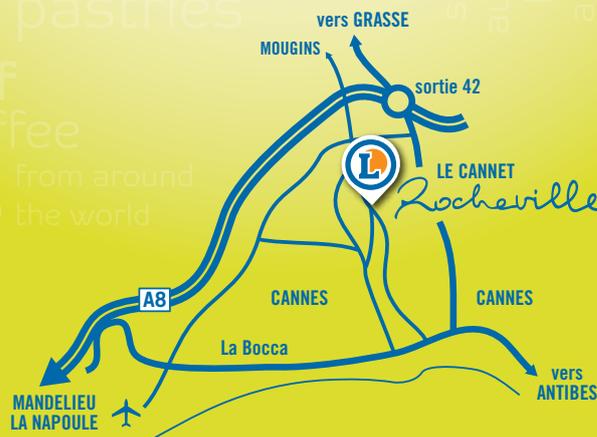
**FOUR:** Use the lingo. The trader will appreciate you much more if you can discuss the piece you are interested in. For many of them, their pieces are like children to them, and they would like to see them go to a good home.

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# Doing your home work

## Why it pays to hire a contractor

WHEN it comes to renovating, many people take on more than they can handle, from trying to do some of the prep work themselves to skipping on permits to miscalculating the overall disruption of daily life. And then of course there's the budget ... We have on too many occasions been contacted by readers who chose the cheapest estimate they could find from some guy "on the black" that they paid in cash up-front, only to see him disappear days after gutting their bathroom.

To help with your home improvements, here are few companies set up in the region.

THE Portuguese-American couple behind Victorious Renovations ([victorious-renovations.com](http://victorious-renovations.com)) – Rui Santos, 38, who has more than 20 years of renovation experience in the US and France, and his wife Elizabeth, 35, with a decade of real estate experience under her belt – launched their company after visiting France in 2007.

"When we realised that the South of France was lacking an English-speaking renovation company to accommodate the needs of expats," Elizabeth explains, "we knew that with our experience, honesty and loyalty to the industry, we were needed here."

Covering Monaco to St-Tropez, what does Victorious Renovations offer? "First

and foremost, our quotes – or *dévis* – are detailed line by line so there are never any hidden costs. We are also personally on site during the entire project. We can be reached on a personal mobile phone when necessary. Through the years we've learned to adjust to the local market and to ever-changing procedures. No one project is ever the same therefore we are always as personalising and accommodating as necessary."

There are a lot of scary tales out there about contractors. What would you say is the biggest mistake that people make when hiring a renovation service? "You have to be careful when shopping around for quotes. Firstly, if you are going to have to redo your project in five years' time, was it really worth the little bit you saved today? Also some companies will quote you a price but then that final invoice will be a lot higher than you anticipated."

"Secondly, people tend to contact a company when they want the project completed. Most reputable contractors have a planning schedule, which for us can sometimes be four to six months out. My advice is to allow time for meetings, *dévis*, approvals, etc, which will then ensure your renovation is completed within the desired timeline. In the US we worked more with wood but in France it's cement so French construction jobs usually take longer."

BRITS James and Helen Basson set up Scape Design ([scapedesign.com](http://scapedesign.com)) in 2000 and have five employees, three of which are full-time. Are there challenges in running a husband-wife business? "We have very complementary skills," explains James, 41, "so it makes it easy to have distinct roles within the business, and we actually really enjoying working as a team. However, it is difficult to let go out of 'working hours' and our children have to tell us to stop talking shop at the dinner table!"

How does Scape Design differ from other garden design companies? "We offer a design-only solution, which means we have no affiliation to any particular contractor or nursery, allowing us to adapt to our clients' individual needs. Each garden design is unique and tailor-made. We are also the only garden design company on the Riviera that has full accreditation from the Society of Garden Designer professional body, and who have won garden awards worldwide."

You're based in Monaco. Does this have advantages for your clients? "Many of our clients are Monaco residents and they find it reassuring to have a Monaco company provide services for their second homes, with the practicality of being able to meet in our local offices. Our client base is a variety of nationalities and



our multilingual approach, as well as the fact that Monaco is so multicultural, makes communicating and finding a solution to meet their needs much easier.”

What is the biggest mistake that people make when hiring a service like yours? “I think the garden is always the part that gets put off until the house is finished with whatever budget is left, whereas in hiring a garden design service early in the proceedings, with an allocated fixed budget, allows you to have intelligent solutions that not only add property value long-term but also means the garden and the house work together both spatially and aesthetically.

“People often think a garden is something they can do themselves by getting a builder in to put up a few walls and then chucking in a few plants from the local garden centre. This tends to leave the way open for unforeseen expensive mistakes, and unless you have a very deep understanding of plants in this area you will quite possibly end up with some that need irrigation, some that don’t, and all of them flowering for only one month in the year!”

STANISLAS Vergnory, 31, grew up in Valbonne, “the most international village of France” as he calls it. The Frenchman started Flexi Services (*flexiservices.eu*) in 2006, and then in 2012 opened a second company, Flexi Garden (*flexigarden.eu*), to focus more on landscaping. Depending on the season, Stan now has some 20 people working for him.

Why did you decide to start your own business, which especially in France can be so difficult? “I was really excited to create my own company, despite what people may believe about France not being the easiest country to run a business in. As we say ‘Impossible is not French!’ You have to work hard, get up really early and deal with a lot of paperwork

... but France offers more opportunities than you think. The biggest problem is hiring people even though there are 5 million unemployed.”

What makes Flexi Garden different from other services out there? “We aim to give a first class service. We work with the most talented landscape architects and can oversee your garden project from start to finish, including building a pool or a private football area.

“On the garden maintenance side, we make sure that the lawn is perfectly green throughout the year, even if our clients aren’t here to enjoy it – we work with a lot of foreigners who come just for holidays.

“I’d add that people always look at the price, fair enough, but price does not always mean quality, nor is the highest price synonymous with the best work. We offer quality and reliable garden maintenance, and are suitable for clients who like one company to organise and manage an exterior building site and landscape project.”

CHRISTOPHE Kennedy launched MosquitoFree (*mosquitofree.fr*) after spending a few weeks last summer at a friend’s house in Roquefort-les-Pins. How did it come about? “We were constantly being bitten by mosquitoes so we arranged for a local pest control company to come, but their ‘treatment’ consisted of a chemical fogger used on the property, which really did not work. We figured there had to be a better way of controlling this ever-increasing problem.

“I did some research and also went to the US, where we teamed up with a manufacturer who is now making our systems. We wanted a product that works but that is also non-chemical, and we found a concentrate that is natural and can work through your water sprinkler or irrigation system.

“The biggest challenge now is making people aware that there is an alternative.” ■




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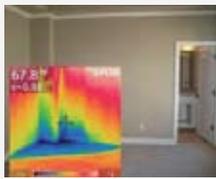
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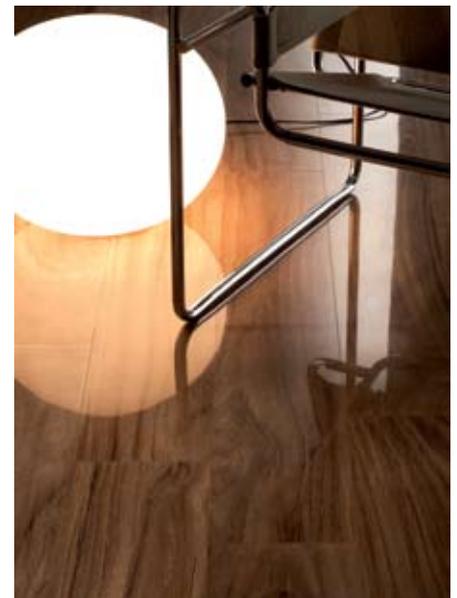
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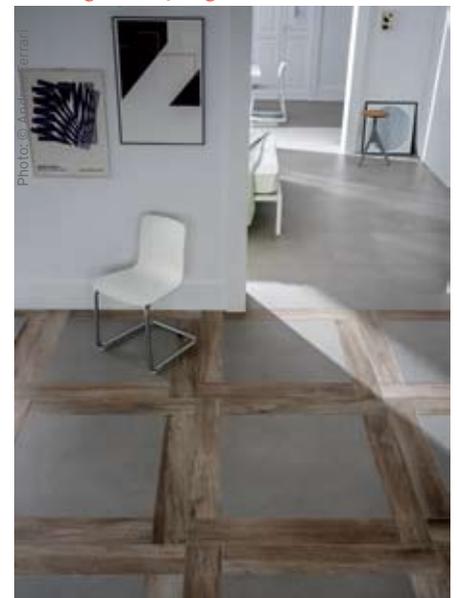
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# WOOD YOU BELIEVE IT?

The natural look is the latest trend in tiles



Above: Marazzi Collection Treverkmoood Woods. Below: Sant'Agostino Jungle Lux Collection.



Step back in time with the sophisticated parquet look of Royal Nut from Sant'Agostino. New tech methods means these tiles reflect the irregularities that occur in real parquet.

ONE style of tile is wiping the floor with the rest this summer – the wood-look wonder-tile.

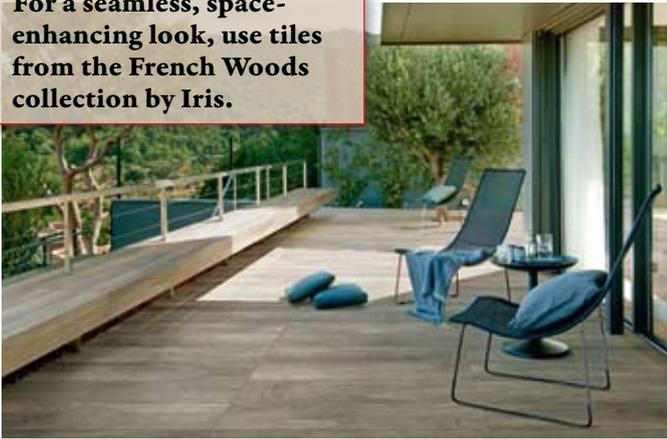
The latest technology has been harnessed by chic tile makers such as Marazzi, Iris and Sant'Agostino to produce a floor covering that looks so natural that it's hard to believe the evidence of one's eyes.

We have come a long way since auntie's lino with the garish pebbles painted on. At Home Store you will find a wide and inspiring collection of wood-look tiles, and the charming and knowledgeable Marie-Laure Luciano is on hand to guide you to the right choice. "Over the past couple of years there

has been a remarkable leap forward in the technology used to produce tiles that imitate natural wood," says Marie-Laure. "The look, colour and texture gives a perfect impression of natural materials.

