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## In this issue ...

### The Insider

HARD to believe but the Christmas season is once again around the corner. You'll find local gift ideas on page 20 but if you really want to give something special, consider volunteering your time (see page 23), which in the long run may help you turn into a Super Ager (page 30).

First results from the world's largest expat survey ([expatsurvey.com](http://expatsurvey.com)) indicate what we have known for some time, that when it comes to helping families integrate in their new host country, employers fall short where local churches offer "practical support as well as spiritual". On page 21 you'll find all of the English-language Christmas carol and religious services from Monaco to St Raphael.

Our local bookshops also act as a meeting point for expat minds, and on page 19 they give their holiday reading suggestions.

To make your Christmas Merry, learn how to dazzle family and friends with culinary masterpieces from the Secrets de Cuisine in Antibes (page 22) or for a truly Happy New Year, sign up at the new School of Happiness in Mougins (page 18).

A few profiles this time round include Monaco resident, the great Paula Radcliffe, women's world record holder in the marathon, while in *American Notes* we see that Janet Ruiz has retired from the US Consular Agency in Nice after 42 years. A special evening in her honour will be held Dec 6th (see page 47) but what about the fate of the Agency?

On page 32, art correspondent Pippa Jane Wieglos meets Jack Vettriano, a part-time Nice resident. Sadly, local artist Mitch Waite died November 10th and our condolences go to his wife Hanna and their two young boys. We will pay tribute to Mitch next issue. Such a humble reminder to be thankful, and not just at Christmas, for all that you have.

A very happy and healthy 2014 to all.

Nancy Heslin, Editor



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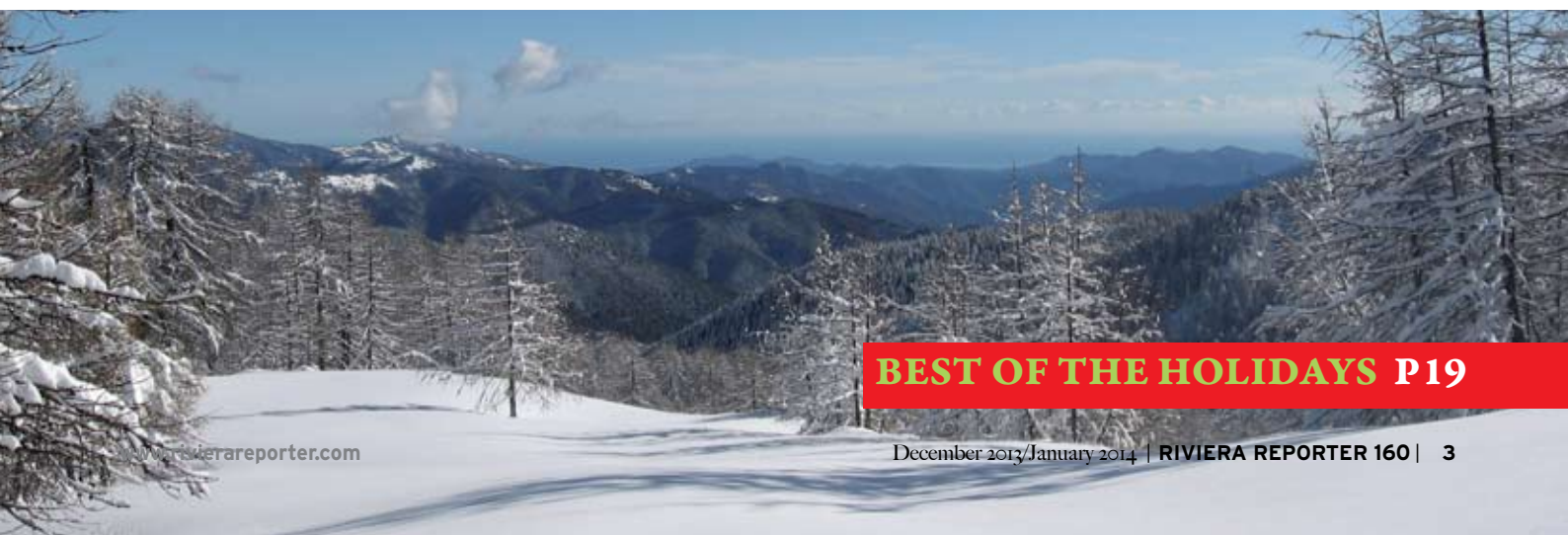


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Cover: Vieux Nice Promenade de Paillon ©Roy Cox



**BEST OF THE HOLIDAYS P19**

# riviera reportage

## DEAR @SANTA ...



JOLLY old Saint Nick may have been born 270 AD, but he's a man of the times with both a Facebook page – *Le site du Père Noël de la Poste* – and on Twitter: @ChezLePereNoel (although he never tweets behind the reins). There are some pretty naughty Père Noël's out there in the Twittersphere so a warning to parents to check which one the kids are following.

La Poste's seasonal interactive website *laposte.fr/pere-noel* is now up and running and children can write a letter to Santa in any language at: Secrétariat du Père-

Noël, 33515 Libourne Cedex or email [chef.lutin@laposte.net](mailto:chef.lutin@laposte.net). Santa's main headquarters are in Lapland – Santa Claus, Santa Claus Main Post Office, FI-96930 Arctic Circle – and letters sent to either address will receive a personalised reply from the man in red.

And just what is topping this year's wish list? Debenhams UK predicts the big sellers will be the Kurio 4S touch tablet (£90), a Doc McStuffins Doctor's Bag (£20) and Monster High Wishes Party Dolls (£23). Lego Galaxy Squad Bug

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Obliterator (£60) and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Anchovy Alley Fold Out Set (£25) are expected to sell well, too.

The retail chain also produced a list of the 50 most popular toys of all time. The Top 5: Cabbage Patch Dolls, Rubik's Cube, Monopoly, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Buzz Lightyear.

Barbie surprisingly came in 6th, but maybe playing make-believe with Make-Up Free Barbie (pictured) is too much of a challenge for even the most vivid of imaginations.

## le FLASH



Does actor Jean Dujardin make us think the French accent is sexy?

in number one position, even though Dr Nigel Armstrong, a University of Leeds lecturer in French and sociolinguistics, says that the accolade has very little to do with the French accent itself but is rather a cultural reflection: "People, especially the British, have this stereotypical view of sexy French women in Paris, the haute couture, the French cuisine and we consider them stylish people. All this adds to their sex appeal, which is basically what makes their accent seem sexy."

And Dr Armstrong is quick to point out, unlike in the UK, "One thing that's nice about the French accent is that you can't make sense of it in terms of class or social standing." *Vive l'égalité!*

IT has been nearly four years since France suffered a linguistic blow, falling to fourth place, behind the Irish, Scottish and Italians, in the world title for the sexiest language. Fortunately, a recent survey has placed the Gauls back on the sexy podium

**£1000**

The minimum a woman expects her future husband to splash out on an engagement ring AND she wants the proposal within 3 years and 4 months of dating.

## "CLOSED DUE TO DEATH OF THE CITY. PLEASE TRY A NEIGHBOURING CAPITAL."

ONCE described by Hemingway as a "vibrant, thriving French capital full of nocturnal pleasure-seekers of varying income levels", Paris was named "the European capital of boredom" by *Le Monde* in 2009.

Smoking bans, lack of late night public transportation and noise complaints have all played a part in dismantling the city that Hemingway knew, but now things are "going to get noisy", according to Clément Léon. The 31-year-old was elected as Paris' first unofficial "Nightlife Mayor" in November by some 2200 voters with a promise to "wake up the French capital", providing a club scene to rival European hotspots such as Berlin, London and Barcelona.

"We can't afford to become the laughing stock of Europe," Léon wrote in the *Nouvel Observateur*. "Let's make Paris, and its nightlife, great again."

The young and trendy can't wait for the City of Light to stop being the City of Lights Out.



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## FRANCE IN THE NEWS



### The Riviera: still on the money

DESPITE the troubles in the eurozone, the Côte d'Azur remains a favourite choice for well-off foreign property buyers looking to upgrade their quality of life. Recent studies by Savills and HSBC again

put the French Riviera on top of their lists of the best places to buy prime property. This is ahead of Monaco, which in the Savills/Candy & Candy Prime Enclave Index came in at 5th after the Costa Smeralda, St Barts and Aspen Colorado.

Top-of-the-market house prices have stabilised as sellers are being more reasonable in their expectations. Climate, convenient transportation links and a cosmopolitan lifestyle are big draws to the region and Monaco-bound expats have the added advantages of the principality's tax-friendly status, renowned personal security and a healthcare system linked to the excellent French model.

Add to the mix an international airport with dozens of short daily flights to nearby European destinations in Britain, Switzerland and Scandinavia and the Riviera remains an attractive option.

European and Russian wealth are attracted to the Riviera but the Chinese nouveau riche is a notable exception. According to Paul Tostevin, an associate at Savills World Research, Chinese buyers tend to prefer cities.

The downside to buying French is the political uncertainty and a potentially punitive tax situation. With proper planning however, many property and investment experts do not see this as a major disincentive to the purchase of Riviera property.



## Not so nice for Nice-Matin?

LAST issue we reported on the financial troubles at *Nice-Matin* and many readers were surprised to learn that this citadel of the French daily PQR (*presse quotidienne régionale*) was losing millions of euros a year. So what's happened since?

On November 4th, former *Nice-Matin* staffer Jean-Pierre Largillet again reported on his site *WebTimeMedias.com* that *Nice-Matin* had suspended payments of national insurance charges, retirement contributions, taxes and TVA until at least December. GHM (Groupe Hersant Média), *Nice-Matin*'s principle shareholder, has announced a firm redundancy plan that would reduce staff numbers by 183, including 54 of our fellow journalists, before the end of 2013. GHM president Philippe Hersant is standing firm on this plan despite union demands for a more modest reduction with possible strike action in view.

Hersant emphasises that at least €14 million must be saved in 2014 if the paper is to survive and reducing staff numbers

is an essential part of accomplishing that. The title's other shareholder, Bernard Tapie, is still lying low following his public (and improbable) claim that he couldn't write a cheque for €10 that wouldn't bounce. Tapie remains entangled in the aftermath of the Adidas/Credit Lyonnais affair and an ongoing difference with the taxman (see *Reporter* 158).

There are no new revelations about a potential buyer although rumours are circulating that there may soon be an offer on the table from a Middle Eastern consortium with some Italian participation.

It will be a worrisome Christmas for many of our colleagues at our only regional daily title. *Bon courage, les gars!*

## Old bones but new questions

IT was a gruesome discovery in the waters off Antibes recently. A diver found human bones from several corpses grouped together only a few metres from the shore and a popular walking path.

The remains are not thought to be recent

as one skull had "death to paedophiles" written across it in marker pen. For that to be possible the bone would have to be dry and without any flesh attached. Exactly who the victims are remains a partial mystery; DNA tests indicate that a leg bone is probably that of Stéphane Hirson, a 17-year-old who disappeared without trace near Meaux (Seine-et-Marne) in 1994. This would rule out grave robbers as Hirson was never officially found or buried and his family never discovered his fate.

But who are the others and how did they get there? A police investigation continues.

## "Hands off my whore"

PROSTITUTION is legal in France but both trafficking and soliciting for sex are not. Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, known as NV-B, the 35-year-old French-Moroccan Women's Rights Minister is backing a law (first proposed by the previous government) that would ban all prostitution and make it a criminal offence to pay for sex. Clients – like sex trade service providers – would

# What 2014 will cost you



## GOING UP

- **Stamps:** the cost of a first class letter (*priorité*) under 20g will rise from €0.63 to €0.66 and the 2-day *lettre verte* service from €0.58 to €0.61.
- **Tobacco:** a packet of cigarettes will cost over €7.
- **TVA** will increase from 19.6% to 20% on January 1st, putting France in line with several EU countries including Britain and as a result, some consumer prices will rise.
- Intermediate **TVA (transport, hotels, restaurant meals, home improvements)** will increase from 7% to 10% while the low rate of TVA on primary necessities will



decrease from 5.5% to 5%. So, in principle, restaurants will be more expensive but essentials such as supermarket food should be slightly cheaper.

- **TVA on domestic air tickets:** an increase from 7% to 10% will not apply to international flights but will to foreign airlines on their flights within France. This rate was planned also for SNCF domestic rail travel but a 5% rate is instead awaiting as an amendment to the 2014 budget.
- **Top-up medical insurance (*mutuelles*)** prices are expected to rise 2.5% to 3%.
- **Fuel oil and natural gas prices:** average annual heating bills will rise by about €30.

► **Petrol:** a new carbon tax is likely to increase the price of petrol. Taxes on pump prices between diesel and petrol will be gradually evened out resulting in an increase in the price of diesel, which is currently taxed at a lower rate.

► **Income tax deduction for families with children** will be reduced from €2000 to €1500 per child so some 1.3 million families will pay an average of €64 a month more in tax. Two-thirds of the 19 million French households paying income tax will face a rise in tax in 2014.

► **Tax deductions for back-to-school expenses** will no longer be deductible for middle-income families.

► **Local taxes** vary from commune to commune and are decided by the mayor. In general, expect *taxe d'habitation* and *taxe foncière* to rise in 2014.

## GOING DOWN

► **TVA on energy saving** home insulation costs will be reduced from 7% to 5% instead of rising to 10% as initially envisaged.

► **Cinema tickets** will be now taxed at only 5% so expect to pay less.

► **Social security reimbursements:** some medicines have been removed from repayment list.



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## FRANCE IN THE NEWS



then be punishable under the law.

How realistic is this? The “world’s oldest profession” has survived many onslaughts in the past and the outcome of such a law could drive the practice even further underground and put a vulnerable underclass at greater risk of poverty, abuse, violence and disease.

Echoing a 1971 French campaign by 343 women supporting legalised abortion, signed by French actress Catherine Deneuve and known as the “Manifesto of the 343 Sluts”, a *Hands off my whore!* petition was launched with the “Manifesto of 343 scumbags” at *causeur.fr*. This group of men claim to “love freedom, literature and privacy” and say that making prostitution illegal “threatens all three”.

“We consider that everyone has the right to freely sell their charms – and even to enjoy doing so. All together, we declare: *Touche pas à ma pute!*”

A majority of the French join NV-B in her outrage at this. “The 343 scumbags demand the right to decide what to do

with the bodies of others,” she said. “I think there is no need for further comment.”

Within a matter of weeks, a second petition signed by French “rock stars, filmmakers and a former culture minister” – and Catherine Deneuve (her again!) – read, “Without supporting or promoting prostitution, we refuse the penalisation of those who prostitute themselves and those who seek their services.”

The 60 some-odd signatures are demanding “a real debate without ideological prejudice”.

*Maisons Closes* were once common in France and a modern day equivalent could go some way toward freeing sex workers from much of the danger and unpleasantness of their marginal existence. They’d be medically followed and have legal rights, and would be taxed on profits and so qualify for Social Security, retirement benefits and police protection. Above all, they would be free from the oppression of criminal gangs – and from scumbags.

### UMP Sy dumpsy

WHEN Marine Le Pen took over as head of the National Front from her fractious father in January 2011, one of her first initiatives was to name a new political party – not her own but that of her opponents. Blaming the country’s economic and social woes on both the ruling Socialists and Nicolas Sarkozy’s UMP, she lumped them together in a common designation: UMPS.

Charming and clearly intelligent,

as Le Pen’s popularity grows in small but symbolic steps, so does the use of the term – even by those outside her party. The inference is that “they” are the cause of all France’s economic and social ills and “we” are the remedy.

A minor but symbolic victory for the FN municipal council candidate in a Brignoles (Var) by-election in October made international headlines, including *The New York Times*: “Minor Victory by Far-Right Party Has France Asking if Bigger Changes Are Ahead.” A small seat in a small commune but a big slap in the face of the UMPS.

Le Pen’s anti-immigration and anti-EU stances mirror closely that of Nigel Farage’s UKIP in Britain. The two parties also share some shortcomings – neither has experience in government, nor a team that’s yet ready to rule. The electoral process in both countries is shaped so that – even with considerable popular support – neither UKIP nor the FN are ever likely to gain full power but could become significant partners in future coalitions. The *entente cordiale* could well see a rebirth. ■

EU citizens resident in France are eligible to vote in the municipal elections March 23rd & 30th 2014, as well as the European elections. A reminder that the voter registration cut-off date is Dec 31st. See last issue and our website about how to register. The same deadline affects French tax remissions for charitable donations, which are a generous 75% for the first €521, and 66% after that.



# A river runs through it ... or at least underneath

BY MARGO LESTZ



Above: *Bugadières qui lavent le linge dans le Paillon à Nice.* Left and below, today's Paillon.



OCTOBER 26th marked the opening of the new ribbon of a park that flows through Nice, the €40 million 12-hectare Promenade du Paillon, in honour of the Paillon River which still flows beneath it.

After two years of major works massively disrupting the city, residents and visitors alike eagerly awaited the official first view of the grounds. And they weren't disappointed. Dancing water jets streaming into the air in time with the music was followed by the opportunity to walk on water. That's right, everyone walked on water. The basin containing the "mirror of water" is only 2cm (less than one inch) deep so when the jets are not in use you can walk right across – some even did this when the jets were on. It was

a nice warm day, so no one minded getting wet, especially the children.

Everything in the park is designed to remind us of the river. The walkways are covered in aquatic coloured stone and there is a "plateau of mist" made by air pumps that blow tiny drops of water into the air. In the children's play area, a whale, octopus and turtle are all following the river toward the sea.

## What about the river?

THE park's watery theme reminds us that the Paillon is still there, but if you are imagining a picturesque flowing river, think again. Even though it has a very wide bed, most of the time there are only a few small streams of water running through the Paillon River. Even 19th-century tourists weren't

very impressed: one of them called it an imaginary river while another said it was the "driest part of Nice".

The Paillon is probably best known for the paintings of laundresses washing clothes in the little streams and then spreading them out to dry in the riverbed. This led to the saying that the Paillon was only good for drying clothes.

However, if there was a lot of rain in the hills behind Nice, that "imaginary river" could (and did) turn violent very quickly because of its steep descent into the city. Even though these deluges were infrequent, the risk was so great that in the 1800s watchmen on horses were strategically placed to keep an eye out. If there was danger they would gallop along the riverbanks crying,



"The Paillon is coming ... The Paillon is coming." Why? For the reason that the nearly-dry riverbed was often full of *niçoise* women doing their laundry.

### "The Paillon is coming"

ONE July day in 1887 was especially bad for three of those laundresses. The skies over Nice were clear and blue and no one noticed a storm brewing in the hills behind.

Suddenly a wall of water rips through the riverbed. Most of the women scramble to safety just in time to see all of their clothes washed away, but three are stranded on a little island of gravel in the middle of the swirling muddy waters. A crowd gathers and watches helplessly.

Five men decide to act. One of them is Monsieur Garaccino, the son of one of the trapped. They wade out supporting one another. Even though the water is only about waist high, the current is very strong and the river is carrying mud, stones and other debris, which can easily knock a person down.

### Mama goes first

THE first woman to be rescued is Monsieur Garaccino's mama, of course. Can you imagine the trouble if he had rescued someone else first? Garaccino puts his mother on his shoulders and with the help of the other four men, they struggle back to the bridge where a ladder has been attached. Mama Garaccino climbs to safety and the men turn back toward the island.

The water is rising fast and the other two stranded women are up to their ankles now. The men arrive and again, it is Monsieur Garaccino who does the

heavy lifting. Aima, "Laundress No. 2", is placed on his shoulders and the five men start back toward the bridge. But they stumble and the current takes them all down into the swirling, debris-filled water. They get back up, but poor Aima swallowed so much muddy water that she's taken to hospital in very serious condition.

### In need of refreshment

LAUNDRESS No. 3 still needs saving, so the very tired men make their way back a third time to the little island. Someone has managed to lead a mule out onto the island and the woman is perched on him. The bystanders see that the men are exhausted and want to do something to help. So they tie a bucket to the end of a rope and cast it out to them. It contains an "energy drink" – a bottle of cognac! After downing the bottle, the men are reinvigorated enough to save Laundress No. 3 and the mule.

### Enough is enough

RESCUING laundresses is hard work and perhaps that is why the city decided to cover the river. They started in 1867 and gradually it was hidden from view (the part that runs through the centre of Nice anyway). Today that troublesome riverbed is concealed by the lovely new park.

But should we worry about those torrents that at times poured over the riverbanks? Well, there is an underground tunnel to take the excess water, plus an electronic monitoring system to keep things in check. So hopefully the deepest water we will see in the Promenade du Paillon park is 2cm, and no more rescues will be necessary. ■

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



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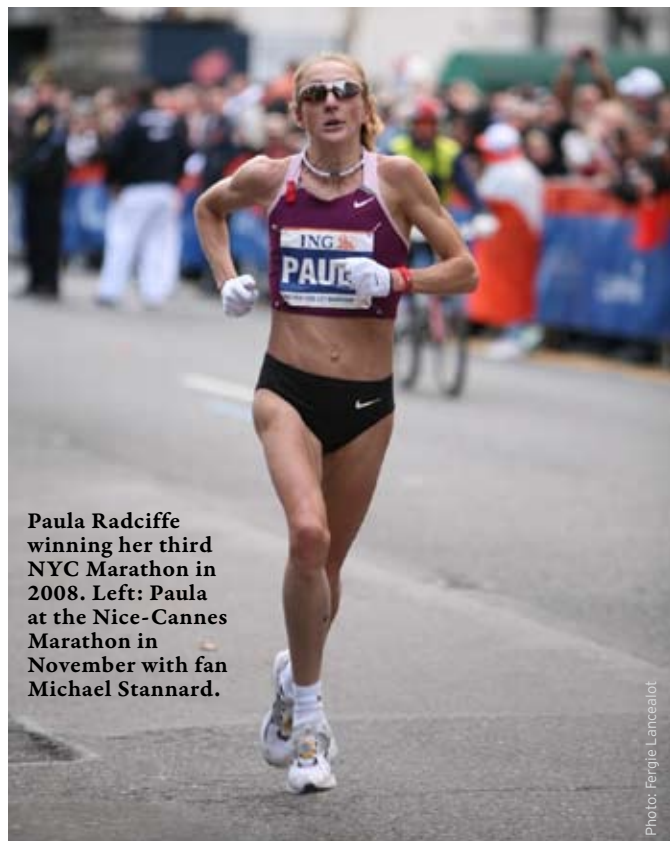
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# PAULA ON THE RUN

A world champion finds peace and sport in Monaco

BY NANCY HESLIN



Paula Radcliffe winning her third NYC Marathon in 2008. Left: Paula at the Nice-Cannes Marathon in November with fan Michael Stannard.



WHEN I read that Paula Radcliffe, the women's world record holder for marathon for the past ten years, was the *marraïne* ("godmother") of the Nice-Cannes Marathon in November, I jumped at the chance for an interview, thinking that she was just passing through the Riviera.

I quickly learned two things: Paula and her husband and coach Gary Lough, a former 1500m runner, have lived in Monaco since 2005. And secondly, as I witnessed at the marathon start line with Paula at the mic giving last minute advice to some 8500 runners, she speaks very competent French.

I ask the soft-spoken 39-year-old about how she ended up in Monaco and her language proficiency when we meet afterwards.

"I really wasn't comfortable in the UK anymore after the Athens Olympics. We were training already in the Pyrenees when someone suggested Monaco. We decided to give it a try and ... well, both of

our children, Isla and Raphael, were born there. At university, I studied Modern European Studies – essentially languages – and Economics. As our kids go to French schools in Monaco, at home I actually speak French with them while my husband speaks English."

When Paula mentions Athens, I want to hug her for every horrible headline that has undeservedly attacked her since the 2008 Olympics, when she stopped at the 36-kilometre mark during the marathon; she did not complete the race. One of the finest runners of our times, she has not ceased to be a target of the British press: "Quitter," "Choker" or "Money-loving drama queen" (which I'm guessing were filed by journos happily eating crisps and having never exercised a day in their lives).

The woman who "gave myself one year after uni to see if I could make it as a professional runner and if not I'd get a job" is a three-time winner of the New York Marathon, and three-time winner

of the London Marathon in which she set the world's fastest time for women in 2:15:25 in 2003, and has represented Britain in four consecutive Olympics. She holds the title of MBE and has earned countless athletic awards. You cannot achieve this by being a "quitter" and for anyone who has ever tried to run, there is a monumental difference between wanting to stop and having to stop.

"I felt ill at ease in the UK, as if I'd let a lot of people down, and I just wasn't settled," she tells me. "I miss family and friends that are there, and some favourite places to run, but Monaco is the place I consider home – it's where our lives are."

A natural and confident woman with her feet firmly planted on planet earth, Paula seems the antithesis of Monaco. "People always say Monaco is like living in a bubble, it's not the real world. And it can be but there are two extremes so you can quite happily be normal if you want to. I like the lifestyle and have



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always loved France, and Monaco is a good mix of French, Italian and the cosmopolitan English lifestyle. The schools are great, the kids are literally running around outside all year, and it's safe."

Plagued by a series of injuries since 2009, Paula has been taking it day by day since undergoing a foot operation in August 2012 that had her in full rest mode until April this year. Now she continues to train, either running up by the Plateau de la Justice in Col d'Eze or at the athletics stadium, where she also hits the weights, and says, "I'm steadily getting stronger and more resilient, and am able to endure longer and faster runs on the road. I would love for it to recover enough to be able to get back to racing at the level I want to and am getting more hopeful that it will."

"I'm still sitting on the fence but if my foot would allow it, I'd like to run another marathon. That being said, I am also very grateful to be able to run again and don't want to lose or jeopardise that by pushing my foot too far."

So what will a post-running career be like for Paula? "It will still involve running, because it is part of me and I hope I will be able to continue running in some shape or form for as long as possible. Obviously the training level and intensity will be less when not competing and I will have to think about the next stage – commentating, maybe mentoring and coaching, and giving back to athletics in some shape or form."

Paula has been involved for many years with Peace and Sport, a global initiative created in 2007 under the High Patronage of Prince Albert II, working

toward global sustainable peace, which, according to the mission statement "is not merely a state of absence of war. Peace is taught, learned and transmitted."

Paula genuinely believes that sport can make a big difference in uniting communities. "Peace and Sport recognises this and tries to harness the power of sport to raise funds to help conflict areas and also to actually bring people together in peace to take part in sport."

"I am also passionate about the many benefits sport brings into your life – you work together as a team and learn about yourself, and it gives you confidence – so any chance I have to introduce people to this, I want to take advantage of it."

An outspoken anti-doping advocate, Paula has worked on the advisory side of the campaign but has never been hands on. "I would definitely like to get more involved with the Blood Passport and new Steroid Passport testing. I also feel higher sanctions are needed: the responsibility of educating youth in sports lies with the parents and coaches – but it's the federations and doping control agencies that need to be able to guarantee these kids that they can achieve elite sport by being clean and by training hard."

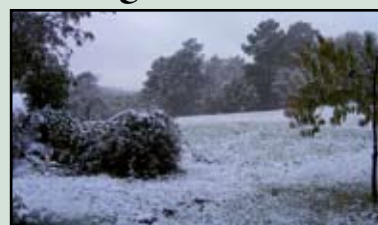
With a 40th birthday approaching in December, is Paula Radcliffe where she thought she'd be? "I'm not someone who worries about ageing because there's nothing you can do to stop it. In my head I still feel like I'm 25 ... but then I realise – oh yeah, the body is getting older, and I need an extra recovery day."

"I thought by the age of 40 I'd have kids – I always wanted a boy and girl – but

I never imagined having a career from running – or to be living in Monaco!

"I guess generally I'm happy with my accomplishments. If I look back, of course, there are times, particularly at the Olympics, when I wish things had worked out differently but there is also so much that I am proud of. Now I'm at a crossroads, though. I'd really like to stay in Monaco but my career is changing." ■

## "Enough I think!"



SO says Brian Cave, who sent this snowy shot from his study in Southwestern France on Nov 20th. Brian continues to turn up the heat on Winter Fuel Payments cuts after a *Daily Mail* cartoon distorted lives of expat pensioners, many who came to France well over 20 years ago to seek cheaper housing than in England.

"They are no different than many in the UK who equally wish to seek a better quality of life," Brian tells the *Reporter*. "In recent years the pound has greatly fallen, Equitable Life has sunk, and inflation in France exceeds that in the UK. Pensioners on fixed incomes are hardest hit. And the British Government cares not a toss."

Make an online complaint to the Press Complaints Commission at [pcc.org.uk](http://pcc.org.uk) or send a request to [lefourquet@orange.fr](mailto:lefourquet@orange.fr) to be placed on a mailing list about this fight.

# KALE TO THE CHIEF

Why the future's green for veggie queen Kristen Beddard in Paris

BY PJ HESLIN



UNLESS you were fortunate enough to have a company hire you before coming to France, most of us just showed up and figured out what we were going to do for a living later. Visa forms were filled out, prefecture line-ups (and scoldings) were endured and after months of jumping through hoops, we wondered just how exactly we were going to make

money to live out the French dream.

That's exactly where Kristen Beddard (pictured), found herself when she first arrived in Paris in 2011. After living in New York for five years, Kristen moved with her husband to the City of Light leaving behind both a city and a career that she found exciting and energizing.

In Kristen's case, her passion for food

combined with the need for a job led her to create her own opportunity. Kristen had worked in advertising at Ogilvy & Mather, which is where she met her husband, and when he was offered a position in Paris they decided it was an opportunity they did not want to pass up. But while her husband, who grew up in both Switzerland and England, had a job, Kristen did not. And she soon discovered that her language skills were not up to snuff when it came to working in France.

"Prior to moving here, I took a year of one-hour weekly French lessons," she tells me over the phone from her Paris apartment. Although armed with a solid resumé and charming personality, Kristen found this simply wasn't enough to land a job in the competitive Paris job market. There was the obvious economic necessity to find work but also being only 29-years-old and having found her career in New York very fulfilling, she wasn't quite yet ready to retire.

Since she and her husband have planned to stay in France for at least five years, she knew she had to create her own project. "Taking five years off was too much time. I wanted to stay in the game and that's where The Kale Project came into being."

Kale? Yes, kale. Many Americans know it as the thick leafy green vegetable that is frequently used as a garnish in upscale restaurants back home. I didn't think this cabbage-like green was even edible until it made the food limelight in the US a few years ago.

"America is a melting pot even when it comes to eating," explains Kristen. "Instead of having traditional meals, it changes all the time and we're always ready to jump on a food trend."

For Kristen, the nutrient-rich superfood has been a constant part of her diet.

"My Mom was very much into macrobiotics and then became vegetarian. She loved making simple, healthy meals and when I was a kid she would lightly steam kale with some umeboshi vinegar or sauté it with dill, olive oil and salt."