"The range is truly remarkable. We stock tiles that look exactly like sun-bleached boat decking, others that bring

**For a seamless, space-enhancing look, use tiles from the French Woods collection by Iris.**



to mind rustic planking, and some that mimic perfectly the parquet from a bygone era.”

While not wanting to put carpenters out of business, it is hard to resist the arguments in favour of a tiled floor. Inside the home, you can forget the tiresome chore of waxing and polishing a wooden floor – the new tiles will keep their perfect surface for an eternity.

Outside, there are advantages to tiling aside from the ease of cleaning, safety being one of the most important. Many of us have come a cropper at some time or other on wet and slippery wooden decking, and keeping that sort of surface free from algae and rot can take up an awful lot of time and effort.

“The anti-slip surfaces used in modern tiling are tested to the highest standards, so whether the tiles are to be used for the ‘plage’ around the swimming pool or for, say, an eating area, you can be certain that you and your guests will stay upright!” says Marie-Laure reassuringly.

The Home Store tiling team are full of good ideas to enhance your home. They advise the use of larger tiles to create a feeling of increased space, in some cases recommending the use of wood-effect “super-tiles” that come in sizes up to 240cm in length – veritable planks that are used to stunning effect.

Marie-Laure has another tip for those households where space is at a premium.

“It used to be the case

that clients would insist on a clear distinction between the tiling used for inside the home and that used outside, on terraces for instance.

“These days the savvy homeowner will keep the same wood-effect tiles running from interior floors to the outside, drawing the eye forever outwards and increasing the illusion of spaciousness.”

Another area in which tiling trumps other choices of floor covering is that of heating. In a move away from unsightly and space-consuming radiators, house designers have gone for underfloor heating big time. This form of *chauffage* can be fatal to a parquet floor, drying out the wood with resultant warping and cracking.

With the modern tile this is not a problem. They are made to conduct heat, and the warmth and comfort provided by such a mixture of room-heating and practical flooring dispels the notion that tiles inside a home make the rooms feel “cold” and uninviting.

Having helped their clients with the choice of tiles, the Home Store team are on hand to advise on the right way to select a tiler with the right skills and the right price. A word of caution: good tiling is a special skill and the best-executed jobs often take longer than the customer expects.

So be prepared to allow a little more time and you’ll be taking the right steps towards a perfect floor. ■

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# GOLFING ON TOP OF THE WORLD

... and it need not break the bank at Monte Carlo



IF the gods played golf, then the Monte-Carlo Golf Club would be their home course. As you thread your way up the hairpin bends of this particular Mount Olympus – in fact the 1000-metre Mont Agel behind Monaco – the anticipation mounts. A spanking new Roller purrs past the *Reporter's* puffing Panda, and emerald fairways and pristine greens come into view. The doors of the elegant clubhouse are open in welcome. You have arrived. And if you are lucky enough to be a member here, then you have arrived big time.

Shane Heminway is one such fortunate soul; I am his guest on this azure summer's day. The views stretch into infinity, or at least from Corsica in the south to the snow-bearing Mercantour

in the north, from the Gulf of St-Tropez in the west to Italy in the east.

We are here to golf not gawp, however. Shane is a big unit with a great swing and drives the ball distances undreamt of by the 18-handicap Riviera Golfer. He is also very laid-back and speaks with a slight Texan drawl, which I find puzzling for a third-generation Monegasque.

"It's true my family has been here for a while now," he says, selecting a 9-iron for his 150-yard approach. "My grandmother was a close friend of Princess Grace, they had been at acting school together, and she came to live in Monaco after her marriage to Prince Rainier.

"I went to college in Austin – a great centre for golf of course, and these

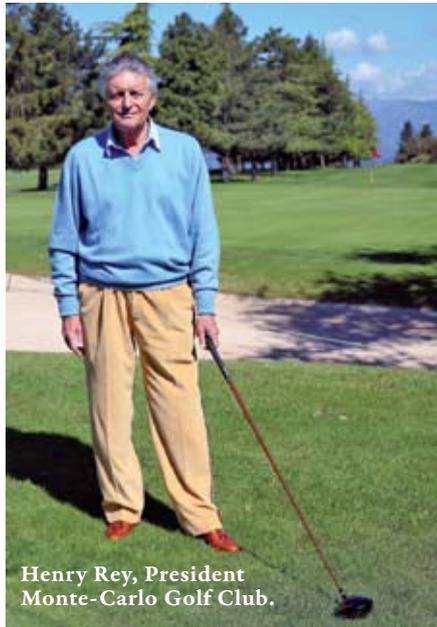
days I spend some of the year in Texas, so I guess that explains the accent."

Shane's company, Monaco Star Events, is heavily involved with both the Monaco and American Grand Prix. But golf is for fun.

As we come towards the turn, I get a pleasant surprise. When I last played here a few years back I was less than impressed by a Mickey Mouse hole near the clubhouse that involved taking on a neighbouring swimming pool from the tee. Three completely new holes have ironed out this problem magnificently, and I notice there is work currently under way on new back tee positions. The aim is to put the MCGC back on the international pro golfing map where it belongs.



ABOVE: MCGC's Hole 4, Par 4, 366m. BELOW RIGHT: At 860m above sea level, the heavenly club house doors welcome you to a magnificent course, where Hole 5 gives you views of three countries.



Henry Rey, President Monte-Carlo Golf Club.

This unique club's origins lie with the British colony in Monte Carlo before the First World War. The *Société des Bains de Mer* (SBM) responded to the Brits' insatiable appetite for the game with the little ball by embarking on the audacious project of building a golf course on Mont Agel. More than a hundred workers were despatched to the mountain, and in 1911 the course opened its 18 holes constructed on the site of the present-day holes 1-12. SBM also built tennis courts and a clay pigeon shoot. The club is on French soil, in the commune of Peille.

Fast-forward to the 1980s, and the dawn of the club's golden age. Jean-Charles Rey, in his second term as president, inaugurated the Monte



Carlo Open, attracting the world's best players to this jewel in the sky. But as the 1990s wore on, bigger courses lured the European Tour away from Monte Carlo. There was a brief re-flowering of international prestige in 2000, when Shane's uncle, Mike Powers, created the Monte Carlo Invitational, a great success in its first outing.

However, the second edition of the event, scheduled for September 12th of the following year, was cancelled for obvious reasons, and it never got back on its feet. But with the lengthening of the course and palpable sense of dynamism that now pervades the club, I expect Monte Carlo to be making international golfing headlines before too long. ■ *N.K.*

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



THIS year's Open champion Rory McIlroy is the most famous current member of the Monte-Carlo Golf Club. He took a hand in improving the practice facilities and can often be seen honing his swing on the slopes of Mont Agel.

Oh Shane what a shame!

It was a proud moment for Shane Heminway. He walked off the 18th at Grande Bastide with a spring in his step, signed for a 71 and bagged the course record. Some achievement for an amateur.

Back at the course a few months later, Shane was disappointed not to see his name on the honours board, the former course record and its holder the last to be engraved. After a gentle nudge, Grande Bastide promised to do the necessary without delay.

Before the club got the chance to play catch-up, Shane found himself paired in a Grande Bastide event with Cannes's greatest contribution to the golf world, Victor Dubuisson. Clearly finding, as I did, that playing with someone as relaxed as Shane brings out one's better golf, Victor shot 68. And Shane never did get his name in lights.

Millionaire Golf? It ain't necessarily so

It will come as no surprise that green fees at Monte-Carlo Golf Club are not the cheapest in the region, peaking at €160 for a weekend round. However, with SBM's "Cercle Monte-Carlo" card the rate for a weekday round drops to €65, almost a bargain. See [montecarlosbm.com](http://montecarlosbm.com) for details.

# SECRET APPEAL OF A *MAS* MARKET GEM



RONALD van der Meij carefully put down the bottle of wine he had just selected and, straining his ears, tried to make out the sound that was filtering through the cellar wall.

“I was sure I could make out the sound of running water,” says the 62-year-old Dutchman. “Clearing stuff away, I could see that part of the wall had been filled in with stones, I guessed not too many years before.”

Intrepid Ronald decided to investigate further. This Indiana Jones of St-Paul-en-Forêt was soon to be found burrowing through the rubble. What he found on the other side of the wall made his jaw drop.

“I saw in the torchlight a grotto with impressive stalactites. Water was trickling through the rocks. I wondered what this

secret place could have been used for.”

What Ronald had unearthed turned out to be a forgotten fragment of tempestuous history, that terrible period in the 13th century when the Midi was scourged of the “curse” of the Cathars, the sect that practiced a simplified form of Christianity that was anathema to the Church of Rome.

“I discovered that, although the greatest concentration of the Cathars was in the French southwest, they were found all over the south. In Provence they were often shepherds, and the grotto I had brought to light was a secret place of prayer long before St-Paul was properly established as a settlement.”

The grotto is one of many appealing features of Le Pavillon, the beautiful old *mas* on the fringe of that enchanting Var

village, that Ronald and his wife Reni are selling.

“We are looking for something a little smaller now that the family has grown up,” says Ronald, who has combined sports teaching and antique selling in his varied career.

“Le Pavillon is a very special house, just a couple of minutes from a morning café and a chat in the village, but with plenty of space and lovely mountain views. St-Paul is famous locally for its perfect blend of mountain and maritime climate. Getting about is easy, we are half-an-hour from the coast, skiing is only an hour away and we’re 45 minutes from Nice airport.

“We love our surroundings and wouldn’t dream of moving away from the



The grotto with impressive stalactites is a unique feature.

area. This is the real France, where when a streetlight goes out it stays that way for four months. You have to take time for everything, the place evolves slowly. For example, the stalactites in the grotto grow at the rate of one centimetre every 100 years, and there are some over a metre long.”

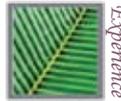
In the 18 years that Ronald and Reni have owned their *mas*, a gradual transformation has taken place, a tweak here, an extension there, all using local stone and craftsmanship. The result is a perfect blend of a cosy interior for wintertime

and the great sunny outdoors for summer. As an extra plus, Le three-bedroom Pavillon is adorned with frescoes and other artworks, the legacy of wealthy Italian former owners. There is a generous-sized swimming pool, a large, independent studio and 5300 square metres of terraced grounds.