While shopping at a farmer's market in Paris, Kristen wondered why she couldn't find kale since she knew it was a traditional European vegetable. She came across a



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farmer by the name of Hermione Boehrer who was selling mustard greens, young herbs, lettuce and wheat grass, so Kristen, with the help of her husband, struck up a conversation with her about *chou frisé*. Mme Boehrer agreed to grow kale if Kristen supplied the seeds. With a batch of Halbhoher Grun Krauser kale seeds that Kristen brought over from the UK, Mme Boehrer grew the first crop of kale, only to see it destroyed by insects. The following year though she found success in both the field and the market.

From the start, Kristen realized she wasn't providing the French with some new and exotic American superfood. "I recognize kale is not an American vegetable. Kale is one of the oldest European vegetables and was brought to America by Europeans. I am just re-introducing it."

As she knew the vegetable like the back of her hand and had witnessed its popularity firsthand, Kristen figured she could develop a market for it in France, at least among the expat community. The challenge would be to prove there was a demand to French farmers and chefs before they'd agree to grow it or cook with it. Thus The Kale Project started as an online mission aimed at the expat community in Paris.

"I had to get a conversation started about kale in France. People had to find out where to buy it." With the help of her kale website and savvy use of social media, Kristen first created the buzz and then farmers began to grow it expressly for this new growing market. Previously,

Kristen explains, farmers would randomly grow and sell kale with only a few expats buying it. Now there is a steady demand for the veggie and you can track where to buy it, when it's in season, at [thekaleproject.com](http://thekaleproject.com).

.....  
**Locally you can buy kale year round  
from producer Christian Benaglia at  
1076 chemin des Peyroues in Mougins  
(look for the fleurs à vente signs).  
French-speaking Christian can be  
contacted on 06 80 74 30 03.**

Hailed as the "Kale Crusader" by *The New York Times*, Kristen says the ball is rolling fast and what started out as a way to help keep her professionally astute has turned into a full-time job.

As she is busy collaborating with producers and farmers, most of whom speak little to no English, she has been forced to speak French. (She and her husband also chose to live in an area of Paris that had few other expats and her French lessons were more intensive once in France.) Now she feels comfortable to have an over-the-phone interview with French journalists.

After living here for a little over two years, Kristen now adores Paris. Where once she found the city difficult and lonely ("Paris had to grow on me") she now describes it as "stunning and gorgeous". Certainly part of her change of heart is due to the natural charm of France's capital, but it's also thanks to a Medieval European vegetable that Kristen has helped put back on the menu. ■

## The future of Nice's Consular Agency

AS we mention elsewhere in this issue, Janet Ruiz of the US Consular Agency in Nice retired after 42 years of service. Many of us have had contact with Janet and her helpfulness and patience will certainly be missed. So who will fill her shoes?

As no replacement has been named, the staff seemed in the dark while Janet, who officially stepped down, is still helping out one day a week. The agency is currently open only one day a week, by appointment only, sparking fears that the doors at 7 avenue Gustave V may be closed permanently by the end of the year.

Reader Marion Curlin who recently had a "disturbing" visit at the agency – "It was totally packed with people seeking help, the consular attaché looked exhausted and the staff member seemed very anxious" – was anticipating the worst and launched an online petition opposing the closure of the US Consular Agency in Nice.

We contacted the US Embassy in Paris about this and were told via Vanessa Tiersky, the new Cultural Affairs Assistant at the US Consulate in Marseille: "The US Embassy has no plans to close the Consular Agency in Nice. We are grateful to Ms Ruiz for her many years of outstanding service to the American community, and are in the process of recruiting her replacement. There may be a brief period when consular services in Nice are suspended after Ms Ruiz departs until her successor is chosen and able to start work."

A reminder that consular news is publicized to American citizens actively listed in the Smart Travelers Enrollment Program (STEP – <https://travelregistration.state.gov>).

# Modernising Monaco

BY MOLLY BROWN



Left, the Sporting d'Hiver in front of the Casino gardens in May, and last month, right.

THE festive season began mid-November in Monaco. Red and white flags appeared everywhere as Monaco celebrated its *Fête Nationale* with a holiday and an impressive parade in front of the palace by the Prince's elite *Corps de Carabiniers*. Their colourful ceremony of changing the palace guard is watched daily by as many as 3000 tourists and while 286,000 visited the Oceanographic Museum last summer, the Principality's main attraction is the Monte-Carlo Casino, renowned worldwide for its magnificent belle époque architecture and glamorous history, a story of elegance and charm, of famous people who have played there for the last 150 years ... and stayed at the Hotel de Paris, built for the comfort of the Casino's elite clientele ... Winston Churchill, the Prince of Wales, Serge Diaghilev, Salvador Dali, stars of opera, ballet ... and of course James Bond. It is the old world charm and fascinating history of these elegant old buildings that attracts visitors to this "quaint" 700-year-old Principality.

## Preserving the past for the future

Yet the fate of these historic buildings is uncertain. There is no law to protect them from greedy builders and "developers", or from "modernising interior designers" who put a flashy Las Vegas-style bar, one arm bandits and modern lighting in an elegant belle époque interior. Prince Albert I wisely entrusted the care of his *Musée océanographique* to the French government, which has a *Conservateur générale du patrimoine* to protect its

heritage buildings. Even dedicated Russian revolutionaries preserved the Czar's summer palace as a museum and in Britain, ancient buildings are listed and cannot be altered by the owner in any way, active conservation charities are ever vigilant and 3000 local residents signed a petition to protect a view.\* Tourism is an important part of Monaco's economy and its citizens should be aware of the need to preserve its treasures ... now the Art Deco Sporting d'Hiver, tomorrow the belle époque *Palais de la Plage*, soon the Alexandra Hotel ... when will it stop?

Interestingly, seven glass-fronted buildings in the Casino gardens could be quite a problem ... a "death ray" from sunlight reflected from a glass-fronted building near the Gherkin in London melted parts of a Jaguar XJ parked nearby in just an hour!

*Beware, Lamborghinis beware.*

*Do not park your car*

*In Casino Square.*

## Modernisation for better or worse

Meanwhile, the machines march on through the Casino gardens and the Häagen-Dazs café has closed for good; the one in the Sporting d'Hiver closes at year's end. The cinema will close next summer. At the Cap d'Ail end of town, the arrival of a Starbucks coffee shop raised eyebrows ... an American cappuccino with one's croissant? ... and next to the famous TipTop bar,

Rampoldi (the place one went to be seen), is to be a private Russian club. Lorenzo's in Larvotto is going all Chinese... the

Song Qi restaurant opens at Christmas, so sharpen your chopsticks. To add to the international flavour, why not a Russian tearoom with Chinese, Indian or Ceylon teas, English scones and French pastries in the Sporting d'Hiver, with a Harrods-style

deluxe international fashion house above (a Monaco fashion week would make headlines) ... and a revolving restaurant built on top to rival the Eiffel Tower. Who says it is past its sell-by date?

## 'Tis the season to be jolly

Christmas is coming and the **Ecumenical Kermesse** is early this year (Nov 30th). Frankie the Clown presents a special dream musical for children in need and a fund-raising matinée (Grimaldi Forum Nov 30th-Dec 1st) and the fair on the port opens on Dec 5th. *Maison de l'Amerique Latine* presents an exciting exhibition of American artist, Nall (Dec 10th-Jan 5th) and the Monte-Carlo Ballet presents Jean-Christophe Maillot's *Nutcracker* ballet at Christmas and New Year ... but who knows where the traditional *sapin de Noël* will be placed in *Place du Casino* this year ... in the middle of the vineyard? Will the cement be dry and the five *pavillons éphémères* be in place ... or will they string Christmas lights on the cranes and put a fairy on the top? ■

\*See Country Life, Letters, June 12, 2013.



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BUSINESS

## Taxing times in the land of fudge

BY PETER JOHNSON

IT'S hard to find anything cheerful to say about France at the moment. Mr Hollande's administration is at an all-time low in ratings and in nearly every important policy there are fudges, compromises, and *volte-face*.

The latest bitter pill announced by the Budget Minister, Bernard Cazaneuve, was just about the most unbelievable yet. Social taxes (*prélèvements sociaux*) were introduced in 1996 to soak up the debt of the social security system. The initial rate was a modest 0.5% and was applied on unearned income (long-term pensions, savings, life assurance policies, investment portfolios etc). The social tax on gains was applied at the rate in force when the investment was started. So, had you held an investment through to say 2013 from a start date of 1996 you would pay 0.5% on the gain element over the duration. But the brilliant (read evil) minds of the Hollande government had decided to *retrospectively* impose the gain at today's rate of social tax: 15.5%; the proposal, of course, was scrapped at the beginning of November.

Saving tax is simply not an option nowadays; every loop hole is being plugged. Even the tax credits available

on eco-friendly home improvements will be reduced next year, so that only thermal insulation and energy-producing equipment will be allowable. Add to this the hike in VAT (10% from 7%) on home renovation and there's little motivation to improve your home.

### 62%

Increase in tax-paying French citizens leaving for abroad. In 2011, 35,077 moved (mostly for the UK) compared to 25,473 the year before.

Source: French Finance Ministry Oct 2013

You might also have noticed that your *taxe foncière* has increased (again!) this year. On average the tax has gone up by 21% in the last 5 years. Ouch! Next year the old rules for calculating the local taxes will be changed to reflect a more accurate rental value (*valeur locative*). The present system is – as most people will tell you – almost impossible to understand, so at least the new system will introduce more clarity... and undoubtedly higher taxes still.

Having kids used to be a "must" for reducing your income tax, but the current government is putting the squeeze on the

higher earners, so any married couple with taxable income in excess of €70,248 will see the benefit of having an extra child capped at €1500.

### PayPal: your offshore account

An antiques dealer was recently fined the statutory €1500 for non-declaration of a foreign bank account. In this case, it was a PayPal account, which – if you didn't know – is registered in Luxembourg, and hence constitutes a foreign account. So, watch out when you make your tax return next year: declare all your foreign accounts! People often say to me: "But Peter, our NatWest account in Tunbridge Wells hasn't had any interest on it since 2005 and our current balance is 2 shillings and 6 pence." No matter to the French tax office: it's the existence of the account that MUST be declared, not the content thereof.

Hey ho, just another 3 years of this nonsense! But who will benefit? The opposition UMP party are all squabbling like toddlers amongst themselves and are thus divided (Sarkozy, will he or won't he?), which all leaves a veritable *boulevard* for Mme Le Pen. Now that would be fun, wouldn't it! ■



# THE FULL MONTE

## Discovering the little gem that is Montenegro

BY NICK KENT

FOR a pocket-sized country, Montenegro punches way above its weight as a tourist destination.

But first things first, do you have an accurate idea of where this Balkan gem is situated? “Next door to Greece,” said one friend. “Bordering Slovenia?” hazarded another. Ne! Its borders are (clockwise from the west) the Adriatic, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Albania. The country is a little smaller than Wales, its coast Mediterranean in style, the interior wild and rugged, with excellent trekking.

Getting there was not straightforward, but in the end very rewarding. Planes from Nice don’t land within 250km of the place, so getting to the most used airport for Montenegro – Dubrovnik in Croatia – means changing planes and a long day. Why not drive, we thought. Good plan. The route takes you a long way down Italy, with the bonus of an overnight in one of the magical towns of Tuscany or the Marche. We chose Gubbio, and took in Urbino with its fabulous Renaissance ducal palace the following morning, before driving a further 450km

to Bari to take the overnight ferry for Bar in southern Montenegro. (There is an Adriatic ferry crossing from Ancona, but it only operates until mid-September.)

The next day we drove for an hour up the coast towards our destination, a villa on the Lustica peninsular in Montenegro’s “fjordland”. On the way we passed a sometimes tacky and overdeveloped part of the rugged coast, which culminates in the city of Budva, and has something of the bad side of Ibiza about it.

With this behind us, we came upon another Montenegro, with its olive groves, simple villages and slow pace of life that took me back to the Greece I remember from my youth. The Villa Mandelin, which swallowed up three couples and a singleton with ease and a deal of comfort, had stunning views over the bays that lead towards the famous medieval walled city of Kotor, while the imposing peak of the Lovcen mountain, a sacred place to the Montenegrins, was never out of sight. From the villa a path frequented by tortoises wound down to a sheltered bay of great beauty, the gently sloping sand making for the safest of





**WILD & WONDERFUL:** The astonishing folds of the Durmitor mountain range in the north of Montenegro (left). The Croatian World Heritage city of Dubrovnik (above) is not much over half an hour from the border. Below, the jewel-box town of Perast, built by the Venetians, is the perfect spot for lunch after a boat trip across the magnificent “fjords”.



swimming for the little 'uns.

In this part of Montenegro tourism is still in its infancy. The restaurant just behind the beach serves the locals with delicious fish and salads at local prices – we paid a quarter of the South of France price for food and drink in this lovely haven.

At the end of our stay we ventured three hours inland on very reasonable roads to walk in the majestic Durmitor massif, which rises to 2522 metres, and where Black Lake and brown bears can be found. Zabljac is the main town in this area, turning into a ski resort in winter. More treats were in store as we made our way back to the coast and the ferry via the fabulous Tara River Gorge at 1300 metres, the deepest in Europe, and by the huge and beautiful Lake Skadar, which Montenegro


shares with Albania.

When to go? To be able to explore the country in comfortable temperatures, late spring and late autumn are ideal. Yes, summers are hot, but that's just what you want for an unforgettable family holiday in a land where the locals are laid back and helpful and there's a place on the beach for everyone. ■

**LAND:** The 6-bedroom Villa Mandelin costs from €1400 per week (REF MN572 at [ownersdirect.co.uk](http://ownersdirect.co.uk)) as does its sister villa, the Villa Maslina (REF MN323).

**AIR:** Montenegro Airlines ([montenegroairlines.com](http://montenegroairlines.com)) fly to the capital, Podgorica, twice a week.

**SEA:** Montenegro Lines ([montenegrolines.com](http://montenegrolines.com)) run ferries to Bar from Bari and (in summer) Ancona on the Italian Adriatic coast.





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# LEARNING BY HEART

Teach don't preach, says the woman with the key to happiness

BY NICK KENT



*Billur Gungoren, above, is described by Hortense in Mougins as "able to bring out the beauty in every person". She adds, "For me Billur is really making a difference in how I view my life today."*

It was a Road to Damascus moment in the Blue Mosque in Istanbul. Billur Gungoren, a woman at a mid-life crossroads, had used a disguise to avoid being sent to the back of the great temple, where Muslim women are meant to stay and know their place

She stood in the shadows and watched the men at prayer. She noted carefully their postures, their movements – and then it hit her. "The men were unconsciously using a technique I had seen in the Far East to open the channels that link the energy centres of the body. Their prayer was a sort of therapy. I knew then what I would be doing for the rest of my life."

Billur took the road to happiness,

and now she wants us to follow her. Using a mixture of techniques taken from mainly Eastern sources, she has created a course that aims to teach women how to harmonise their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual energies and see the world anew.

The incredulous may ask of the founder of the Cannes School of Happiness, Can Happiness be Taught?

Billur's answer: "Yes, each day of our lives each of us makes a choice. We can choose to follow our mind with its constant demands, judgements and criticisms. Or we can quiet our ruminating mind and learn how to listen to our heart. Our slogan is 'Live from the Heart', because life truly reveals itself only through the heart. In the School of Happiness foundation course I share many techniques that help women to experience acceptance, peace, love and forgiveness."

The seven sessions that make up a School of Happiness ([schoolofhappiness-cannes.com](http://schoolofhappiness-cannes.com)) course follow a pattern. First, members of the small group are taught to use yoga postures to remove energy blockages in the body. Next come breathing exercises to balance the emotions. Following that, relaxation techniques are employed to link physical, emotional and mental states. The session ends with Billur's famous Happiness Tea and a talk. Referring to the group as a 'sharing circle', Billur guides the participants through such topics as the use of 'freedom techniques' to improve daily life, changing relationships to get the love you need, and learning to forgive yourself and your loved ones in order to live in the now.

One suspects that it would be easy for the charismatic, perceptive and deeply intelligent Billur to become a 'guru' to the women she teaches. This is furthest from her mind.

"I have designed the programme to lead to empowerment, not dependence," says the Turkish-born 47-year-old. "At the end of the course, the graduates have access to all the materials necessary to enable them

to sustain a daily 'life of the listening heart'.

"They don't need to come back to me for help and guidance, it will all flow from within."

The testimonials of past students of the €500 course are impressive. Individuals in Billur's most recent group varied in age from 40 to 65, and came to the School of Happiness with a range of problems – sleeplessness, feelings of terrible isolation, and difficulties with a partner or child – and all found at the end of the course that they had the tools to understand and deal with these issues.

Although Billur's aim is to be self-effacing when it comes to her students – her policy of building self-reliance is effective – there is no denying that she is a fascinating woman who has never shirked life's challenges. Born in Istanbul, she rebelled against the subservient role that seems to be expected of her as a woman. She went to university in Turkey, then, against the wishes of her parents, she set off to grow her life in the wider world. After a doctorate at Columbia she joined the UN and began a career that would see her putting power into the hands of women in Central Asia through her management of water policy. She helped save lives, she improved the health of children, she made a big, big difference. Billur had it all, a fulfilling job, a loving partner, a daughter, a full life – then the shock and the numbing emptiness that comes with a diagnosis of breast cancer.

Out went the computer. She threw away her watch (she hasn't replaced it). She searched the world and eventually found answers and strength within herself: along with that came the vision of helping others through the School of Happiness.

In Mougins, where Billur's second Happiness School is opening, the *Reporter* photographer poses his subject next to a village fountain because it just seems right somehow. Only later does he discover from Billur that her name means "the pure water from the high mountains". Fitting for a special kind of woman whose watch phrase could be "Go with the Flow". ■



## BOOKS

### ANTIBES BOOKS

**Coco Chanel**  
Justine Picardie  
(Harper Collins)



THIS critically acclaimed biography is the history of the incredible woman who conjured up the little black dress, bobbed hair, trousers for women, contemporary chic, and the most successful fashion brand of all time.

Throwing new light on her passionate and turbulent relationships, this beautifully constructed portrait gives a fresh and penetrating look at how Coco Chanel made herself into her own most powerful creation. *Heidi Lee*

### CANNES ENGLISH BOOKSHOP

**The Beatles - All These Years: Volume One: Tune In**  
Mark Levinson (Little, Brown)

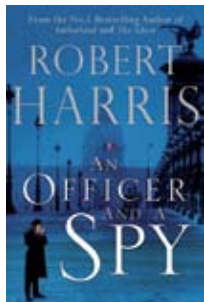


WHAT a marvellous book, and 1000 pages, with two volumes to come. Eight years of research and writing bringing to life the four most talented musicians of their generation. They managed to make music so endlessly full of interest, while the world was changing at an unprecedented rate, and how they were changing it themselves! Not a boring moment.

*Wally & Christel Storer*

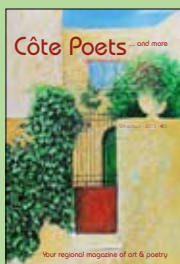
### ENGLISH BOOK CENTRE VALBONNE

**An Officer and a Spy**  
Robert Harris (Hutchinson)



THESE 496 pages will grab you over the holidays and keep you enthralled to the end, regardless of how well or little you know about the Dreyfus case. It is a literary thriller, which Harris does brilliantly – wrapping both his fictional and real characters around the history of a most shameful real-life event, and drawing ever-so-subtle parallels with a few of our more recent political scandals. A ripping yarn, a gripping page-turner, a great gift for any reader, and a bit of history all rolled into one. What more can we ask of a novel? *Lin Wolff*

### THEY'RE BACK ...



JUST in time for Christmas, the 5th edition of *Côte Poets* will be on sale from Dec 9th

at the English bookshops in Antibes and Valbonne, from Mougins School or by contacting editor Richard Ward directly.

Richard tells the *Reporter*, "The latest publication sees regular contributors joined by new 'voices', including a Guest Poet from Yorkshire and a blues musician from South Africa."

Get in touch with Richard for more details: 06 89 51 39 63 or cotepoets@hotmail.fr

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# A NOT-SO-SECRET SANTA

Your holiday shopping guide on the Riviera

## Two turtledoves

WELL not quite but for the man who's tough to buy for Vilebrequin 24-karat gold swim trunks might do nicely.

The two patterns – the Ring of Golden Turtles or Dancing Golden Turtles – are embroidered in 24-karat gold, as are the drawstrings, with sizes ranging from S to XXXL (in case more than just the turkey gets stuffed). Of course it comes with a “certificate of authenticity” and can be personalised but it's a limited edition so you better act quickly: €6200. Available at 1 Place de La Garonne in St Tropez or see [fr.vilebrequin.com](http://fr.vilebrequin.com)



## Go with the Fl'eau

A huge fitness fad that has swept across France over the past two years is aquabike – pedalling a stationary bike in water. Fans are raving about easy weight loss and cellulite reduction, but mostly it's catching on because it doesn't feel like exercise; there's no risk of tears or aches. Aquabike by Fl'eau in Nice gives classes at three local pools as well as in the sea in Beaulieu and Nice at Ruhl Beach (bikes provided). What better way to activate lymphatic drainage after Christmas pudding? It's a great gift idea as you can pay per session. See [aquabike06.com](http://aquabike06.com) for more or download the Aquabike By Fl'eau app from iTunes.

## Champagne wishes and ...

THE perfect size for a stocking-stuffer, Kaviari Paris has hit the market with “En-K”, 15 grams of caviar in portable tins complete with a *cuillère de dégustation* (tasting spoon). €25-€40. See [kaviari.fr](http://kaviari.fr)



## A gift without a wrinkle

SUSAN Harmsworth, ESPA creator and CEO, has spent the past years working with medical professionals to develop a serum that targets the skin's “biological”, not “chronological” age. The result is the new “Lifestage” facial (90 minutes; €235) – an “age-enhancing skin care range” (in other words, designed for over-45s) that truly leaves you looking years younger. It was launched in October at the Hotel Métropole in Monte-Carlo, home to the ubër-chic Karl Lagerfeld designed pool, The Odyssey. See [metropole.com](http://metropole.com)

## Oh baby, baby

BEEN invited to the New Year's Eve party this season but stuck without a sitter? Baby Prestige ([baby-prestige.com](http://baby-prestige.com)) is based out of Paris but offers a variety of 24/7 childcare services, including baby-sitters for hotels and villas, from Monaco to Nice to St Tropez (€29.50/hr with a 3-hour minimum; they also have an exclusive deal with Disneyland Paris hotels). Founder Lucinda De Cicco came up with the idea after living in LA five years before moving back to France and assures us that her staff is thoroughly referenced and are “native English speakers or bilingual”.

## The bare essentials

EARLIER this year (see *Reporter* 158) we featured 12 female Antibes yachties who posed nude for a calendar to raise money for the Worldwide Cancer Research Fund.

With photographs by Linda Alaniz, these €20 calendars make both a meaningful and useful stocking stuffer and can be bought at Geoffrey's or Heidi's bookstore in Antibes. For other points of sale, see Women Who Dare to Bare on Facebook or call 06 21 01 94 26 to have a copy delivered to you. Even Santa can't beat that.



## More than 50 shades of gray

ANTIBES-based Crew Eyewear sells top-end polarised sunglasses individually or customised with yacht logos and worn by crew or given to guests onboard (from only €80 a pop). Founder Leila Nafa drives the “pop up shop” across the coast from La Ciotat to Genoa, showcasing some 230 pairs of shades, mainly certified Australian



brands like Odyssey 20/20, Liive Vision, Dirty Dog and Filtrate Eyewear (snow goggles are also in stock). The newest range features the British outfit Finlay & Co: wood polarised retro-styled sunglasses made entirely by hand laying 7 types of wood including Zebrano, Rosewood, Walnut and Ebony. *Reporter* readers can get a 50% discount on all “Winter White” sunglasses over the holiday by punching the promo code 251213 at [creweyewear.com](http://creweyewear.com)

## Don't forget the Christmas cracker

IT wouldn't be Christmas without *The Nutcracker* (*La Casse-Noisette*) and after an absence of 13 years, the classic ballet returns to Monaco with performances by the Ballets de Monte-Carlo with the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra from Dec 26th to Jan 5th. Choreographer Jean-Christophe Maillot's interpretation echoes his own experience when he arrived in the Principality 20 years ago. Show time 20h30 (except Sundays at 16h) at the Grimaldi Forum. Tickets €19 to €33 (up to €48 on New Year's Eve). Contact +377 99 99 30 00. ■



# CHURCH & CHOIR SERVICES CHRISTMAS 2013

## AIJ★EN★PROVENCE: ICCP INT'L CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF PROVENCE

Cathedrale St Sauveur, rue Gaston de Saporta  
04 42 21 55 31 ★ [iccpaix.org](http://iccpaix.org) ★ Timothy Arlen

**Sun Dec 1, 15h30:** Annual Christmas Carol Concert in English. Doors open at 15h, music begins at 15h30 & program at 16h. The concert is free so get there early for a good seat. Come celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with us!

## BEAULIEU★SUR★MER: ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

11 chemin des Myrtes ★ 04 93 01 45 61

[stmichaelsbeaulieusurmer.org](http://stmichaelsbeaulieusurmer.org)

Father Philip Robinson

**Thurs Dec 19, 18h30:** Ecumenical Carol Service followed by seasonal refreshments.

**Sun Dec 22, 10h:** Service of Lessons, Carols and Eucharist.

**Tues Dec 24, 19h:** Christmas Eve. First Eucharist of Christmas and Blessing of the Crib.

**Wed Dec 25, 10h:** Christmas Day Eucharist.

## CANNES: HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Ave Branly ★ 04 93 94 54 61

[holyltrinitycannes.org](http://holyltrinitycannes.org) ★ Rev Giles Williams

**Sat Dec 7, 11h-16h:** Christmas Fair with various stalls, tea and cakes, Christmas gifts.

**Sun Dec 22, 19h30:** Carol Service.

**Tues Dec 24, 16h:** Children's Carol Service.

**Tues Dec 24, 23h30:** Midnight Communion.

**Wed Dec 25, 9h:** Early Communion.

**Wed Dec 25, 10h30:** Family Service with Communion. All welcome.

## MARSEILLE: ALL SAINTS' ANGLICAN CHURCH

4 rue de Belloi ★ 06 82 48 04 58

[anglican-marseille.org](http://anglican-marseille.org) ★ Canon David Pickering

**Sat Nov 30, 14h-17h:** Christmas Fayre.

**Sun Dec 8, 18h:** Carol Service.

**Wed Dec 25, 10h:** Christmas Day Service.

## MENTON: ST JOHN'S CHURCH

Chapelle St Roch, Place St Roch (while St John's is closed for repairs) ★ 04 93 57 20 25

[agh.va@free.fr](mailto:agh.va@free.fr) ★ Revd Dr John Adams

**Sun Dec 22, 10h30:** Christmas Eucharist with Carols.

**Wed Dec 25, 10h30:** Christmas Day Eucharist.

## ST PAUL'S CHURCH MONTE CARLO

22 ave de Grande Bretagne ★ +377 93 30 71 06

[stpaulsmonaco.com](http://stpaulsmonaco.com) ★ Father Walter Raymond, OGS

**Sun Dec 8, 10h30:** Children's Nativity Play.

**Sun Dec 15, 19h:** Annual Carol Service.

**Tues Dec 24, 17h:** Children's Christingle.

**Tues Dec 24, 23h:** Christmas Eve Midnight Mass.

**Wed Dec 25, 10h30:** Family Christmas Communion.

**Sun Dec 29, 10h30:** First Sunday of Christmas.

## MONACO CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Eglise Réformée, 9 rue Louis Notari

06 80 86 47 03 ★ [mcfellowship.com](http://mcfellowship.com)

**Sun Dec 14, 18h:** "Christmas Around the World" concert. Please note the change of venue this year: the concert will be held at St Paul's Anglican Church (22 ave Grande Bretagne). All welcome.

## NICE: HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN CHURCH

11 rue de la Buffa ★ 04 93 87 19 83

[anglican-nice.com](http://anglican-nice.com)

**Tues Dec 24, 23h:** Midnight Mass.

**Wed Dec 25, 11h:** Christmas Day Eucharist.

## INT'L BAPTIST CHURCH NICE

06 64 96 94 22 ★ [ibcfrance.org](http://ibcfrance.org)

13 Rue Vernier ★ Pastor James Arnold

**Sun Dec 1, 18h30:** Thanksgiving Service

**Sat Dec 14, 20h:** Christmas Carol Celebration at Sacre Coeur Cathedral (22 Rue de France Nice).

## RIVIERA INTERNATIONAL SINGERS

06 17 81 15 08 ★ 06 88 82 91 58

[riviera-international-singers.com](http://riviera-international-singers.com)

**Thurs Dec 12, 20h, Fri Dec 13, 20h, & Sat Dec 14, 18h:** Get into the spirit of Christmas with RIS' Christmas concert with a wonderful variety of classical and traditional Christmas songs and carols at St Blaise Church in Valbonne. Come and sing along with us and have a cup of mulled after the concert. All benefits go to charity. Tickets: Adults €10 (wine incl); children under 12: €5.

## INT'L BAPTIST CHURCH ST PAUL DE VENCE

Commercial Centre Saint Claire, Niveau 0

06 64 96 94 22 ★ [ibcfrance.org](http://ibcfrance.org)

Pastor James Arnold

**Sun Dec 1, 10h45:** Thanksgiving Service.  
**Fri Dec 13, 20h:** Christmas Carol Celebration.  
**Tues Dec 24, 18h-19h:** Christmas Eve Service.  
**Wed Jan 1, 9h30:** New Year's Day of Prayers.

## VAR: ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

04 94 60 87 05 ★ [sjevar.com](http://sjevar.com) ★ Rev Keith Bretel

**GRIMAUD VILLAGE:** St Michel's Church

**Fri Dec 20, 19h:** Traditional English Carol Service followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

**ST RAPHAEL:** St John's ★ 117 ave Paul Doumer

**Sun Dec 22, 18h:** St John's Carol Service followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

**Wed Dec 25, 10h30:** Christmas Day Communion Service.

**Sun Dec 29, 10h30:** Holy Communion Service.

FOR MORE CHRISTMAS  
EVENTS SEE  
PAGE 47 &  
[RIVIERAREPORTER.COM](http://RIVIERAREPORTER.COM)

# COOKERY WITH CLASS



**DISH OF THE DAY:** Cédric Séguéla (top right) will have you serving up something special in no time.



WITHIN five minutes of meeting Cédric Séguéla, you know this guy has got his finger right on the pulse of the way we cook now.