All in all, Le Pavillon is the perfect place to escape, happily no longer from religious persecution, just from the pressures of modern living. ■

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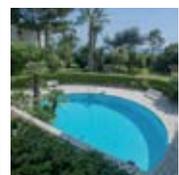
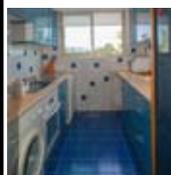
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# DAZE OF THE WEEK

BY TIM CLARK, LEGGETT IMMOBILIER



THE role of an Estate Agent is often maligned with the assumption that we spend all day flouncing around in our Ferraris while looking for ways to fleece old people and ruin the lives of unsuspecting house buyers. So let me try and set the record straight by describing a typical week in a realtor's life.

**MONDAY:** Listing day. Drive to Menton and then Nice to visit a number of new properties, including a beautiful apartment in Menton with great sea views and a superb renovation project in Mont Boron, Nice. A listing appointment can last over two hours, as we have to discuss with the vendor how we can present the house, photography, and how to produce our free 360° virtual tour of the principal rooms.

After visiting four properties, it's back to the office to create the official paperwork for marketing (mandate), to be certain we have permission from all the owners and that the property is actually owned by said owners – you wouldn't believe how many times vendors have to be reminded that they can't put the house up for sale if an ex-wife/sister/great aunt etc, who happen to be on the deed, is not in agreement too.

**TUESDAY.** Meet with a lovely couple that are at the early stage of searching for a holiday home in the Fayence area. We transfer to my car with a plan to view six properties that meet their pre-qualified specifications. It becomes apparent at the first visit that husband and wife don't

agree on anything and that the remaining viewings are also likely to be opposite to what they actually want. We visit two more houses before lunch and agree to sit and discuss a change of plan. I call the afternoon vendors to apologise and explain that the client has decided they don't want to have a 2-bedroom house in a village, and that 5 bedrooms for their 3 children and a pool are a must.

Arrive home after a long day on the road, still none the wiser except that the couple will "know it when we see it".

**WEDNESDAY.** Admin day. I write descriptions for the four properties I listed on Monday, so once signed mandates are received they can go live on our site without delay.

Call yesterday's husband and wife duo to arrange another day of viewing more suitable properties.

Call clients from the weekend who expressed interest in a particular property and after discussing a number of financial questions on the tax implications of owning in France, they decide to make an offer, although somewhat under the asking price. While we will make this offer, I explain to the buyer that if a house is already priced to reflect a tougher market, the seller is unlikely to reduce by a further 25%.

Today concludes with numerous hours spent answering emails and forwarding marketing plans for specific properties to our exclusive UK partner, Hamptons International.

**THURSDAY.** Morning spent organising the septic tank test for a house we have sold. Liaise with the *notaires* via our internal contracts department and take a sharp intake of breath when the owner of said house decides now is an opportune moment to inform us that he never had planning permission for the veranda at the front of the house. Once I pick myself up off the floor, we work together to make certain the correct paperwork is submitted to regularise this "oversight". This involved us actually filling out all of the relevant documents (in quadruplicate) and driving to his *mairie* to submit them (I won't even mention the fact that the person in charge of urbanism had the day off).

I also have to make sure a clause is added to the buyer's contract to ensure this regularisation is satisfied before a completion can take place, very much protecting the buyer from future problems.

**FRIDAY.** Meet with client and once again drive the length and breadth of the Fayence Canton – although today is much more positive and the couple thank me for transferring their feedback into very relevant viewings. One house in particular is spot on and they decide to make an offer.

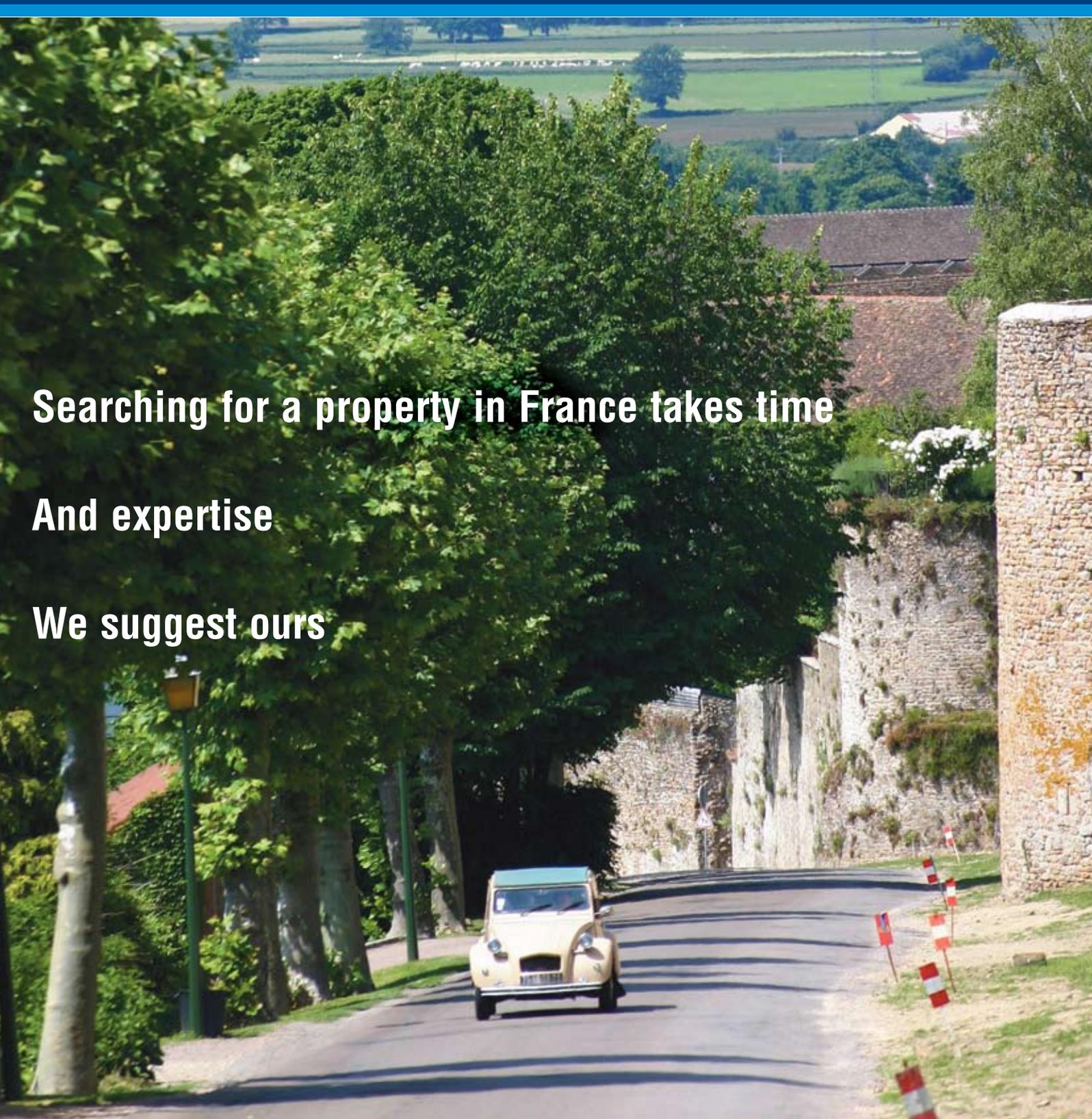
After some negotiation this is accepted by the vendor and I begin the aforementioned paper trail, liaising with *notaires*, our contracts department and local structural surveyors to make sure the purchase contract is ready before Monday afternoon as the client departs Tuesday on a three-week holiday to Dubai.

**SATURDAY.** Catch up all morning on emails, send high-resolution photos to a UK magazine editor for a feature being presented on a very interesting property we have for sale in Montauroux.

**SUNDAY.** Day of rest – apparently. Why is it though I can never turn my phone off?

A good agent will put in the effort so that your purchase goes as smoothly as possible and if you're a vendor, they'll work hard to get you the best price – and won't simply disappear after the final act. I have personally helped new owners to negotiate a deal on a car from their local Peugeot dealer, arranged all utility transfers for the new house and have even translated their telephone instructions because "they are in French". ■

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



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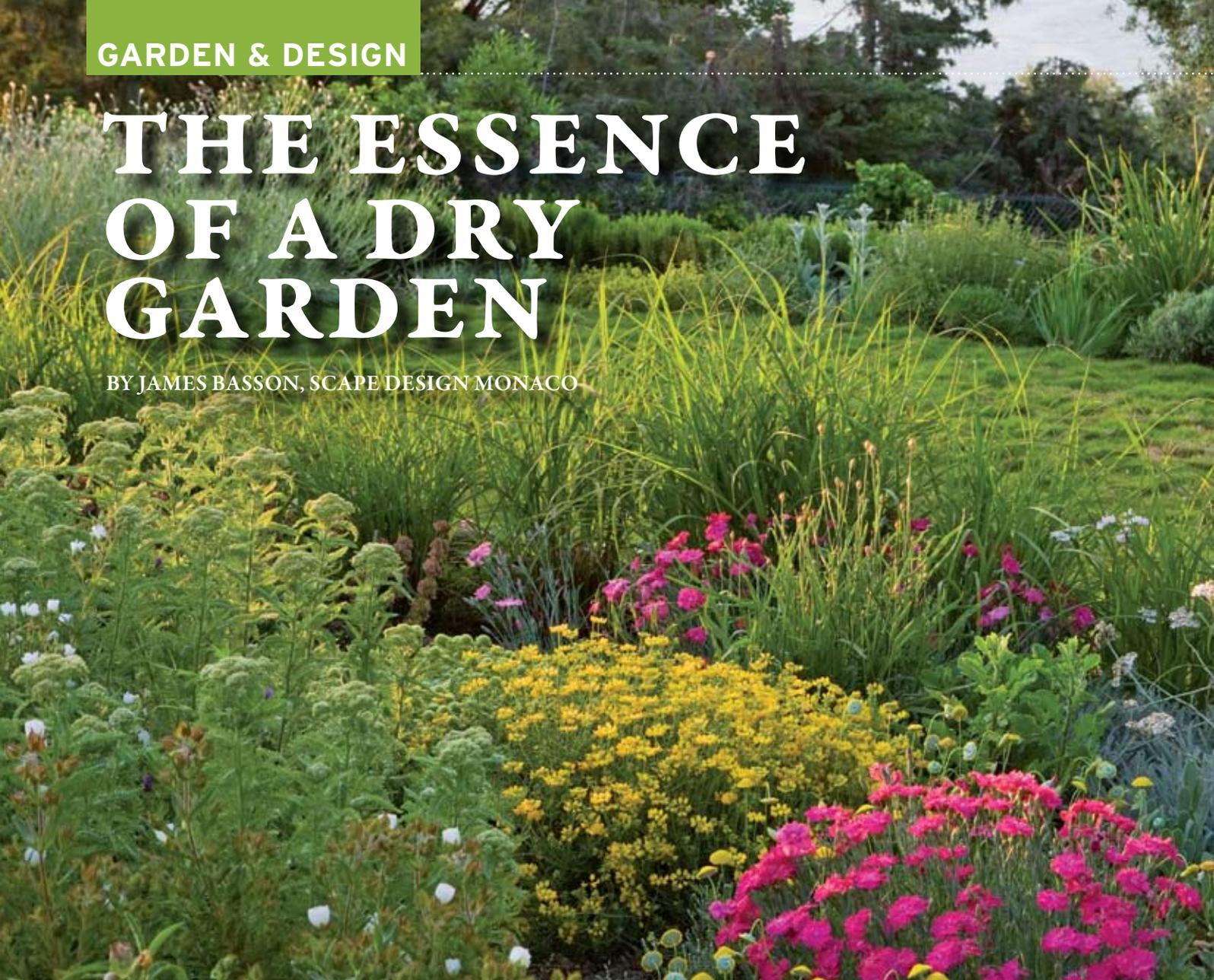
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# THE ESSENCE OF A DRY GARDEN

BY JAMES BASSON, SCAPE DESIGN MONACO



AS specialists in dry gardens we often get asked, “So you do cactus gardens?” While of course cacti and succulent plants do thrive in a dry environment, it’s a common misconception that this is the only solution.