His pupils don't watch in reverent silence as the chef lectures, then demonstrates his art; they don't find themselves imprisoned in a lonely farmhouse for a week producing dishes for the maestro to turn his nose up at. Learning the art of cuisine from Cédric is fun, and it's fast.

Got a half-hour to spare at the end of the morning? Log on to the Secrets de Cuisine website at [secretsdecuisine.fr](http://secretsdecuisine.fr), see what's cooking, and sign up. At 12h30 you enter the light and airy cookery school near the big Carrefour at Antibes, tie on the apron you're given, and get stuck into learning how to cook the best chicken curry of your life. Thirty minutes later you're done, dish under your arm and ready to amaze your partner with your newfound talent for cookery.

A little more time to spend perfecting a memorable meal? After a one-and-a-half hour evening course you'll be serving up, say *Feuilleté de snails with Savoie cheese* *Pan-fried scallops with Jerusalem artichokes* *Crème brûlée with foie gras*

Of course, aspiring cooks bring to the classes different levels of

expertise. How does Cédric cope with varying speeds of learning?

"We treat each member of the class individually. If for instance we see that someone is very slow and unconfident when working with a knife, we let the others get on with the preparation while one of the team teaches that person the technique they need," says the 32-year-old, a hunkier version of John Travolta with the same twinkle in his eye.

"We have space in the teaching kitchen to work individually with 12 people. We take it easy, we don't rush them, we listen to them. Someone might be anxious about plating up, having in the past cooked a good meal only to ruin it in the serving. Another person may be unsure about what cookware to use for best results. In the end we want our 'pupils' to feel that they are operating in their own private restaurant; eating the food they prepare on the spot if they want."

The ingredients of Cédric's career so far are impressive. He has worked with Yannick Delpech at l'Amphitryon outside Toulouse and with Raymond Blanc at the Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Hampshire. He saw how successful the cookery courses were at Blanc's famous Great Milton establishment and decided to create his own version in the South of France.

As he was building towards this dream, he cooked on superyachts and then enjoyed great success as a "Chef à Domicile" preparing the finest dishes for many exacting Riviera clients, from celebrities to business people.

Now sharing his passion for cooking with the likes of you and me, Cédric makes a bold pact with his customers. What happens if just one person signs up for a particular session or course? "Then we put on the course just for that person," says Cédric, who lives in Biot with his Serbian wife Milica and their two children. "They commit to us when they choose a specific course and date on our website, and we in turn commit to them." So no last-minute course cancellations here.

You get the feeling that a gift voucher from Secrets de Cuisine could be a hit Christmas present this year. They can be used to buy courses or some of the superb kitchenware on display at the school, from Swiss Diamond – the world's best nonstick pans – to the layered steel knives of De Buyer.

Oh, and if anyone still thinks that a woman's place is in the kitchen, then forget it. Two-thirds of the aspiring cooks who come through the doors of Secrets de Cuisine are men. *N.K.* ■





## Menu Fish & chips

with Mushy peas

9,00 €

## Fish & chips

7,50 €

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## WHAT'S ON

### The best way to give

DIANNE Brothwell reminds us that UNICEF needs local volunteers for their shops and special holiday stands.

**Cannes:** Palais des Festivals until Jan 8th, 14h30-17h (ex. Wed & Sun). **Menton:** Town hall until Dec 21st, 14h30-17h30, Mon-Sat. **Nice:** The shop at 17 rue Assalit is open 10h-12h and 14h-17h30, Mon-Sat. Call 04 93 80 89 39 for dates of stands at Monoprix and CAL Leisure Centres.

**Vence:** Market Dec 13th-15th.

UNICEF Christmas cards and gifts are sold at the above locations as well as in Antibes, Cagnes-sur-Mer and Mouans Sartoux, but they are always looking for places willing to stock UNICEF Christmas cards. Interested parties can contact English-speaking Dianne directly on 04 93 55 67 65 or email [dianne.brothwell1@aliceadsl.fr](mailto:dianne.brothwell1@aliceadsl.fr)

Volunteers are always needed at The Grange (04 93 47 94 20) where you can arrange visits at Victoria, the retirement home next door. See also [francebenevolat.org](http://francebenevolat.org) and [espacebenevolat.org](http://espacebenevolat.org)

### Menton and the city that never sleeps

FROM Dec 6th to Jan 5th, the *illuminations de Menton* will once again light up the town using one million low-energy LED bulbs. This Christmas New York and the American Dream are coming to Menton with lots of activities for kids; 20 vendors on hand selling products.

**Monaco's Christmas Village** is at Quai Albert 1er from

Dec 5th to Jan 5th. Regional specialties on sale with themed events for kids old and young. Open daily from 11h-21h (22h on Fri and Sat) and on Christmas and New Year's Day from 14h30-22h. For info call +377 93 15 06 03.

The **Cannes Village de Noël** starts Nov 30th and runs until Jan 5th, offering creative workshops, vendor chalets and of course, a visit from Santa.

In **Vence**, the marché du Noël takes place Dec 13th to 15th, with producers from all over France, entertainment including a giant on stilts, a magician and storytelling. Santa arrives on the Saturday at Santa's Village, where you can take a carriage ride. On Dec 21st, there's a Gala dinner with a magic show (reservations 04 93 58 06 38).

In **Nice**, the traditional Christmas market reclaims Place Masséna from Nov 30th until Jan 1st with its usual gift stalls, Ferris wheel and public ice rink.

And in Mouans Sartoux, the largest **Santon Fair** in the region is from Nov 15th to Dec 24th, 14h-18h at the Médiathèque La Strada.

### Out with the old and dip in with the New

NEW Year's Eve fireworks at midnight at the Bay of Cannes and in Monaco (along with a DJ from 21h30). Also on Jan 1st, 18h, at Bay of Juan-Les-Pins.

The traditional New Year's Day swim (*Baignade du Nouvel An*) takes place in Antibes at 11h30 at plage de la Salis – last year the sea temp was a balmy 13°C. ■



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FROM A RIVIERA PAST:

# Aaron Messiah: the small man who became the great Anglo-Niçois architect

BY JUDIT KIRALY, ENGLISH-AMERICAN LIBRARY OF NICE

AARON Messiah (1858-1940) was the son of a British father and *niçois* mother in a textile merchant family. He grew up speaking English, *niçois* and French, but his education was cut short when the family suffered financial misfortune, which forced him to start working at the age of 14, pushing him along the rocky road of apprenticeship towards his dream of being an architect.

The Messiah family was well known within Nice's British community and although Aaron was Jewish, he was chosen in his early twenties as resident "church architect" for Holy Trinity's maintenance. This unusual Protestant connection continued through his entire life: he built the Beaulieu English church following Temple Moore's plans and he designed the Monaco English church as well as the Neo-Gothic Presbytery in Nice. All three are still standing and part of the Anglican heritage of Nice.

Aaron would often develop friendships with his clients, including the owner of the *International Herald Tribune* (which stopped publication October 2013 after 125 years) James Gordon Bennett Jr, the Muslim Prince Halimi, and the controversial Belgian King Leopold II, for whom he built a series of villas in Villefranche, Beaulieu and St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat.

The long-time priest of Holy Trinity, Canon Langford, after his retirement moved into the Aaron family building in Cimiez. An extraordinary time, when the

Russian priest of Nice, the retired Anglican priest and Aaron (who was later elected President of the Israelite Consistory), all lived under the same roof and in good friendship. The *Bella Vista* building is still on

the Boulevard Cimiez, but today this social configuration of inhabitants would be highly improbable.

Aaron had already built the Colonel Evans' villa and this led to more commissions from seasonal foreign residents to construct grand villas. Gaston, his eldest son, also an architect with a professional Beaux Arts education, later joined him.

A small man suffering from asthma, Aaron's own health had tremendous influence on his working life: he would always look for ways to ensure the maximum comfort in the living space of his clients. He received a gold medal from the *niçois* municipality in 1902 for building the superb Esslingen villa (today the Musée Masséna), and in the same year he had the distinction of designing the first building in Nice that had electrical lights in every room and on every floor. He incorporated plumbing, electricity and heating in his plans and convinced the Church Wardens of Holy Trinity to add electric lights so they could hold evening services in winter, the result of which, those dainty, Victorian rose-shaped lights, is still there.

Curiously, this comfort-loving man loved sports and practiced them from a young age. Founding member of the Club Alpin, Vice-President of the Yacht

Club of Nice and long-time head of the Ski-Club, he travelled frequently with his family; being the owner of one of the early motorcars, he rapidly incorporated garages in his designs.

Yet he was not spared from tragedy as his favourite son, Albert, a brilliant *juriste*, was killed during the First World War. Aaron's life turned completely upside down. He became *Commissaire de réfugiés*, donating large sums and devoting his energy and time to help the displaced masses arriving in Nice. He received the *Légion d'honneur* after the war for his contribution.

By the time of his death in 1940, the ugly war years had started and his architectural practice had to close down. Almost all documents disappeared. Jean Médecin, Mayor of Nice, wrote a four-page certificate trying to protect the family. Aaron died unaware that the following four years would wipe out the Riviera's lifestyle for years to come, before its eventual recovery.

Two years ago the newspapers reported that the world's most expensive villa was to be sold to a Russian. The deal fell through, but "Villa La Leopolda", built for the Belgian King it's named after, became famous and though remodelled, one can still recognise the original version from old postcards. The most expensive villa was built by a man who went from rags to riches and from fame to oblivion: Aaron Messiah, my favourite architect. ■

## One mot time

### Bastide.

A big house built by a bourgeois family, usually near but never in a town or village. The word can also refer to any isolated house, even a poor one. George Sand writes of *les sordides bastides* near Les Sablettes. Used in the latter sense, bastide can be confused with *cabanon*.





# NATURAL BORN PUTTER

Back to basics for best results on the greens

BY JOHN NORSWORTHY, PGA

LIKE many aspects of golf, putting often flows better if you forget complicated instructions and just trust your natural instincts.

Many of our golfing forefathers demonstrated this with great success. When I look back to the earliest photos of great golfers, taken well over a century ago, I notice three things.

1. Their stance is open and wide.
2. Their left elbow is away from the body and pointing slightly towards the hole.
3. Their eyes are always directly over the ball.

If any of my students experience difficulties when putting, I get them to try this position. The results are simply spectacular. Invariably they start to putt better, their confidence increases dramatically and any fear of putting virtually disappears.

Gaining confidence is a major step to finding success on the greens.

When watching a child, or someone who has never played golf, trying to putt for the first time, I notice they always adopt a position similar to the one described above. It is quite natural for them to face in the direction of the target as much as they can.

Facing the target is also the customary position when playing darts, bowling, or making a throw. On the green, a wide stance creates a feeling of great stability and the elbow slightly towards the hole improves aiming along the putting line.

This invariably means using the wrists and hands more than in a conventional "pendulum" stance. However, this more natural and instinctive approach has yielded excellent results in virtually all my students.

Completely excluding wrist action, as often recommended in modern day teaching, is so unnatural that it creates stiffness, tension and loss of feel. The result is an enormous difficulty in judging distance. Dave Pelz, a prolific writer and expert on the short game, states that 80% of bad putting is a result of poor judgement of length and not of direction.

**SLOPE INDICATOR:**  
When studying the line of your putt, just imagine water coming from the hole and seeing what direction it would flow.



## Exercise: Hole increasingly long putts

1. Start by putting 2 feet from the hole. Each time you hole out, move the ball an additional two feet from the hole and putt again. If you miss a putt, stay at the same distance until you hole out.
2. Now repeat the previous exercise and see how far you can get in 15 minutes. This is one of the simplest but most effective putting improvement exercises I know.
3. Finally, repeat the previous exercise but this time look at the hole while you putt. This will seem odd at first, but quickly it will become quite instinctive. Just think of other sports such as darts where you look at the target while making your throw.

## Exercise: Centre your putts for consistent length

During my early years as an assistant at the Roehampton Golf Club near London, my former employer and coach George Gadd (who was incidentally one of Britain's best putters in his prime)

held the opinion that to putt well, you must strike the ball perfectly.

I totally agree with this point of view. The following exercise will help you learn how to strike the ball perfectly when putting.

Start around seven yards from the hole and use the same strength of putt for each of the following exercises:

1. Putt three balls striking the ball on the toe of the putter.
2. Putt three balls striking the ball on the centre of the putter.
3. Putt three balls striking the ball with the heel of the putter.

If you use the same force for each putt, only balls hit using the centre of the putter face reach the hole, while the others will be short. Many bad putts are caused by poor ball striking rather than by bad judgement – this exercise will prove this.

## Great green reading

While a good putting stroke is essential to good golf, learning to read greens is fundamental to putting successfully. See page 28 for the most important points to remember. ➤ Continued on page 28

# RIDING HIGH ON THE RYDER CUP

**EXCLUSIVE: Pascal “Go-Go” Grizot reveals his game-changing plan for golf in France**

PASCAL Grizot is a man with a mission – to change the way the French view the game of golf.

He knows that at the moment the majority of people in the country view golf as a game solely *pour les riches*.

“That attitude has to change,” says the vice-president of the French Golf Federation (FFG).

“People’s perception of the game is that it is too expensive and it takes up too much time, so they decide it is not a sport for them even before they have picked up a club.

“To change that, and to give potential players a way into the game, the Federation has set a target of 100 new ‘compact’ courses which can provide a game of golf that is enjoyable, affordable and doesn’t take four or five hours to complete.”

To build public enthusiasm for golf in France so that it matches that of the US or UK, Pascal, 51, adopted a bold strategy.

“We needed a major golfing event other than the French Open to promote the game on home soil and get to the widest audience possible.”

Pascal doesn’t think small. He went for the biggest competition in world golf, the greatest sporting team event in the world bar the Olympics – The Ryder Cup.

This terrific two-yearly tussle between the Americans and the Europeans has only once before been played outside the US or GB, at Valderrama (Spain) in 1997.

As chairman of Ryder Cup France

at the FFG, Pascal put together a powerful pitch and backed it with a big purse, bagging the Ryder Cup 2018 for the Golf National course with an €18 million payment to secure the European Tour.

“It’s big money for a big, big event,” Pascal concedes.

The fact that the money and muscle were there is evidence of the very French way that the FFG is set up. It organises golf in France in a unique way, pulling in revenue from 450,000 players. There is no escaping the FFG if you are a more than occasional French golfer, it runs the handicapping system for a start, a job done by individual clubs in the UK. The annual licence fee includes the important element of golfing insurance, a comfort if you are the sort of hacker liable to shank your ball into your playing partner’s head.

Next year the licence will cost €51, which includes a €3 Ryder Cup supplement that is going to be around for a few years to help pay for the

**GOLFING BRAIN:**  
Pascal Grizot plays off +1 and is a member of Morfontaine Golf Club north of Paris.

Photo: FFG





# TO VICTOR THE SPOILS



Photo: Alexis Orloff

purchase of that super-major event.

A big incentive for expat golfers to take out FFG membership is the distinct possibility that being a part of the organisation could bring a rarer than hen's teeth Ryder Cup ticket their way.

Back to Go-Go Grizot: "Next year Gleneagles in Scotland will host the Ryder Cup and they have room for 45,000 spectators. We are still working on the final figure for the Golf National, but it could be as high as 70,000.

"If that is the case, there is a good chance that we will be able to offer tickets to FFG members, maybe by way of a ballot."

The superb Golf National course has other advantages besides crowd-holding capacity. Unlike other Ryder Cup venues, it is just outside a capital city, a short distance north of Paris, and the transport links by motorway, rail and train are second to none.

Venues and great events aside, Pascal is aware that another key to getting the French to really take golf to their hearts is to have a home-grown champions to follow.

"The FFG is actively supporting the development of individual golfers of promise. We need to have champions to inspire people to follow the game. Our involvement in the game's 'grassroots' is huge – we organise 1000 competitions nationwide each year."

French golf can think itself extremely fortunate to have found such a dynamic man as Pascal Grizot to champion the game of the little white ball in the hexagon.

*See ffgolf.org*



**HIT AND HOPE:**  
Victor Dubuissou is a world-class golfer.

Photo: © Marie-Lan Nguyen

VICTOR Dubuissou freely acknowledges the backing he has received from the French Golf Federation. He says without it he wouldn't be where he is today.

And where is that exactly? Why, in the world Top Fifty rankings, the only French name found in that hallowed list. The 23-year-old from Cannes sprang to the attention of the international golfing world by winning the Turkish Airlines Open, then sprinting on to the grand finale of the Race to Dubai. Although Henrik Stenson proved too much for him in that much-hyped event, Victor is certainly on his way. He reached World No. 32 after Dubai, and if he is still in a similar position at year's end, then he'll have bagged himself a place in the 2014 Masters.

After winning his first Open title, Victor spoke about the pressure he had worked through and conquered.

"I had Tiger, Rose, Stenson to cope with. To be frank, I was proud of myself," said the man who is giving back the good name to golfing facial hair that Bernhard Langer took away. "I came through on top after the toughest tournament of my

life. It was the sort of course that I would have been happy to make par on the last day. But I knew that with Woods and Stenson in pursuit, shooting par wouldn't be good enough."

"My game was holding together on the back nine, and then I holed that putt on 17. It was the sort of putt that turns dreams into reality."

Victor started playing golf at the age of eight, and by the time he was 15 he realised he could probably earn a living from the game he loved. At 19 he won the European Amateur Championship in a year of achievement that saw him top the world amateur rankings.

Turning pro, he trousered €16,400 in his first tournament, the Scandinavian Masters in 2010. He quipped that the money would just about cover the rent of his apartment in his expensive hometown.

The FFG can be justly proud of making an important contribution to this young man's career. Now they are on the lookout for more candidates for the top slots, building a team of French golfers for a nation to get behind.

# SWINGING IN THE PLANE



WELL all right, maybe not in the plane, but you can set up the Swing Plane Perfectioner (£115, [swingplaneperfectioner.com](http://swingplaneperfectioner.com)) just about anywhere else. It's this year's top Christmas golf gift recommendation from Alain Alberti, head of the Leadbetter Academy at Terre Blanche and coach to Raphael Jacquelin and other big hitters.

"The precision and ease of set-up on any surface, and the fact that the Perfectioner will fit into the pocket of a golf bag makes it a valuable training aid for any player or coach," says Alain.

Fifteen minutes practice a day using this excellent aid will groove your swing, leading to consistent ball-striking and better scores.

Continued from page 25

## Great green reading



- When walking towards the green, take a look at the general topography. Where is the high point and where is the low point? This will give you a general idea of the slope that you can expect and the direction your ball is likely to take.
- If you see no slope at all, do not invent one. Just putt straight and concentrate on getting the distance right.
- Study the grass itself. Has the green been cut recently? Is the green damp or dry?
- Watch and learn from your partner's putts and how the ball behaves on the green. By being observant, you will gain a lot of valuable information in a very short time, further enabling you to make the right decision before you putt.
- Grass can grow at an amazingly fast pace! Beware of the difference in speed between the

earlier and later greens, particularly if the round is played over a five-hour period (which unfortunately can often be the case these days).

- If you start your round early, the morning dew will burn off as the day warms up, and the greens will speed up. Conversely, if you are finishing in the evening, humidity can start to settle on the grass as the day draws to a close. That plays an important role in green speed and how much a putt will break. This gives the player even more reason to take just a little more time when reading the greens.
- Remember that it's your duty as a considerate golfer to avoid slow play, so always do your reading while waiting your turn to putt. ■

*John Norsworthy's book Good Golf is Easy is available from the English Book Centre in Valbonne.*

## Golf? We're the business!

The aim of the Club des Dirigeants Golfeurs is to gather together businessmen and women who would like to combine their passion for golf with extending their network of business contacts.

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# THE YACHT INDEX OF WELL-BEING

BY MICHAEL HEALY

HOW does one calculate or even estimate the state of the world and its economies, which affect us all – workers, retirees, and taxpayers? How can we tell if we face an imminent melt-down or whether we will just ride out any passing storms? There must be more pundits predicting our well-being than there were one-centime coins in the Nice-Monaco Poppy Appeal collection tins.

My own yardstick is the movement in the yacht market, particularly of mega-yachts which change hands for tens of millions of (usually) dollars. A yacht is purely for luxury, and its ownership is a sign of wealth and status. Yet, as Saudi billionaire Adnan Khashoggi used to say about his 86-metre yacht *Nabila*: “I can only sleep in one bed at a time!”

“Wealth and status” need to be backed up by an adequate disposable income, because the yacht upkeep can be crippling if money is not readily available when needed. Yacht brokers occasionally “forget” to tell a mega-yacht buyer that he will face a raft of expenses: mooring fees, food, social charges, crew wages, uniforms, dry-docking, insurance, overhaul of machinery and electronics, painting and all the rest. The rule of thumb for this annual figure is 10% of the purchase price, so for a nice 45-metre yacht this could be \$5 million. But if a buyer really knew what he was taking onboard with his dreamboat, he might reflect. It is very sad to see a yacht laid-up with all the crew fired because the owner’s cash flow required him to pull the plug.

The valuation of a yacht is a very subjective business and in this post-season period bargains are available, often price-reductions of over \$5million ... at a stroke! The buyer and seller both have diverging ideas of the value of a yacht, but the chief interest of the broker – the expert – is to make a sale at any price and take his commission. So transactions are numerous, more than in recent years. Needy sellers are shedding costly assets, and there are new millionaires with money to spend, in large numbers, so that must be a good sign.

However, the theory is skewed by capitalists who shrug off business ventures in these high-taxation days in favour of sailing around the world for three years. For that they need the best yacht they can afford. I feel like joining them.

THE amazing Monaco Yacht Show produced a must-have for any large yacht: the ROV (remote operated vehicle) JACK mini-submarine, weighing just 13kg yet able to dive to 100m and do all kinds of undertakings, from checking anchor safety to rudders. Long known for naval tasks like mine disposal, JACK’s bigger sisters have operated worldwide while JACK (made in France and the first mini-ROV equipped to move laterally) should now find his place in every well-equipped super-yacht. Just like the Defibrillator keeping the owner alive – an essential for every captain wanting to stay employed. ■

Contact 06 47 77 19 48 or [lesausse@aaafrenchyachting.com](mailto:lesausse@aaafrenchyachting.com)

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# SUPER AGERS SAVE THE BEST TO LAST

BY COLETTE KENT, FITHUB



Father and son,  
Drs Kenneth and  
Tyler Cooper jogging  
at Cooper Aerobics  
Center.  
Photo: Cooper Aerobics

DR Kenneth Cooper, the man who literally added the “s” to the word aerobic, is adamant: “We don’t stop exercising because we grow old, we grow old because we stop exercising.”

He should know. During his years of service with the US Air Force, Dr Cooper had a stint as Director of the Aerospace Medical Laboratory in San Antonio, Texas, where he created a sequence of fitness tests that to this day serve as the standard for military organizations and athletic teams.

Yet, like many of us, Dr Cooper had a wake up call. At the age of 29 and carrying forty extra pounds, he was attempting to slalom water-ski when a pounding chest made him believe he was having a stroke. The ER doctor delivered the diagnosis: he wasn’t having a heart attack; he was just out of shape.

This led him to two major events: a 1968

bestseller *Aerobics*, introducing his “revolutionary fitness concept” to the world, and in 1989 the Cooper Institute breakthrough study proving “moderate physical activity can decrease risks of death from all causes by 58 percent”.

These days, the 82-year-old granddaddy of aerobics still jogs and continues to spread the word about preventive health and fitness with his “Get Cooperized” campaign ([cooperaerobics.com/Health-Tips.aspx](http://cooperaerobics.com/Health-Tips.aspx)) – which is for young and old alike.

For me, encouraging people to be physically active throughout their lives is a passion. In group fitness classes at FitHub, for example, we welcome everyone regardless of age or ability, and my job as instructor is to provide options within each exercise to meet each person’s capacity. The feedback from our over-65 clientele is unanimous: they feel

much stronger, more confident and healthy as a result of regular exercise.

Before you retaliate by saying that at your age exercise and a healthy future don’t matter, take note that most 65-year-olds now have a life expectancy of up to 88, while a 25-year-old can expect to live until 91. That’s a lot of years and it’s up to you to control within your means the quality of your physical condition and well-being.

## Body changes after the age of 40

- A 3%-5% loss of muscle mass per decade
- Flexibility decreases
- Balance diminishes to the point where falling suddenly becomes a major concern
- Bone density loss can lead to osteoporosis

And let’s not forget the “super agers”. Haven’t heard about this age group north of 80 with “brains and memories that seem decades younger”? A study in 2012



headed by Emily Rogalski, a neuroscientist at Northwestern University's cognitive neurology and Alzheimer's disease centre in Chicago, found a group of elderly men and women in their 80s and 90s had memories as sharp as those 20 to 30 years younger. Rogalski put this down to the cortex, the part of the brain responsible for attention and memory, which amongst her super agers was "much thicker than the cortex of most elderly people". She added, "The super agers also seemed to have more energy and a more positive outlook on life."

### Exercise can reverse the symptoms of aging

- Gain muscle mass at any age
- Adding a stretching/yoga class to your weekly schedule will improve your range of motion in the joints and improve your balance
- Strength training can improve your bone density, preventing the risk of fractures

In fact, for seniors there seems to be more and more encouraging research. According to a Live Science poll in August of this year, people become happier after the age of 50 but the magical number is 85 – the age when people say they are happiest and "more satisfied with themselves than when they were at a bright and sprightly 18 years of age".

I understand that introducing a new physical activity can be daunting at any age, but even more after we hit 65, when the fear of falling, illness or feeling that you're "too old" can all play a part in avoiding exercise. Here's an inspiring story about a very dear client in her seventies. When we first met, her goal was to get up from the beach towel without the aid of her grandchildren. She was an absolute beginner and very fearful of starting something new at her age. The transformation was amazing and she is now a strong, independent, active woman always looking

for her next challenge. In her words: "Having reached the age of 75, I thought personal training would be too hard but this is not the case. The sessions are fun and are adapted to my ability and needs. It has given me back the physical confidence I had lost. My sense of balance has improved hugely."

So where do you begin? Well, it's essential to start slow and consult with your doctor before starting any physical activity. Seek professional fitness advice from a personal trainer or attend a group fitness class where the instructors offer clear instructions for alignment and modifications in exercises where necessary. Even if standing is not an option, exercises can be performed in a chair.


To stay enthused, stick with activities you enjoy, whether it's walking the dog or taking a class with friends followed by lunch. You're more likely to make it a regular occurrence if it's fun, and also if you vary the activity. It's essential to include cardiovascular exercise for your heart, stretching/yoga for flexibility and strength training for muscle mass and bone density.

### Benefits of physical activity include

- Improves your memory and overall sense of well being
- Increases muscle mass, which means you will burn more calories (fantastic with the holidays around the corner)


If this isn't enough to spur you on, here are some other advantages your body will enjoy: boost in energy, happier moods, better blood pressure and digestive function, an improved circulation of blood and lymph around the body, good sleep quality, boost to the immune system with a better chance to manage symptoms of illness or pain.

The best way I can sum it all up is in the words of Jim Rohn: "Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live." ■

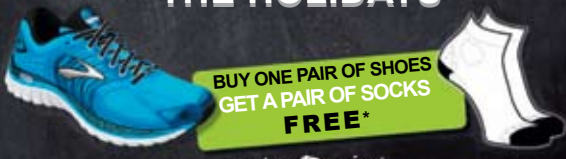


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# Jack Vettriano: “I’m not part of the art world”

The People’s Painter talks to Pippa Jane Wielgos about Nice, British art and his 20-year Retrospective



Her Secret Life (2006).

Clockwise below: portrait Jack Vettriano; Olympia, portrait of Zara Phillips (2008); Sunshine and Champagne (2009).



Photo: Fred Marcarini



WHETHER you like or abhor his work, Jack Vettriano (né Jack Hoggan), the Fife-born self-taught Scottish painter, is one of the UK’s most popular, successful and profitable painters.

The licensing and distribution of his images has resulted in the sales of more than three million posters and cards worldwide and his royalties bring in no less than £500,000 a year.

His 1992 iconic image *The Singing Butler* became a best-selling image in Britain, achieving 20 million copies sold but, later that same year when Vettriano submitted it for inclusion in the Royal Academy summer show, it was rejected.

When it was sold at auction at Sotheby’s in 2004 for £744,500, it achieved a record for a painting by a Scottish artist.

In 2004 Vettriano was also awarded an OBE for services to the visual arts and was the subject of a South Bank Show documentary called *Jack Vettriano: The People’s Painter*.

His international fan-base includes collectors such as Sir Tim Rice, Sir Alex Ferguson, Sir Jackie Stewart, First Minister of Scotland Alex Salmond, Jack Nicholson and Madonna.

Not limiting himself solely to commerce, in 2008 Vettriano was asked to paint a portrait of the Queen’s granddaughter Zara Phillips for the charity Sport Relief ([sportrelief.com](http://sportrelief.com)). The 20 x 24-inch oil on canvas sold at Bonhams for £36,000.

His major centenary commission for the Monaco

Yacht Club, *Homage à Tuiga*, came about in 2008 after he produced *Tension, Timing and Triumph*, a triptych of paintings depicting racing legend Sir Jackie Stewart’s third victory at Monaco in 1971.

The series of ten *Homage à Tuiga* paintings, including *Sunshine and Champagne* (pictured) were inspired by the Clyde-built yacht *Tuiga*, built by William Fife a hundred years ago for the Duke of Medinacelli, who wanted a boat similar to his friend Spanish King Alphonse XIII so that the two 15-metre vessels could race together.

Speaking in 2009 to BBC Scotland, Vettriano described the commission, which took him nine months to paint in his South of France studio, as the “most difficult project” he had taken on in his career.

Vettriano’s work, based on film noir recreations of popular iconography, has throughout his 20 years as a painter courted much controversy in the UK art establishment; critics claiming that it’s more akin to “biscuit tin” art or, as he’s been described, “a purveyor of badly conceived soft porn”, lacking real skill and accomplishment despite its commercial success.

Vettriano recently sold his London home for £2 million, which included the give-away of a free £300,000 original painting, titled *Suddenly Last Summer* (a depiction of a former female lover) which he hung over the boiler room door.

The sixty-two-year-old artist is considering relocating to Edinburgh this winter.

He told the *Herald Scotland* that he was hoping to find



somewhere “you didn’t have to walk one mile to buy a nail”.

He has studios in London, Scotland and Nice and tells me, “I’m in Nice as often as I can be; I find the climate, the light and the people-watching such a pleasure and very inspiring.

“Nice has a glamour to it that is underpinned with a slightly sleazy underbelly, if you look for it, and this leads to a rich seam of inspiration for me. I think I’ll always keep a studio there.”