Dry gardening in this area means working with the Mediterranean climate that shares with other parts of the world – like South Africa, California, Australia, parts of Southern America and of course the Mediterranean basin – hot, dry summers, wet springs and autumns and then cold, dry winters.

We advocate dry gardening in this region because it makes sense, and is a sustainable and ecological way of approaching your garden: using the right plant in the right place, adapted to the soil type, water availability and characteristic of the land.

Our dry gardening guru – Olivier Filippi (*Jardins-sec.com*) – has studied the art of creating a water-free garden and in his book, *The Dry Gardening Handbook: Plants and Practices for a Changing*

*Climate*, observes that we are lucky that the natural evolution of flora here in the South of France is actually far more varied and long-lasting than the more temperate areas in Northern France.

So the great news is that we can have a dry garden without being limited to cacti! If we look in the surrounding landscape, we see it remains green throughout the summer thanks to native shrubs such as Pistacia, Phillyrea, Myrtus, Rosemary and Buxus while its colour comes from Cistus, Roses, Broom, Lavender, Iris, Peony, Lavatera.

Once we get into autumn and winter, we are treated to the changing leaves of Cotinus, Rowan trees, Dogwoods, Field Maples and native grasses give everything that golden glow, providing an architectural interest.

So how do we go about creating a dry garden? You don’t need to import or upgrade your soil, which obviously reduces costs immensely. The plants need to be chosen for your specific

microclimate depending on winter temperatures, maritime winds and so on. The easiest way to know what would work is to look at what’s doing well in the surrounding landscape.

From a technical point of view, it’s important to plant small specimens in the autumn giving them a chance to settle in and set down roots over the winter and spring. Then after careful surveillance for the first summer with watering as necessary, your garden will never need watering again. This reduction of water not only vastly reduces the mosquito problem but will boost native bee and butterfly populations.

The end result gives you a colourful, ecological, sustainable and low-maintenance garden that will evolve naturally into a truly beautiful garden without having to have a cactus in sight!

The most important lesson that we have learnt in this type of gardening, once the right plants have been chosen for the site, is the importance of using predominantly



evergreen shrubs and sub-shrubs which gain ground quickly to cover the soil and prevent weeds developing. The first year is the hardest to keep the weeds down. There are two ways to speed up or help your chosen plants win over the weeds: one is to mulch the soil heavily – we suggest using mineral mulches such as locally sourced gravel or stones found in the garden; organic mulching is also useful but in the long-term it improves fertility which is not always beneficial to the plants chosen for your garden. Second is to overplant the garden so that the ground is quickly covered and then the most vigorous of the plants dominate and survive, while some of the other plants are removed

or die out. When it comes to paying for maintenance, this second option might seem rather wasteful but it really does work out cheaper in the long run.

Life is not all rosy though; there is a cultural aesthetic to accept and understand. Although with use of plants from other countries with Mediterranean climates, such as *Perovskia* from Afghanistan, *Agapanthus* from South Africa, we can extend the flowering season. Yet still in the heat of August the flowering landscape is reduced to a series of soft summer tones as discussed in our article *Brown is the New Black* in the last issue, which can also be seen on our website. ■

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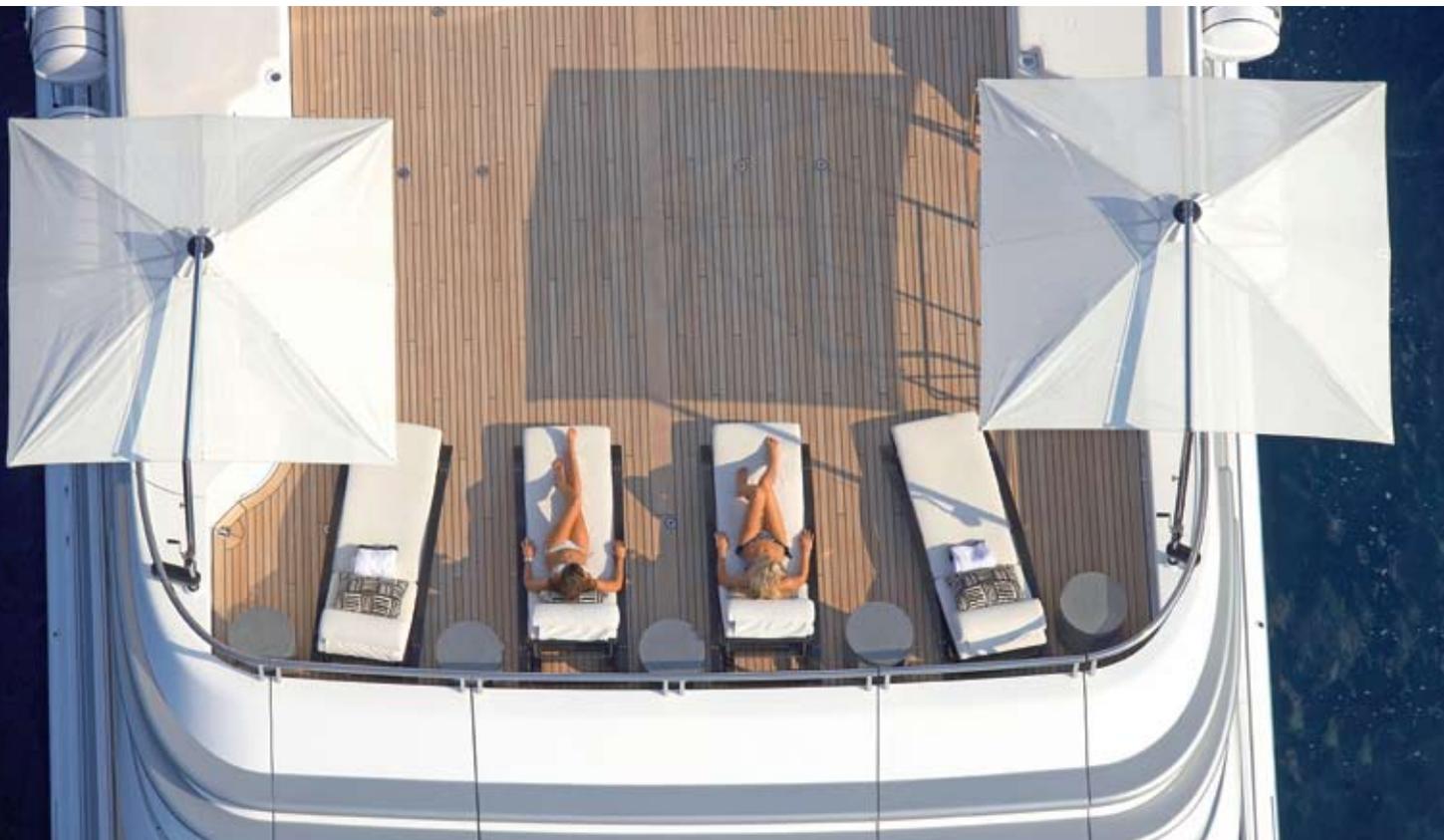
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# ED HOLT: TO SEA THROUGH HIS LENS

BY MIKE MEADE



Superyacht photographer Ed Holt (below right) has built an online collection of 5000 photographs for purchase.

DIGITAL cameras have simplified many aspects of the photographer's craft but the old adage rings as true as ever – by far the most important piece of photographic equipment remains the photographer himself.

No camera, however sophisticated, can replace a professional photographer's eye for composition, awareness of light and sense of the right moment. His or her cameras and lenses are merely the tools to give form to his training, experience and vision – much like a painter's brush and canvas. The kit must be good and usually is very expensive, but unless it's in the right hands, even the best equipment won't produce the "wow" factor that gives a picture that special look and feel which leaves no doubt the shot was taken by an experienced professional.

Ed Holt could well have become a painter like his father but it was when studying at Guildford in West Surrey that he leant towards an initial career in fashion photography, later opening his own London studio. His first trip on a yacht to La Coruña kindled his love of the sea and a natural penchant for marine photography.

Before long he had bought his first boat, a Cornish crabber that during the early Eighties he drove overland from Hook of Holland to Greece, where he lived on and off for eight years, alternating photographic jobs with chartering his own 42-foot sailing yacht, *Boucanier*.

Ed eventually discovered why a native of landlocked Oxfordshire felt such a natural affinity with the sea. "When my



grandfather and father died, the family papers were passed on to me and revealed more than I knew at the time. As it happens, my ancestors were shipbuilders at the time of Captain Cook."

He worked in Suffolk for a while but life in the UK wasn't for Ed. "I felt I was stagnating and I wanted to be where the yachts were." That place turned out to be Mallorca where he lived and worked for 18 years before moving to the Côte d'Azur five years ago.

"There's a lot to be said for having learnt the basic technical aspects of photography before the digital revolution came along.



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The fundamentals became second nature in a way that can only come from a degree of hands-on experience and formal training. I know how to shoot in full manual and can gain more control over the final result than any automated camera ever could.”

Apart from the technical essentials of his craft, Ed has developed the lifelong habit of all successful photographers – contemplating the work of those he admires. Still today he scrutinises the masters – Ansel Adams, Bill Brandt, Yousuf Karsh, Elliott Erwitt and others. “The documentary photography of Dorothea Lange and Robert Capa can still teach us about the importance of what Henri Cartier-Bresson exemplified in his seminal collection *The Decisive Moment*. If that moment isn’t instinctively captured at the split second it happens, it is gone forever.” (Ed’s initial interest in fashion photography still draws him to the work of Annie Leibovitz and Brian Duffy.)

Photographing a yacht sometimes requires an organised formal approach,

especially for deck and interior shots. About 30% of Ed’s work is on sailboats and the rest is motor yachts. “Even for charter shoots, I like the crew to set up the boat as the owner would want it. This is, after all, his home for part of the year and the photography should reflect his lifestyle to some extent.”

Yachting is big business, especially on the Riviera, so budget comes into play on some shoots. But Ed also knows that you can’t cut many corners if you want the best result. “These days, a helicopter is important for many shoots. Flight time with a good pilot doesn’t come cheap but the results are there in the end,” he declares. You don’t shoot a yacht in a few minutes and a 50-metre yacht needs at least three days to organise.

Travel can also be an important part of a yacht’s photography budget. “Yachts are mobile and don’t always sit outside my window in Antibes waiting for me to walk on board with my cameras. Sometimes I have to travel to where the work is.”

Two days after this interview, Ed was off to Turkey to shoot a new yacht for a shipyard.

Copyright is a common source of misunderstanding. Like with all creative processes the paying client doesn’t always comprehend the basis of creative ownership and subsequent rights for use of the photography he commissioned. “In principle my photography is meant for the promotion, sale or charter of a yacht. Sometimes it’s for the owner’s personal pleasure or for a shipyard brochure or website. It’s not for the client to pass on without my permission for possible use in an unconnected way that might not have anything to do with the initial purpose. That being said, copyright terms can usually be negotiated.”

Ninety percent of Ed’s work comes from satisfied former clients or by reputation. A look at his professional image library at [superyachtfocus.com](http://superyachtfocus.com) demonstrates why. His personal website is at [edholtphoto.com](http://edholtphoto.com) or contact him at [info@edholtphoto.com](mailto:info@edholtphoto.com) ■

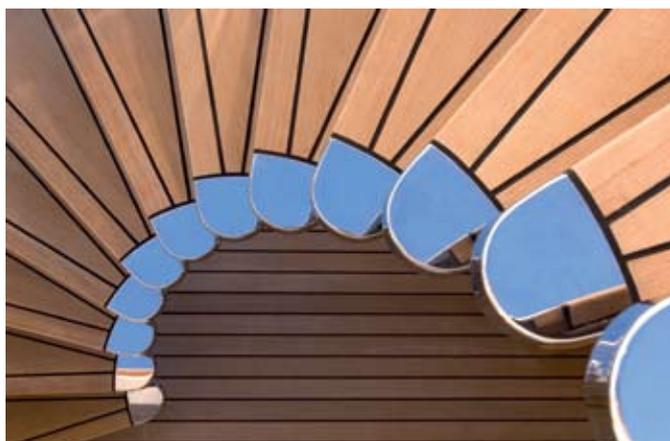




Photo: Berthold Werner

# TOO BIG? TOO BAD!

BY MICHAEL HEALY

ONE of the world's most beautiful bays is right here on our Riviera: Villefranche (pictured), with its historical old town and waterfront, classy boutiques and restaurants, military citadel (now serving as the *mairie* and housing an open-air cinema plus three museums) and the stylish villas on the hillsides. For thousands of years, Cap Ferrat has sheltered the bay from the easterly winds and it has been a deep-water anchorage for fleets of warships, either friendly or bent on attacking Nice, long before that city had its own harbour. Nowadays the Rade de Villefranche is popular for visiting yachtsmen, and a summer Sunday afternoon will see hundreds of boats anchored for swimming and relaxing. Eateries, bars and shops derive much benefit from these nautical visitors, along with cruise ship passengers.

But one category of yachtsman is virtually excluded from spending his time and money along the waterfront. He is the owner of a mega-yacht over 50-metres long, and he suffers from French laws which make it compulsory for vessels over 50m (165 ft) to take a pilot to enter Villefranche Bay. Pre-war there were very few mega-yachts, and the race to 50 metres was "won" only in the Eighties. Pilots for Villefranche come from Nice, and close-quarters manoeuvring in Nice Port may well justify a pilot onboard the larger ships. But the huge Bay of Villefranche is much easier, yachts are very manoeuvrable and their captains usually excellent ship-handlers. Cargo ships are used to waiting for a pilot, but a busy charter yacht may suddenly have a last-minute demand from the guests to dine ashore at La Mère Germaine or elsewhere. Guests who have paid a very large charter fee do not appreciate the captain telling them that a pilot is needed

but not instantly available – they want to move NOW. The expense of the pilot is not an issue – it is the unavailability of a service they could enjoy if their yacht were smaller. No wonder so many large yachts declare their overall length to be 49.9m!

According to *Boat International*, worldwide there are some 620 yachts over 50 metres, with another 55 under construction. Of these (from the 180m giga-yachts *Azzam* and *Eclipse* down) 95% will sometime cruise our coast, which is very short of berthing space for them particularly in the summer cruise liner and ferry season; they will regret missing out on Villefranche. Meanwhile the other losers are the town's restaurateurs, bars, taxis and shops, much of the business going to Beaulieu and St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, accessible by tender from the open roadstead between these towns. Even here restrictions are placed on them, mainly by ecologists, such as wanting to forbid anchoring in less than 35 metres of water, to protect the *Posidonia* sea-grass. Garbage and waste liquids may of course not be dumped overboard; the port of Beaulieu charges €30 per boatload of rubbish (SJCF is €20). The French Coastguard Semaphore on Cap-Ferrat is supposed to accord permission for vessels over 1600 tons to anchor, but there is little enforcement by the patrol boats of the Douanes, Affaires Maritimes, Police Municipale or gendarmerie.

One reason for going yachting is to escape the increasing number and complexity of restrictions affecting us all ashore; professional crew of the big yachts have the burden of compliance with all the new regulations, yet their main brief from their paymasters is to make sure the owners and guests have fun, here in the sun! ■

## MR PIGGY GOES TO MARKET



**EGGS OVER EASY?**  
Could that be Stelios flogging the oeufs at the Marché Forville, Cannes?

MR Piggy's canniest move was to take a French sow for a wife. My, how she transforms mealtimes – and that includes the summer picnic.

Out go the monotonous boiled eggs of the English, the *déjeuner sur l'herbe* features egg mayonnaise with a hint of curry.

Ham sandwiches curling at the edges? *Quelle horreur!* Bring on the cold ratatouille safe in its clip-top box. (Mrs Piggy is most particular about her ratatouille – only Italian oil made from the delicate Taggiasca olive is used, and the aubergine, courgettes, peppers and red onion are softened gently in it, in that order. Oh, and don't forget a generous handful of ripped basil goes in right at the end).

Socca – *farinata* in Italy – is a delicious and filling chickpea pancake that is easily portable. Tiny vine-ripened tomatoes are delicious and nutritious finger food. Crunchy radishes put the *pique* into *pique-nique*; spread salted butter on them French style.

That sweaty cake you were keeping for dessert is for the birds. A fresh fruit salad featuring juicy peaches and melon, both plentiful and cheap at the moment, fits the bill – adding a dash of Kirsch makes all the difference.

All the ingredients for the perfect picnic are to be found at their abundant best in your local market, of course.

# Cook d'Azur

**Katie Bills serves a satisfying summer dish to share with family and friends over a glass of crisp rosé as the sun goes down. Serves 4.**



## Squid with Chorizo & Sweet Potato Mash

### INGREDIENTS

1kg sweet potato	225g chorizo
1 garlic clove	2 tbsp olive oil
50g salted butter	1 (small) squid per person
50ml milk	300g fresh peas
Salt, pepper	Handful of pea shoots
Smoked paprika	3 lemons

Peel and chop sweet potato (250g per person). Boil with whole unpeeled garlic clove until it softens.

Drain the sweet potato and discard the garlic. Add 50g butter and 50ml milk and mash until soft. Season with salt, pepper and smoked paprika to taste.

Finely slice and fry chorizo in 1 tbsp of olive oil until brown. Add to the mash, stir together.

Prepare the squid (ask

your fishmonger to remove insides and backbone). Slice into inch-long pieces and cook in a hot pan with a tablespoon of olive oil.

Season with salt and pepper and fry until lightly brown and tender (around 2 minutes).

Shell fresh peas and boil for one minute. Drain and season with salt and pepper.

Plate the mash, then squid and peas. Garnish with pea shoots and drizzle with lemon juice.

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# CASTAWAY IN PROVENCE

BY JAMIE IVEY



SO here they all come, in their red-kneed posh-car glory, the tourists, nicknamed the *gibier d'été*, because with no winter birds (*gibier*) to shoot, the locals resort to preying on the influx of outsiders. The glasses of wine shrink in the cafes, the quality of the meat used for the ubiquitous *steak frite* order changes dramatically, and the price of *haricot verts* in the markets doubles. If you are unkind you could describe this type of behaviour as a rip-off; a more generous, understanding soul such as myself sees it as a necessary evil, enabling the locals to squirrel away savings for the harsh winter months.

I suppress a smile when I see another unsuspecting, Panama hat-wearing visitor purchasing a *vrai* Provençal lavender sachet. They'll never know that their clothes drawer back home is being perfumed by flowers from Chinese lavandin fields. Yet the reality behind my suppressed smile, is that after seven years in Provence, I am just as much an outsider as the average guidebook-wielding tourist. In fact, part of me wishes I were one of them.

Here's why. This month I've been

fancying myself as a bit of a Jean de Florette, developing a passion for self-sufficiency in the garden. Pagnol's Jean, like me, arrived in a village as an outsider, beguiled by the beauty of Provence. Like me, he was first attracted to move to the countryside by the promise of a simpler life. Jean described the Provençal countryside as "*a coin de paradis*", the very same phrase I first heard under the cathedral of plane trees, which surround the *étang* in Cucuron. A local had caught me looking up at the supplicant branches and whispered in my ear: "*C'est un coin de paradis, n'est-ce pas?*"

And if you live in *paradis*, you don't supermarket shop, you grow your own veg, hence my new *potager*, that staple of the socially-aware foreigner in Provence. I'm dreaming of enormous plump beef tomatoes, freshly picked, sliced with some mozzarella, and dressed with a little basil and olive oil. The dream remains distant because the *arrosage* expert keeps promising to come, "*normalement demain*". In the meantime, since no hose is long enough, I've been condemned

to trudge to and from the house with a watering can, just as Jean traipsed to a distant spring to water his pumpkins. My vegetables wither and no amount of trips in the beating sun seem sufficient. The local villagers laughed at Jean's ill-fated attempt at farming, like they no doubt ridicule my city-boy's potager.