As a child, Vettriano studied works at Kirkcaldy and the Kelvingrove art galleries.

He was quoted as saying, “I am not a great fan of Brit Art because it lacks craft. It’s astonishing, though, how an unmade bed or a shark in formaldehyde does take on a completely different effect when it is placed in the middle of a room.”

Vettriano explains, “I have no time for conceptual work as, for me, I love to see labour and craft and it’s missing here. That’s why my heroes are from the older generation of painters: Bacon and Freud.”

Between 2011-2013 his self-portrait work *The Weight* was shown at the National Portrait Galleries of Scotland

as part of their major re-opening in acknowledgement to Vettriano being a “symbolic artist in Scottish history” and a “major contemporary artist”.

This for Vettriano, a miner’s son from Methil who has had to fight to get his name accepted, must be some modest measure of success.

Still he tells me, “I’m not part of the art world either in social terms or in career terms but that’s very probably a blessing.”

Vettriano’s 20-year career is currently encapsulated in a retrospective of 100 paintings including *The Singing Butler*, *Dance Me To The End Of Love* and *The Weight* at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (Glasgow), backed by The Art Fund.

The block-buster level of visitor interest attracted no less than 30,000 visitors in the four days of its opening, and is expected to break attendance records for the gallery.

*Jack Vettriano: A Retrospective* ([jackvettriano.com/retrospective](http://jackvettriano.com/retrospective)) runs until February 23rd, 2014; for tickets see [glasgowlife.org.uk/museums](http://glasgowlife.org.uk/museums) ■

For an exclusive Jack Vettriano Q&A with Pippa Jane Wieglos see our website.

Blue Blue (2012).



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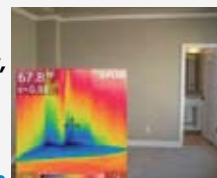
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# Inside the other Ally Pally

BY NICK KENT



FROM that azure day at the end of the 1800s when the Alexandra Palace in Menton first rolled out the red carpet for its carefully-chosen guests, it looked as if all would be well with this exclusive hotel.

A few short years later they had just one family staying. A disaster? Hardly, when that family bore the name Romanov.

The last Czar, Nicholas II, thought the Alexandra the perfect place for his four daughters (below), the Grand Duchesses Maria, Tatiana, Anastasia and Olga, to slip away to when the climate of St Petersburg



proved tiresome. They stayed many times before the outbreak of the First World War carried that doomed family away from our golden coast forever.

Over the years the Alexandra has had many royal connections. Queen Victoria visited and the Swedish king Gustav V regally resided. Now a beautiful apartment in this Belle Époque marvel is on the market to provide a lucky buyer with a special slice of elegant history.

The Résidence Alexandra, as the former hotel is now called, was designed by the architect Gustav Rives and built in 1885 by the Danish architect Hans-Georg Tersling. Tersling was responsible for many well-known buildings along the Riviera, including the Hotel Métropole in Monaco. The Alexandra sits in splendour on the Madone hill overlooking the sea above Carnoles.

The apartment (95m<sup>2</sup>) is on the southwest corner of the first floor. A very special salon in a round tower has three French windows opening onto a terrace



(13m<sup>2</sup>) with its view to the sea over the lovely gardens with many exotic plants. There are three bedrooms with French windows giving on to small balconies (5m<sup>2</sup>). Each, like the salon, has parquet flooring. There are two bathrooms and of course a kitchen.

The present owner, Duchka Crvenic, is leaving behind 25 years of sunshine and superb health. "None of the family have ever been ill here. I believe this is due to the special Menton climate," she says.

"In summer cooling breezes blow from the Maritime Alps directly behind the town, and in winter the sea moderates any feeling of cold. The freshness of the air and the limitless sunshine makes this a wonderfully healthy place to make your home.

"Menton is right on the Italian frontier, and it's lovely to pay a visit to a neighbouring country at the drop of a hat."

€890,000 will secure you a piece of Menton's Alexandra Palace, so different from another Alexandra Palace I have had the pleasure of living close to – Ally Pally in North London. ■

*For full details see [frenchestateagents.com](http://frenchestateagents.com), property reference 19215KC06.*



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# THE CÔTE D'AZUR 2014: A RISK-FREE MARKET?

BY TIM CLARK, LEGGETT IMMOBILIER



BEFORE making any kind of prediction for 2014 it's important that we understand where the market stands in terms of international buyers.

We know that last year more foreign buyers (33%) chose the PACA region over any other area of France, and indeed we were more popular than second-placed Rhône-Alpes (15%) and Paris

in third (12%) put together. This was almost certainly down to the fact that in troubled times people always seek a safe haven and you don't really get a more "prime" area than the South of France.

Buyers came predominantly from Italy, Belgium and the UK but, of course, we also saw an increase from the Swiss, Russians, and Americans.

It's also important to acknowledge that PACA saw a significant drop in sales to nonresidents from the two previous years, with 3179 buyers spending an average price of €551,000.

The *Notaires de France* report that prices in the Alpes-Maritimes dropped by just 1% over this period, which is rather surprising given the lower volume of sales to both French and foreign buyers. However, these figures are based on the actual

sale rather than the asking price.

Given this relative stability, we forecast that 2014 will see a similar pattern with no discernible change either way – local vendors know that they must list their property sensibly in order to sell but are equally aware that they live in a prime residential area of Europe.

While prices are likely to remain steady, we estimate a rise in international buyers coming into PACA. We saw over 4000 sales to nonresidents in both 2010 and 2011 and we think that if this barrier isn't breached next year then we should at least get close, depending upon the willingness of vendors and agents alike to price sensibly.

We particularly feel that buyers from the UK will return to the South of France. They made up 10% of the market last year and, with confidence returning quickly to London and southeast England, we expect to see an influx of property purchases from across the channel in 2014. ■

Contact local expert Tim Clark of Leggett Immobilier, one of the leading international agents in France, with questions on 06 76 59 25 88 or email [tim@leggett.fr](mailto:tim@leggett.fr)



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# A count of flowers and a tale of the two Riviervas

BY LORENZO GARIANO



Photo: Archive GBH © Daniela Guglielmi

BOTH the Italian and French Riviervas enjoy some truly exceptional and mild microclimates, which offer for this latitude the opportunity to experiment with the most exotic plants originating from far away tropical locations. This awareness was already present in past centuries with, for example, the introduction of the olive tree around a thousand years ago from the Middle East by the Benedictine monks in Liguria. The Victorians were also great masters in collecting plants from exotic locations during the British Empire. One London tea merchant, Thomas Hanbury, who made his fortune in China, truly left a huge gardening legacy on the Riviera by creating the first outdoor garden in Europe for acclimatising plants originating from the southern hemisphere.

He arrived in the South of France in the middle of the 19th century, looking for a location where he could spend mild and sunny winters away from the cold grey skies and smog of London.

On a sightseeing tour of Mentone (now Menton) he took a little boat trip to the east and came across the beautiful

promontory of La Mortola and fell instantly in love with it. Immediately he purchased the land and with his brother Daniel, a pharmacist and keen plants man, set about to create one of the most romantic and exotic gardens on the planet. The aptly named Hanbury Gardens located at La Mortola, just inside the Italian Riviera, has an amazing showcase for any budding gardener to see what he could introduce in his newly-acquired or existing piece of land on the nearby Riviera.

Here you will witness the successful acclimatisation for over 150 years of exotic plants originating from sub and tropical climates. In his gardening chronicles of the late 19th-century, Thomas would taunt the English gardening world by listing the huge profusion of species in bloom in January, the height of winter. The idea of a flower count was born and every January 1st, an appointed botanist from Kew Gardens would come and make a detailed tally of every flowering species present in the gardens at that moment of time. In the height of the garden's splendour, the number would have

reached 1500 types of flowering plants.

The British television programme *A Count of Flowers* presented by the famous gardening expert Roy Lancaster, wonderfully shows the exotic beauty of the Hanbury grounds back in the January 1987.

For today's Riviera gardener, the huge advantage of this coastal latitude is that you can literally overwinter plants in beds that otherwise the frost in the north would wipe away. A good and observant gardener will use plants that are endemic from the area and go by example from existing species in the local parks and private gardens. It is a mistake to try and recreate the pretty English cottage garden when the summer high temperatures would be detrimental for a successful and fresh display. The same would apply for types of bulbs such as daffodils and tulips. But move inland and up at around 400-500 meters, and suddenly it's very possible to produce an English-type garden away from the blistering summer heat, not forgetting, however, that a precise and efficient irrigation system is an absolute must if you





Photo: Archive GBH ©Daniela Guglielmi

want your lush English lawn. Water, and the frequency of irrigation, is what lies behind a successful Riviera garden. Understanding basic rules will see you triumphing in the gardening.

We all love the exotic beauty and fragrance of citrus plants, bougainvillea, oleanders, hibiscus, succulents and cactus. Developing a garden with such a variety of delightful species is fine as long as there is adequate planning and design involved; in this region a superb display of colour for every month of the year is achievable, from wonderful almond blossoms and stunning mimosa flowers and aloes in the depths of winter, to wisteria and tamarisk in early spring. Then you have early summer's ever-present bougainvillea and jasmines



Photo: Archive GBH ©Daniela Guglielmi

right through to winter.

The sky is the limit around these parts in terms of plant experimentation and certainly travelling across the two Riviéras and visiting gardens provides a feast for the eyes. And just one final note, extracted from Thomas Hanbury's old records: "In this Garden of Eden, no plant we have introduced from exotic lands has posed any problem for adaptation except the Coffee bush. So no fresh ground coffee beans coming from our gardens for us on our morning cappuccino break!" ■

*During the winter, Hanbury Gardens is open Tuesday to Sunday 9h30-17h (admission €7). Give yourself 90 minutes to tour the grounds. For hours and ticket prices throughout the year see [www.giardinihanbury.com](http://www.giardinihanbury.com)*

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# THE FAMILY TREE

Forget genealogy. American Lisa Pepin explains how anyone could have roots in the Luberon



## August 22, 2013

MY husband Johann and I, like the rest of France in August, took two weeks off. Or so we thought. Today we were lounging poolside when a car pulled up in the driveway. A very prim French woman got out, shook our hands, said she was from the government and that she had come to discuss our olive oil. She was going to pick up her colleague and would be back to speak to us in an hour.

That hour was fraught with anxiety. Why on earth would the government want to talk to us about our olive oil? How did they even know about us? What had we done wrong? As we calmed our nerves by sharing what I admit was a very large glass of rosé, we became suspicious. Since when does the French government conduct business in August, let alone make unannounced

house calls? We changed into more respectable-looking clothing, just in case.

She returned right on time and along with her associate presented us with their official identification. They proceeded to question us about our business, quickly getting to the matter of how much olive oil Les Pastras produces. When we answered about 60 liters, their faces fell. "That's all?" they asked. "But all these articles about you ..." They produced a stack of printed pages from blogs mentioning our olive and truffle oils.

"French food bloggers are happy to write about your product if you send them a free sample," I explained. "We send out a lot of *échantillons*."

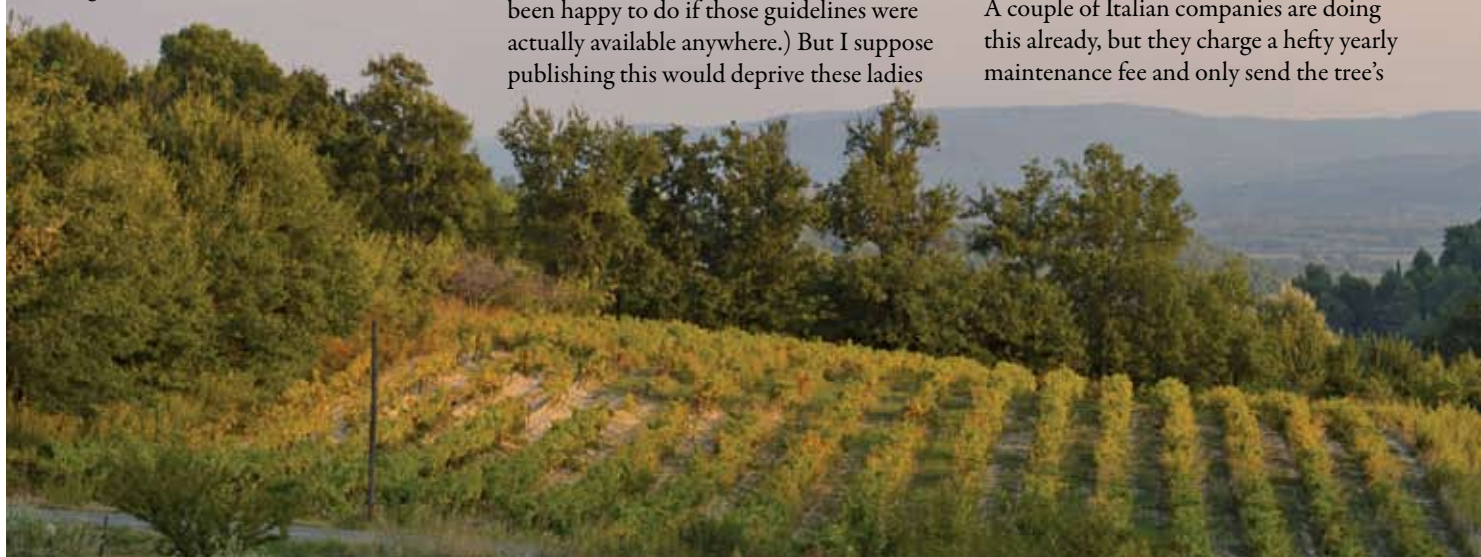
All the online publicity had given the impression that we were a big producer blatantly flouting the law by not labeling our bottles properly. (Something we'd have been happy to do if those guidelines were actually available anywhere.) But I suppose publishing this would deprive these ladies

of the opportunity to tour the Provence countryside in August at the taxpayers' expense, searching for rule breakers. They advised us on how to revise our labeling and left, clearly crestfallen that they hadn't caught the big fish they were after.

## September 10, 2013

JOHANN is an easy man to shop for. All he wants are trees. No new shirts, books, gadgets or tickets to sporting events. Just trees. So when my family came for a visit, we took them on the grand tour and they asked us to point out where "their" trees were. As we showed them where their birthday and Christmas gifts to Johann were planted, an idea took root.

Why not let people adopt a truffle or olive tree at Les Pastras and send them a yearly shipment of products from "their" tree? A couple of Italian companies are doing this already, but they charge a hefty yearly maintenance fee and only send the tree's





adoptive family something if that particular tree produces. Given that a truffle tree can take 8 to 10 years to produce (and some don't generate at all), it's a gamble.

So we decided that our program would send truffles or olive oil no matter what the adopted tree yields. Everybody gets a shipment for their annual fee, just like a Wine of the Month Club. Visitors to the property can choose their own tree on the spot or online customers can send the tree as a gift. Who wouldn't like that? We shall soon discover the answer to that question as we officially unveil on our site [lespastras.com](http://lespastras.com) **Adopt-a-Tree, just in time for Christmas.**

### September 25, 2013

OUR new labels arrived today, with a surprise in store. Johann re-named our olive oil "Cuvée Lisa" to signify that this is the first Les Pastras oil made with olives from trees we planted ourselves. He's crediting me with the idea for planting them when he really does all the hard work. And while this doesn't seem quite fair, it's really sweet of him. So I'm going to let it slide.