It was Jean's choice of book to read to his daughter Manon *Robinson Crusoe* that made me stop, think and begin to see the tourists in a different light. *Crusoe* is part of all of our childhoods. Even if we've never read the Defoe original, we can see *Crusoe*, in our mind's eye, standing dressed in a loin cloth, with sun burnished skin, staring out to sea. He's the great literary hero of a man returned to a state of nature, stripped of all trappings of civilization apart from a few tools salvaged from the wreck of his ship, there appears to be nothing his ingenuity can't achieve. *Crusoe* builds himself an encampment, raises a herd of goats, and sows crops. He creates a new life from nothing. However, crucially *Crusoe* never stops dreaming of a passing ship.



Whereas in Pagnol's epic, Jean returns to civilization only to purchase the means of his own destruction. Determined to hew a living out of his *coin de paradis*, he purchases dynamite and blows himself up exploring for water for his crops. Now I am not about to start playing with dynamite in my potager, even if the *normalement demain* excuse has now stretched to two weeks, but the moral of Pagnol's story seems to be that castaways in Provence can meet an untimely end.

Hence my feeling of envy for the herd of Nikon-wielders that heads south every year dreaming of the sun. The timeless appeal of Provence is that it offers these tourists, if only briefly, a simpler life, eating vegetables grown locally rather than jetted in from Kenya and talking to

artisans who offer handmade products for sale. Aided by the dappled, Instagram light and slow pace of life, there's a sense of returning to an old-fashioned more righteous way of doing things, but ultimately it's only a sunny interlude. However much the tourists protest of wanting to give it all up, and downsize to a dreamy life in the sun, their boarding cards for the return trip are all already downloaded to gleaming smartphones.

Perhaps then it is a wistful smile I suppress as I watch them purchase their Chinese lavandin sachets. I'm a castaway like Crusoe, and rightly or wrongly, I've chosen to snuff out the smoking fire that might attract the passing ship. ■

*Jamie Ivey is the author of Ten Trees and a Truffle Dog and runs the website provenceguru.com*

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# STRIKING THE RIGHT CORDIALE



Bach double violin concerto at the Musique-Cordiale Festival concert in Bargemon.

TEN years ago, I had the great fortune to buy a small house in a village called Seillans, less than 10km from Fayence. As a professional violinist and viola player for much of my working life, the past 20 years have been deeply involved in the promotion of music in Europe, working with individual artists, festivals, and record companies, and most recently, with the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich and David Zinman, their music director.

It had always been my dream to put on a performance of Bach's masterpiece, the "Mass in B Minor" – a work as wonderful for the players and singers as for the listeners. Seillans has the L'église Saint Léger, a wonderful 11th-century Romanesque church, so, with the encouragement from my friend and partner, Jonathan Barker, we put the show on the road!

Coaxing my professional musician friends and a handful of good amateurs to come and have a busman's holiday in France in order to make up the orchestra, I then assembled a good choir made up



Pippa Pawlik, President of the Musique-Cordiale association.

of contacts from France, UK, Germany, Switzerland and Holland – who paid to come for a musical holiday in August.

The superb Errol Girdlestone (see *Reporter* 154), a nearby friend and supporter, was invited as he had conducted an *a capella* programme the year before and he continued

to conduct the choir for several years after that.

It was almost by default that Musique-Cordiale was born. We thought of the name, and through the mayor of Seillans, met Jacques Leforestier, in charge of culture, and Serge Leibovitz, President of the Tourist Office. Without their support we would not be where we are today. All the municipal buildings were at our disposal, including the Salle Polyvalente, and the church, plus a team of men in yellow outfits who were willing to move chairs and tables to anywhere we wanted – mainly to the garden where we cooked meals for over a hundred people for a week. It was an exhausting but highly satisfying week for all.

The structure of the festival has now

changed, with an emphasis on combining professional players with nurturing young talent. There is an Academy for 14- to 20-year-olds who work with tutors and are invited to play with the professional orchestra at the end of the week. We have a group of highly talented students from the Hochschule in Zurich, and from the Conservatoires in Lyon and Nice and have developed a unique relationship with the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, in addition to a good contingent from the London colleges.

In fact, we are now part of the *Communautés de Communes* label and perform in most of the villages *perchés*.

This year we celebrate our 10th festival, and are performing Bach's "Mass in B Minor", conducted by Graham Ross. Also on the programme is a fully staged opera, *The Barber of Seville*, conducted by Mark Austin and directed by John Savournin. There are three orchestral concerts conducted by James Lowe. In addition, we have Madolin players from the UK, Panpipes from Geneva, and a young Jazz trio from Holland. Plus there are free lunchtime concerts every other day. ■ Pippa Pawlik

For tickets and programming, see [musique-cordiale.com](http://musique-cordiale.com)

## AU CONTRAIRE

# A journey of a thousand miles begins with ... a reservation



EVEN though it's one of the most visited regions on the planet, the South of France is a geographical oddity in the minds of would-be travellers – “just a couple of hours” from any part of France.

As a tourist attraction with a Provençal farm, we can't count the number of requests from Americans who would like to “pop in” for a truffle hunt just after lunch at La Tour d'Argent in Paris, or from Japanese couples who want to stop by between visits to vineyards in the Champagne region.

Compounding this delusion is the romantic image of France's rail system. Foreigners imagine fast and hassle-free cheap trains, that they can walk right onto with no advance notice, arriving at their destination within a few hours.

Passengers often find out the hard way that things are not so easy or efficient. Recent guests who planned to travel from Paris to Nice but hadn't actually made any such plans were shocked to find that a last-minute ticket on Air France cost just €80 while train fare was €300.

It was lucky they hadn't

chosen the train. As June's SNCF strikes proved, you don't just need a plan, you need a backup plan. With a worthless train ticket in hand, they tried to no avail to hire a car. When their concierge's search came up dry, he found them “a guy.” They say a Paris concierge can get you anything, and this one really did. The “guy” was an executive who didn't need both his Land Rover and his Lamborghini for the week in question. For a hefty fee, he lent his Land Rover for the couple's trip to Nice, a voyage that took a very unanticipated seven hours.

And while the South of France is known for being the second home to many of the world's rich and famous, their paths don't cross with those of mere mortals like us as often as tourists seem to think. How many of us were asked how close we lived to Brangelina when they moved here? My nearest celebrity sighting was the day my friend Amanda told me her friend thought she might have seen Paris Hilton shopping in Aix. So someone I never met almost saw Paris Hilton ... Quite a brush with fame. ■

**Lisa Pepin, *lespastras.com***

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## WHEN WAR GAMES TARGET THE INNOCENT

THE tragedy of Malaysian flight MH17 is not at all the first time a civilian airliner has been brought down by a military missile or fighter aircraft. One of the first instances probably happened here on the Riviera. The cause for the loss of Air France flight 1611 near Nice in 1968 has long been thought by the families and some investigators to have been a missile misfired by the French navy. Investigative reports have regularly been suppressed for “national security” reasons but BBC Radio 4 made a further credible case for the missile theory in 2007, and as recently as 2011 the French television station TF1 interviewed a former French soldier who claims he saw a secret report substantiating the hypothesis.

There have been many other cases. In 1973 over the Sinai, Israeli fighters shot down Libyan Arab Airlines civilian flight 114; in 1983 Korean Airlines flight 007 from New York to Seoul via Anchorage was shot down by a Soviet fighter jet; in 1988 the US Navy shot down Iran Air flight 655 over the Gulf and later admitted that the civilian Airbus 300 had been mistaken by the USS *Vincennes* for an Iranian fighter plane; in 2001 Ukrainian forces mistakenly shot down a Siberian Airlines flight from Tel Aviv over the Black Sea. Officially, the explosion of TWA flight 800 on a New York to Rome flight in 1996 has been attributed to fuel vapours ignited by a short circuit but eyewitness reports say there was a

streak of light before the explosion and this led to credible theories that it was mistakenly shot down by the US Navy. I have attached [below] a publicly available redacted copy of an eyewitness statement to the FBI at the time.

Flying is certainly the safest mode of travel but we shouldn't believe everything we are told about air accidents!

*Sheldon Cohen Jr, by email*



## NICE CONSULAR SERVICE STILL CLOSED

THE US Consular Agency in Nice has hired a new Special Consular Services Assistant, however, pending the reopening of the Consular Agency in Nice, appointments for consular services are available online at the US Consulate General in Marseille. Please visit [marseille.usconsulate.gov](http://marseille.usconsulate.gov) to make an appointment for passport, citizenship, or notarial services and for updates on when the US Consular Agency in Nice will reopen. For matters involving deaths of US citizens,

## WHITE VAN WAS A WRITE-OFF

**Star  
letter**

WE responded to an online ad (not on the *Reporter* site, so don't worry!) for a “white van man” who advertised to take part loads from the Côte d'Azur back to the UK. He called by our house to pick up two cartons of our children's personal effects now that they are both at uni in England. He seemed very presentable and pleasant although we did find it a bit strange that his van had a French mobile number painted on it but was RHD with British plates. His price was reasonable and we paid cash in advance without even thinking about it.

About a week later our son in Southampton said that the goods hadn't arrived even though the van had left France in plenty of time. When we called the mobile number we were told by an embarrassed woman that her husband's van had been broken into during an overnight stop near Lyon. The man even came by the house with the police report as proof and we are convinced he is not lying and that our boxes really were stolen. The problem is that as he is not an officially declared mover, our possessions were not insured!

Everyone should be careful that anything valuable should be trusted only to a legally registered transporter with proper insurance. The only advice our French lawyer could offer is that we should sue the website for taking a commercial ad from a black business but that will not bring our personal items back and some of them are not even replaceable as they are of sentimental value. Caveat emptor!

*Grace & Mark Egerton, Seillans*



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## LETTERS

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*Vanessa Tiersky, Cultural Affairs*

*U.S. Consulate General Marseille, by email*

### WHERE HAVE ALL THE BRITISH GONE?

THERE are many conflicting reports about how many British expats there are around the world and it doesn't help when the popular press sometimes gets things so obviously wrong. The *Daily Mail* recently put the total number of British expats at about 5 million. This is a credible estimate but their country-by-country list is not.

The *Mail* put the number of British expats in France at ... 720! In the same report they say that there are more than 1.3 million British expats living in Australia, 759,000 in America, 49,000 in the Netherlands and 1182 in Iceland.

Even statistics accredited to a reputable source like the UN should be looked at with reasonable scepticism. In some instances the explanation for an obvious error might be as simple as typography, which is probably what made the *Daily Mail's* "statistics" very wrong in some cases.

In most European countries a decimal is shown as a comma, not a dot like in Anglo-Saxon annotation. We use commas to separate thousands whereas continental Europe uses spaces. If figures are imported into a spreadsheet for analysis it's important that the software be configured properly first. Most statisticians would

round off to the nearest whole number when talking about hard population numbers (you can't have a fraction of a person), which adds to the possibility of misinterpretation.

In the case of the *DM* piece, if the British population of France is known to be something like 720,253 (with a comma), most European software (except British and Irish) would interpret that as 720.253 (with a dot) and then round it off to 720. Even if they're configured to show 2 digits after the decimal, spreadsheets and databases tend to remove zeros if they are the only digits to the right of the decimal. If the working figure is approximate (like 720,000) the erroneous result of 720 would be calculated. So 3,000 (in British annotation) would become 3 on the continent because the comma is interpreted as a decimal.

Some intern at the *Daily Mail* probably didn't pick up the paper's obvious errors but we should all be sceptical when a newspaper publishes so-called "statistics".  
*Andrew Rowbotham, Cabris*

### A TAXING TAXI ISSUE

FRENCH taxis can carry passengers from France into Monaco but they are not allowed to pick up passengers within the principality unless they have paid an expensive Monaco tax. Prince Albert is very interested in environmental issues and Monaco has taken many excellent steps to promote green transport and sustainable living but this situation

seems to go against their other initiatives because a taxi coming into Monaco from Nice airport (for instance) must return empty even if a return client is available. This goes some way towards explaining the high cost of the one-way trip but it also seems an environmentally irresponsible waste of petrol.

*Carla Mestri, Beausoleil, by email*

### LA GENTILLESSE DES GENDARMES



THE local French seem to think that their gendarmes are tough and inflexible but I find them just the opposite. My wife and I drive a lot and have been pulled over several times. The gendarmes' demure is formal, it is true, but they are always polite and there is no sarcasm or sneering like we have experienced in England.

If you don't make a fuss they can even be forgiving. I was breathalysed as only very slightly over the limit in June and was let off with a verbal warning when I sheepishly explained I had been celebrating the Queen's Birthday over lunch. I think the officer probably found my story so typically British that he couldn't bring himself to issue me with a ticket, which could have cost me my licence and a big fine. He just laughed and waved me on ➤

with the broadest smile I've ever seen.

Let's give them credit where it's due. As long as you don't argue with them (you'll always lose) gendarmes are invariably reasonable and can even be charming.  
*Graham Holden, by email*

#### SATELLITE COVERAGE... SORT OF

JUST to say that the ability of our old 100cm satellite dish in St Laurent du Var to capture BBC television seems to vary by the day. Some days it works fine but not on others. Maybe it's influenced by the weather? We live in an apartment and the syndic forbids bigger dishes on balconies, so we're stuck. Suggestions welcome!

*Gale & Hal Petris, by email*

*This is discussed on our web forum. RR*

#### GOING, GOING, GONG



OVER the many years I have been reading your excellent magazine I have remarked a rather inconsistent editorial attitude towards British Honours. In one issue you opined that gongs were handed out merely "for growing old" but in another issue you state that recipients "always" deserve their awards. I can only presume that this reflects a difference of opinion between writers rather than the ambivalence of your editorial policy. In the past couple of years you have avoided the subject but I do wonder, in light of the recent sordid revelations, what your attitude is now?

We now know that some recipients of such baubles have been perverts and child molesters (Sir Jimmy Saville OBE KCSG), convicted paedophiles (Rolf Harris CBE), indecent assaulters (Stuart Hall OBE), foul-mouthed celebs (Jonathan

Ross OBE), disreputable businessmen (Sir James Crosby), sacked politicians, tax fraudsters, cheats and mere incompetents such as Sir Fred Goodwin and even Lord King who so badly mismanaged parts of the British economy. Peerages can also be bought (unofficially of course) without due regard to merit. Her Majesty must be uncomfortable with some of the honours her advisers expect her to bestow.

My late half-brother refused an MBE for services to charity because he felt less deserving than the many others who are passed over. His view was that honours are regularly handed out to those with little merit but that those with friends in the right places are able to influence the Honours List. It now seems he was right. Gongs do often go to the undeserving and this makes a mockery of the whole system and discredits those who truly deserve an honour.

Happily, some have shown the good taste to refuse theirs; JG Ballard, Roald Dahl, Albert Finney, David Bowie, Nigella Lawson, Jennifer Saunders, Dawn French and many others. These are precisely the people who deserve our respect for their sense of decency. Many of the shameless who accept their gongs do not and some of them even live here on the Riviera.

In recent years, gongs have become a ridiculous joke and are only taken seriously by those who receive one. They should go.  
*Kenneth Halstall-Worth, Menton*

#### BAGS OF TROUBLE

SOME airlines are now offering discounts for passengers without checked baggage and I was very happy that British Airways is one of these on the Nice route.

But travellers to Nice from London should also know that there can be an inconvenience attached to this saving.

Recently I was singled out for an extra security check at Heathrow Terminal 5 because the scanner showed that my carry-on bag contained many wires and electronic items. The detailed check took a very long time so it is lucky I was early for my flight.

I travel with at least a digital camera, a laptop and/or tablet, and a mobile phone. Each of these needs a charger and accessories like ear buds, so it's quite normal to have several cables and electronic components in a carry-on bag. I doubt that the contents of my bag were particularly exceptional but I suppose spot checks are a normal thing. I want to be safe in the air so I accept that we

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all should be carefully scrutinised.

But I do take issue with the carefree way in which my particular check at Heathrow was carried out. I travel a lot for business and pack very carefully with items grouped together in pouches. For the check, these pouches were unceremoniously emptied in haphazard fashion on top of one another into big trays without any attempt to group them as they were packed and with no regard for the fact that some items might have been fragile.

To make matters worse, this was done with no respect whatever for my privacy and in plain view of other passengers. Papers were removed from folders and dumped onto the pile. One of these papers was a bank statement which could have been read by anyone standing nearby. What if I had been travelling with something very personal in my carry-on?

I have nothing to hide and have no problem with in-depth security checks but if the search is to be intensive, travellers should be offered the option of having their bag examined in a private booth or behind a curtain. I was not offered this.

The indignity of standing in a queue while holding our trousers up with a toe peeking out from a hole in our sock because our belts and shoes must be removed for security checks is bad enough. To have our intimate personal belongings put on display for the whole world to see is a step too far. From now on I'm checking my bag into the hold.

*D.M., name supplied, by email*

## One mot time

### Barigoule.

To *partir en barigoule* is to become decadent, degraded, louche, the consequence of a loss of moral values. Also the word for certain kinds of mushroom (barigoulo), as well as a dish involving artichokes grilled with salt, pepper and oil..

#### WRITE TO US

Letters to the Editor can be sent by post (see page 50) or email to [info@rivierareporter.com](mailto: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.

## july

### RACE FOR LIFE COMES TO MOUGINS

Sun July 27, 8:30: For the first time ever we are holding a Race for Life event here on the Cote d'Azur at l'Etang. There are over 300 Race for Life women-only events in the UK each year to raise money for Cancer Research UK. Each year these events raise millions of pounds for vital research. We will start early: arrival and registration at 8.00 for an 8.30 start. The route will be alongside the road, starting from the large car park, around the lake 3 times, and back towards the car park. It will thus avoid the difficult paths, making the event suitable for girls and women of all ages and all abilities. We will organise the event so sprinters and runners set off first, with walkers and strollers following on behind. This is a non-competitive event. Those who jog or run Race for Life often complete the 5k course in about 30 to 45 minutes. Walkers take about an hour, but there is no pressure to finish in a certain time. So we will be finished before it starts to get too hot. See [raceforlife.cancerresearchuk.org/index.html](http://raceforlife.cancerresearchuk.org/index.html)

### 65TH FESTIVAL DE MUSIQUE, MENTON

Thurs July 31-Mon Aug 14: France's oldest classical music festival at Parvis Saint-Michel Archange and other locations. Tickets: €10-€50 04 92 41 76 95. For more info see [festival-musique-menton.fr](http://festival-musique-menton.fr)

## august

### 40TH MONTE CARLO SPORTING SUMMER FESTIVAL

Sat Aug 2: Boy George. Tickets €170.  
Thurs Aug 7: Neil Young & Crazy Horse. Tickets €80.  
Sun Aug 9: Julio Iglesias. Tickets €220.  
Sat Aug 16: Tom Jones. Tickets €220. [en.sportingsummerfestival.com](http://en.sportingsummerfestival.com) or +377 98 06 36 36

## 70th Anniversary Operation Dragoon



Thurs Aug 14: Le Miton, a tiny hamlet near La Motte, and adjacent to the Drop Zone/Landing Zone where the British 2nd Independent Parachute Brigade, part of the First Airborne Task Force, landed. Commander Brigadier General Frederick (USA) used one of the buildings in Le Miton as his headquarters and another was used as a hospital. This is not a private ceremony, but there is no space for spectators as the area is too small.

Thurs Aug 14, 18h: At the parachute monument, near to St Enderol, La Motte. Much bigger and certainly the most spectacular of all the events, with re-enactors dressed as British and American soldiers of 1944, resistance fighters, and civilians and military vehicles of the period. Participation is by invitation, but spectators may attend.

Fri Aug 15: A ceremony at the monument just outside Le Muy, followed by shorter ceremonies at the General Frederick roundabout, the Peter Matthews plaque, the 4th Parachute Battalion Bridge (a company of the British 4th Parachute Battalion captured and held the bridge) and finally at the Claude Jacquement plaque. Participation by invitation but the public may attend.

Fri Aug 15, tbc: ceremonies organised by the French government at the Rhone American Cemetery, Draguignan and also one at Toulon that involves naval vessels. By invitation only.

Sat Aug 16, 9h: The liberation of Draguignan usually takes place at the Rhone American Cemetery, Draguignan, with two ceremonies. The first normally at 9h for the re-enactors; the second is organised by the local authority and starts about 10h. Both are usually open to the public.

Many ceremonies in the towns and villages on the coast and inland during August, in order to commemorate the days on which they were liberated. Cavalaire will have its parades and wreath-laying ceremony as usual on Aug 15.

*Events TBC; contact local tourist offices or mairies.*

### CINÉ PROM IN NICE

Mon Aug 4: Lost in Translation  
Sat Aug 11: Sky Fall  
All films shown at 21h30 in their original versions with French subtitles. Tickets €2 (free for children under 12 accompanied by an adult). Don't forget to bring a jacket or shawl and a pillow. 04 92 04 06 66 - [tdv-nice.org](http://tdv-nice.org)

### PWN ROUND TABLE LUNCH NICE

Mon Aug 4, 12h30-14h: at the Boscolo Hotel Nice, Pescheria Restaurant, 12 bd Victor Hugo. See [pwnnice.net](http://pwnnice.net) or contact [events@pwnnice.net](mailto:events@pwnnice.net)

### 4TH LES NUITS DU CHÂTEAU DE LA MOUTTE À ST-TROPEZ

Tues Aug 5-Wed Aug 13: A cultural summer staple in St-Tropez, prestigious concerts and shows with artists from the biggest international stage. Traditionally, the festival honours the culture of a country every year. This year has a Concert on the Beach, QUEEN ELISABETH MUSIC CHAPEL, History of the Place, Jazz All Stars, Brazilian Night and Opera Night. For tickets (€25-€45), call 04 94 96 96 94. See [lesnuitsduchateau-de-lamoutte.com](http://lesnuitsduchateau-de-lamoutte.com) for more info.

### 6TH INTERNATIOAL FESTIVAL TANGO

Wed Aug 6-Sun Aug 10: Courses and workshops at various locations across Nice. See [verynicetangofestival.com](http://verynicetangofestival.com)

### POSH PARAPHERNALIA & OPEN HOUSE

First Thursday with Posh Paraphernalia is the Thurs Aug 7 & Sept 5. Quality 2nd hand clothes and accessories for women and men are also available. A light lunch will be served. On Sat Aug 16 & Sat Sept 20 it is Open House at the Grange with lunch served from 12h30-14h. At 815 Chemin Gourettes, Mouans-Sartoux, 04 93 47 94 20.

### CANNES 2014 FESTIVAL OF PYROTECHNIC ART

Thur Aug 7, 22h: PYRAGRIC (France)  
Fri Aug 15, 22h: PYRO MAGIC (Hong Kong, China)  
Sun Aug 24, 22h: KHAN (Russia)  
This year's event brings together winners of the "Vestale d'argent" and the "Judges Prize" over the last 3 events. Each of them is returning to Cannes to carry off the prestigious "Vestale d'or", one of the world's major firework trophies, which is only awarded once every 4 years. Take the Palm Night Bus which runs until 3am; [festival-pyrotechnique-cannes.com](http://festival-pyrotechnique-cannes.com)

### AMIAI (ALPES-MARITIMES INTERNATIONAL APERITIF CLUB)

Wed Aug 13: Lunch at L'Ecluse restaurant in Pegomas. To reserve please ring Ann Wynn on 04 93 61 87 60.

### NATIONAL DAY OF SEBORGIA

Wed Aug 20: Dinner outing to the Principality of Seborga for National Day Celebrations. See [internationalclub.fr](http://internationalclub.fr)

## september

### POLITICAL WINE

Wed Sept 3, 18h30:20h: Hosted by the Riviera Chapter of Democrats Abroad at La Canne à Sucre, 11 promenade des Anglais, Nice. This social event is open to all members and Americans here on the Riviera and an opportunity for all Americans in the area to attend a brief presentation on a current political topic and to interact with one another as we engage in thoughtful political discussions. Please note that there is no formal entry fee but, to support and thank our gracious host, all attending are asked to order at least one drink during the event. Please RSVP (even "maybe") to [dafrance.riviera@gmail.com](mailto:dafrance.riviera@gmail.com). See [democratsabroad.org/group/france-riviera](http://democratsabroad.org/group/france-riviera)

## PIANO CONCERT IN NICE - 50 YEARS OF UNICEF IN FRANCE

Fri Sept 5, 19h30: In support of 50 years of UNICEF in France, the Association Energie Création Solidaire is organizing a piano recital by the Russian pianist GÉNIA, acclaimed by the *Times* newspaper as an "exceptional musician", to take place in the auditorium of the Theatre of Photography and Image in Nice. Entrance: €12 donation directly to UNICEF. For tickets: see [asso-ecs.com](http://asso-ecs.com), call 06 31 90 83 92 or email [asso-ecs@gmail.com](mailto:asso-ecs@gmail.com)

## COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF THE RIVIERA

Sat Sept 6: A Taste of Asia. Details on our website: [commonwealthclubriviera.com](http://commonwealthclubriviera.com)

## FESTIVAL DE LA PLAISANCE CANNES

Tues Sept 9-Sun Sept 14, 10h-19h (Fri until 22h): More than 150 boats at the first meeting of the season bringing together exhibitors or visitors, owners or prospective buyers at Vieux Port & Port Pierre Canto. See [salonnautiquecannes.com](http://salonnautiquecannes.com)

## BEAULIEU CLASSIC FESTIVAL

Tues Sept 9-Sat Sept 20: Beaulieu-sur-Mer has a new musical rendezvous: Beaulieu Classic Festival. Soloists of international elite, exceptional repertoire, different mythical places each night as the Beaulieu Classic Festival combines virtuosity with musical enchantment and "Spirit Côte d'Azur"! Each concert is followed by a dinner or cocktail reception with the artists. Dinner or cocktail: €65/pp - drinks included). Reservations can be made only from the Tourist Office at least 72 hours before. Contact Tourism Beaulieu-sur-Mer: 04 93 01 02 21 [tourisme@otbeaulieusurmer.fr](mailto:tourisme@otbeaulieusurmer.fr)

## AMIAI

Thurs Sept 11: Lunch at Auberge Provencale in Valbonne. To reserve please ring Kim Crawford on 04 93 01 20 37 or mail [kimandgary@sky.com](mailto:kimandgary@sky.com)

## RENDEZ-VOUS DES ASSOCIATIONS

Sat Sept 13: This now annual event, with some 250 Club & Association stands at the Acropolis in Nice, shows the general public activities and services that range from sports to culture, from health and welfare to humanitarian to leisure education. 5000 associations have their headquarters in Nice, and their diversity is essential to public outreach.

## SINGING DAY, ENDING IN COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE FOR WORLD WAR ONE

Sat Sept 13, 10h-18h15: Royal School of Church Music in France at St John the Evangelist church, avenue Paul Doumer, St Raphael. All singers welcome. See website for details and booking form: [rscmfrance.org](http://rscmfrance.org)

## BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF THE VAR

Sat Sept 13: Annual Vendange lunch at Lorgues. See [baofthevar.com](http://baofthevar.com)

## ETOILES DE MOUGINS

Fri Sept 19-Sun Sept 21: Gastronomy festival, this year honouring Christelle Brua, Gault et Millau's Chef Pâtissier 2014. For details see: [lesetoiledemougins.com](http://lesetoiledemougins.com)

## 31ST EDITION EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS

Sat Sept 20 & Sun Sept 21: Visit historical monuments and buildings usually closed to the public. For more info, see [journeesdupatrimoine.culture.fr](http://journeesdupatrimoine.culture.fr)

## "BREAD OF LIFE" BY ST JOHN'S CHOIR & HARVEST FESTIVAL

Sat Sept 20, 18h: A themed service at St John the Evangelist Church, avenue Paul Doumer, St Raphael. All welcome. Sun Sept 21, 10h30: Harvest Festival at St John's.

## Purple Pants Promenade



Sat Sept 27: 19h-22h: 3.5km charity walk to encompass Port Vauban, starting at Fort Carré in Antibes. Funds raised will go to two charities that support women suffering from cancer. UK Wellbeing of Women and in France, Défi de Femmes. €25 (to include purple shorts); €5 for under-16 (no shorts). Sign up: [facebook.com/purplepantspromenade](http://facebook.com/purplepantspromenade) It is possible to donate without inscription for the walk in this link. Contacts: Meg Burley [meg@ppp-riviera.org](mailto:meg@ppp-riviera.org), Bev Hill [bev@ppp-riviera.org](mailto:bev@ppp-riviera.org), Lizz Boardman [lizz@ppp-riviera.org](mailto:lizz@ppp-riviera.org)

## FIRST CHARITY LADIES' RALLY VINTAGE CARS

Sun Sept 21: Presented by Child CARE Monaco (See pg 13). Day includes a gourmet picnic lunch, afternoon tea at the Grand Hotel, a visit to a perfumery, and a glass at the finish. You have nothing to organize. Info: [childcare@monaco.mc](mailto:childcare@monaco.mc)

## PWN FOCUSING YOUR ENERGY TOWARDS THE PRIORITIES: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Tues Sept 23, 21h30: Central Nice. More information to follow. See [pwnnice.net](http://pwnnice.net) or contact [events@pwnnice.net](mailto:events@pwnnice.net)

## MONACO YACHT SHOW

Wed Sept 24-Sat Sept 27, 10h-18h30: Considered the most prestigious boat show in the world with an exhibition of 500 major companies in luxury yachting and 110 super and megayachts afloat. Tickets €150/day per person. For more see [monacoyachtshow.com](http://monacoyachtshow.com)

## PYA SEA CHANGES FORUM AT THE MONACO YACHT SHOW

Thurs Sept 25: At the international Hydrographic Organisation in Monaco. Contact [info@pya.org](mailto:info@pya.org) for more information.

## SIGN UP, BAKE & BE HAPPY

Fri Sept 26: It's that easy to hold a Macmillan Coffee Morning and help raise money for people living with cancer back in the UK. So get your friends together for a cuppa, a chat, and a very good cause indeed, and help make this year truly the World's Biggest Coffee Morning yet. Wherever you are in the world, you can get your FREE Macmillan Coffee Morning Kit by emailing: [coffeemorning@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:coffeemorning@macmillan.org.uk)

## THE RIVIERA POLO CUP 2014 SEASON FINALE

Sat Sept 27: Annual International Polo Tournament. Domaine De Pijaubert, Montauroux. Details to follow; see [internationalclub.fr](http://internationalclub.fr)

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## MISC

English American Library, 12 rue de France, Nice. Open since 1862, the largest English-language library in Southern Europe. Open 10-11 and 3-5 Tues to Sat. Tourist €6/week or €26 for a year. See: [www.nice-english-library.org](http://www.nice-english-library.org)

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