Our next step is to have the property inspected and certified as organic so that we can officially label our products *bio* in France. Though this process will take years and be very expensive, I have to say that I appreciate France's diligence when

it comes to accurate food labeling. As an American, I wish my homeland was as conscientious about informing people about exactly what's on their plates. So, for once, when faced with a mountain of French paperwork and fees, I'll smile and say, "Vive la France."

### October 20, 2013

WITH the summer truffle season at an end and the olive harvest not yet begun, you wouldn't think there would be much to report during the month of October. But we had another "first" today. An American family who visited our website and read our story wanted to see the property so badly that they offered to pay for a tour even *sans* truffle-hunting. How could we say no to such enthusiasm?

The charming group of six even brought a truffle they had purchased at a market near Gordes. While Johann gave them the grand tour, I sliced and prepared their little truffle on toast with salted butter and just a drizzle of truffle oil to punch up the flavor, since it was a specimen from the very end of the season, when they get a bit bland. Three hours and several bottles of Champagne later, we had made some new friends. Restaurant and hotel owners in Provence may sigh with relief when tourist season comes to an end, but we can't wait for it to start up again. ■

Photo: Scott Cejka Photography



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# Cook d'Azur



## Roast Chicken with Lentils and Garlic Mayonnaise

*This winter warmer is made more perfect by using Puy lentils and Bresse chicken.*

**TIP: Looking for kale?**  
See page 12



## INGREDIENTS

Whole chicken	2 onions
1 lemon	2 carrots
3 large sprigs rosemary	<b>Mayonnaise</b>
4 cloves of garlic	3 egg yolks
20g butter	1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
200g lentils (green or Puy)	Light olive oil (not extra virgin)
1L water	Thyme leaves
150g lardon (bacon)	Salt and pepper

Stuff chicken with a half a lemon, rosemary and 3 crushed garlic cloves. Carefully slide butter under the skin of the breasts, drizzle with oil and season with salt, pepper and thyme leaves. Cook at 200°C for 20 minutes to help the skin crisp, then reduce to 160°C for an hour. Baste with the juices in the tray every 20 minutes to keep the meat moist.

Rinse lentils and bring to boil in 1 litre of water. Simmer for 30 minutes until al dente and strain. Separately fry onions, carrots and lardon in oil, add thyme leaves and strained lentils. Add salt and pepper.

To make garlic mayonnaise, separate eggs and use only yolks (keep the whites for a sorbet or meringue.) Add Dijon mustard, season with salt and pepper. Slowly whisk in small amounts of light olive oil, making sure the mixture doesn't separate as you whisk, and continue until it both thickens in texture and becomes lighter in colour. Whisk in one finely grated garlic clove to finish.

Remove chicken from roasting tray and set aside for 5 minutes. Add lentils into the tray and stir in with the chicken juices. Put the chicken back onto the tray and serve with mayonnaise. Enjoy this rustic dish in front of the fire with a red Côtes du Ventoux or Côte Chalonnaise. White wine drinkers may enjoy a Côtes de Provence Ugni Blanc 2011.

Serves four.

## MR PIGGY GOES TO MARKET



WHAT a pleasure for Mr Piggy to dig up one of his favourite delicacies in such an unexpected place.

The parsnip used to be a

rarity in this part of the world, and when this very northern vegetable did turn up it usually looked a bit tired, tough and over-scrubbed. Now local

growers are trying their hands at cultivating the *panais*, most successfully at higher altitudes where the frost gets a chance to concentrate their sweet and special flavour. Result: a big display of delightfully dirty parsnips on Dominique's stall at Marché Forville, just right for roasting round the rib of beef of Olde England. €3.90 the kilo.

While we have the roasting tray to hand, look out for the Bintje variety of spud, now available at €2 a kilo, which makes lovely fluffy roasties.

The raw material for warming winter soups is now available in the market. Try out the *potimarron*, a type of pumpkin that has a delicious

chestnut flavour (€2.90/kilo), as well as the better-known butternut squash at the same price. A *topinambour* is not a musical instrument but a Jerusalem artichoke, excellent as a soup base though the chef should be careful not to mask its delicate flavour (€3.90/kilo).

With Thanksgiving upon us, it is good to see the sweet potato readily available (€3.90 per kilo). But the British will have to wait a while before the Brussels sprouts, that vital vegetable for their big feast, Christmas lunch, becomes good, plentiful, and reasonably priced. Mr P couldn't believe his little piggy eyes when he saw some anaemic specimens at €6.90 a kilo. ■



# Christmas corkers



If you're watching the budget when choosing champagne for the festive season, look out for reasonably priced bottles direct from the producer. These wines seem to have a more "natural" taste than those of the lower priced *marques*. Three well-made examples: Jean-Michel (€13.65), Poirot & Fils – yes like Hercule (€16.82) and Bernard Figuet (€17.86).

Moving into the mid-price range, and back into the world of the *négociant*, it is hard to match the magnificent Drappier (€23.90). Little known when compared with Moët or Taittinger, it's a class act that leaves others in its price bracket standing.

A turkey, be it for Thanksgiving or Christmas, doesn't do much for the French. Even when stuffed to the gunwales it tends to dry out in the oven, they reckon. Much better a tasty *pintade* (guinea fowl), with a super-rich farce composed of foie gras, truffles and Armagnac. Whichever way with poultry

you choose, forget the local wines for once and head for Burgundy. You'll be the toast of the table if you serve, say, a Savigny-lès-Beaunes red AND white. The combination of lightness and attack in both wines will complement the meal perfectly. Buy the youngest available in both colours, and expect to pay €10-12 per bottle. You could do the same with the excellent red and white burgundy of Rully at around the same price.

When the Christmas pud is served, put the wine away. There is usually such a high alcohol content in the pud that it wrecks any wine served with it, even an intense Muscat, although there are some who say that Champagne goes down a treat at this stage in the meal. The best bet, however, is a little nip of malt whisky. ■



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# we've got mail...



Remembrance  
Day 2013 at the  
Monument aux  
Morts in Nice.

## LEST WE FORGET

JUST before Remembrance Day I was shocked to hear a couple of expats in a Valbonne café rant about how “we” had to save “them” during WWII because the French “let themselves be walked over” by the Germans. This sort of “French-bashing” misrepresents the situation, is not historically accurate and denigrates the many resistance fighters who died opposing the Occupation of their country. Critical expats should be reminded that our countries don’t border Germany like France does, and were never invaded by troops on the ground. Britain was bombed but never occupied (except the Channel Islands). America waited until Pearl Harbor, when the war was well

under way in Europe, to decide it was time to help the war effort against Japan and Germany. At least that “Day of Infamy” served a purpose and brought fresh, well-trained and well-equipped troops into the fight just when the occupied countries were being worn down by the Nazi war machine.

None of us know what we’d really do if our country had been occupied. It’s one thing sitting in London or New York complaining that the Poles or French didn’t do enough to resist. It’s quite another thing to defy orders when an SS officer has his Luger pointed at your child’s head.  
*Harold K. Benton, Valbonne*

**Star  
letter**

## DECONSTRUCTION NEAR TOURRETTES

RESIDENTS of Bar-sur-Loup, Gourdon, Pont-du-Loup and Tourrettes-sur-Loup will suffer the consequences if a proposed new social housing project is built in “Des Valletes”. Apart from the visual impact, traffic will increase and there will be extra pressure on local schools and infrastructure in what remains for the moment an attractive part of the Riviera.

The prefecture can refuse permission for this project and there is a petition at [petitionbuzz.com/petitions/prefect](http://petitionbuzz.com/petitions/prefect). All those who would like to see this project refused should sign.

*Danielle Sivell-Muller & Cherrie Bunce, by email*

## NEWS ON THE SATELLITE

I read your satellite TV update last issue but we still have our old 80cm satellite dish and it still works as before. So this new satellite in orbit hasn’t changed anything.

*Jake & Meg Holden, Bargème*

*As we wrote last issue, there were delays in putting the new system on stream. By the time you’re reading this, things may well have changed. Keep an eye on the HASEurope website (see page 15) for customer remarks on how well their new 1-metre dish works after the system switch. RR*

## WE GET MAYLE

WHY the unsubtle dig at Peter Mayle (Oct/Nov issue. Page 22). “...unimaginative and often poorly-penned Mayle-lit ... which (has) ... far too numerously – found their way onto expat book shelves.”

Since he has written at least twelve books, half of them novels, your criticism “unimaginative” does not seem to agree with the facts. He has also received the Legion d’Honneur from the French Government for his cultural contributions – “poorly-penned”?

Quote from *Time Magazine* review: “Peter Mayle is something of a wonder, chronicling the scene around him in irresistible prose.”

I have no connection in any way with Mr Mayle, nor do I overvalue his talents, but your criticisms are not shared by others in the literary world and would appear to be an unnecessary put-down.

*John Gover, by email*





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## LETTERS

### ALL ROADS LEAD TO ...

REGARDING your item in issue 158 (pg 9) about the road conditions in the UK, I recently saw this taped to a car window: "In Britain we used to drive on the left of the road. Now we drive on what's left of the road." It's sad but true.  
*Greg Hartles, by email*

### TAXI!

THE other day I took a taxi to the airport and as the driver thought I was British (I'm Australian) he handed me a *Riviera Reporter*, which I read on the plane. Do you distribute in all the Riviera taxis? If so, bravo!  
*Joseph Cardigan, by email*

### HAVE A DRINK ON US

WHILE passing through Nice airport I purchased a 25cl bottle of Merlot wine and a glass of beer at the snack/bar nearest to Departure Gates 19-26. I was then charged 17.20 euros. I was not given a receipt and when remonstrating at this exorbitant price, I was assured

that this was the correct amount. As our flight had already been called and there was a queue of people behind me, I could not spend further time arguing with the character behind the bar, who obviously did not think I would be returning in the near future.

If this is a frequent occurrence then the person concerned must be ripping off the public to a considerable extent.

I can see that an official complaint would be our word against his. We did purchase the same drinks on our last visit, served by a young lady, who gave us a receipt for just over 13 euros, which was 5 euros difference from our previous bill. We now know should we buy again at the airport bar, to ask for a receipt.  
*Name withheld, by email*

*If you have a serious and demonstrable complaint, the person who deals with the airport concession holders can be emailed at Valerie.CHUONG@cote-azur.aeroport.fr. There is certainly nothing that can be done if the price you were charged was the correct price or if you do not have proof of your claim. RR*

### THE SCAM OF THE SECRET ADMIRER

UNLESS you know whom it is from, everyone should beware of unexpected deliveries. I just heard about this, which happens in the UK so it won't be long before it comes here. A delivery company calls and asks if you are going to be in as they have a parcel for you. Within the hour a driver appears with a basket of flowers and a bottle of wine, no idea who it's from but there is going to be a card to follow. He asks for a small amount so he can prove the delivery has been made to an adult, as there is alcohol in it. He can't take cash, as the transaction has to be proven so he produces a hand-held card reader. You put your card in and type the PIN and get a receipt from the machine for the paltry amount. A couple of days later your account has been cleaned out. Pass this around. The more who know the harder it is for the scum.  
*Robert Warren, by email*

### NAME TWO COASTAL TOWNS

I am the creator and host of a Pub Quiz in Nice Old Town, now also ➤



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in Antibes. It is a traditional English Pub Quiz that is available with French translations and has a wonderful reputation in Nice. We have a Facebook page at [facebook.com/DavesTriviaNight](https://www.facebook.com/DavesTriviaNight)  
*David Phillips, by email*

### LA VIE EN ROSE

REF "The Villa in the Rue des Roses" in issue 159. Attracted by the lovely photograph of an impressive, sweeping staircase [pictured], I decided to read the article in your last issue, and it delighted me. The further I went the more I wanted to find the money and buy such an exceptional home. You made my day – thanks.

*Madeleine Blanchet, Cannes*



### FAKEBOOK?

I was rather sceptical about your claim that many Facebook "likes" and "follows" may be fake so I did some searching online. In only an hour I discovered that selling phoney FB likes is a highly competitive market. With a bit of shopping around I could buy 8000 FB likes for less than \$25. I must say I was tempted to do it for a new business I am starting up but if I can see through the scam, can't others? And if they see that many of my followers are bogus, will they even believe claims I make about other aspects of my business?

I also learned that even legitimate "likes" can be deceptive. "I'll follow you if you'll follow me" is common practice between people who will never look at their followed FB feeds again.

*Jane-Charlotte Verger, by email*

### WRITE TO US

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

## VÉLO BLEU FOR VISITORS



I saw the article about Vélo Bleu on your website and as I was going to Nice I decided to try it.

I did not get subscribed online from the UK, though, which was my original goal. The online form does not accept phone numbers or addresses outside France. I waited until I arrived in Nice and went to an office near the Nice-Ville train station at Thiers. That meant the traditional wait in a queue, which was a drag. It took a while but the woman who subscribed me was very helpful. And doing it face-to-face like that included a quick demonstration on how to operate the system. They have a display version of a drop-off point in the office.

As for the service itself I found it terrific. A great way to do short trips especially. I was staying in the Old Town and used it to go to the Musée d'Art Moderne, to the Thiers station and so on.

As the first 30 minutes are free that meant all those trips were free. Being mean, I rode for about 25 minutes until I found a drop-off point, then simply switched bikes, which it allowed me to do. So potentially one can ride for longer for free. Not sure how long the system will tolerate that but it worked for me for totals of around 45 minutes at a time with one bike swap.

Another great aspect of the system was the major cycle lanes along the Promenade and up the Ave Felix Faure. The latter is very protected from traffic; the former, however, carries considerable risk from pedestrians wandering across the cycle route without

looking. Hence requires considerable caution and best not to ride fast.

As for cost, I was in Nice for two weeks. So I signed up for the one-month deal. That worked out the best value by far, assuming I was using the bikes quite a lot. For occasional use, paying for a one-day pass is best. Being *un étranger* without a French bank account they take a hefty deposit on the credit card. I will get that back, but a month later, which presumably means a month after my subscription runs out, ie, a total of six weeks from when I signed up! That is a drag.

### Downsides?

A couple of times – both very early morning – I could not hand back a bike at a particular drop-off point because it was simply not working (the on button got no result.) That cost me one euro while I got to another. Another problem was occasionally finding no drop-off spaces available and having to find another.

Most of the bikes I rode were in OK condition. One I found had flat tyres, but one should check all that before taking it. Some of them I found the mechanism for altering seat height was wonky.

The biggest problem I had was getting round Nice because of traffic and confusion over where one can ride. They need to give more info on that when people subscribe. You really need to know the protected cycle lanes and plan trips to use those. Examples of confusion? I am still not clear if it is legal to ride in bus lanes, as is OK in the UK. I eventually found out it is forbidden to ride in the tramway, though many do as it's far safer than the roads. Nice's infamous system of one-way streets makes things difficult, so I got a map with them marked. Even then it is confusing as what is a one-way street for cars may be two-way for bikes.

### Bottom line?

It's a great system but you need to find out a lot in order to make it work for you. A combination of traffic rules, mad pedestrians and crazy drivers means one has to ride with a high level of caution and awareness 100% of the time. That applies to regular cyclists like me. I would hesitate to recommend the system to people with little cycling experience.

Hope that's of use, and thanks again for a great article that introduced me to the Vélo Bleu.

*David Grey, by email*



## november

### AIAP-UNESCO MONACO EXPOSITION

Until Dec 8, 13h-19h: *L'eau à l'oeuvre exposition* at the Salle d'Exposition in the Port of Monaco (4 Quai Antoine 1er).

### PROFESSIONAL YACHTING ASSOCIATION

Wed Nov 27, 18h: PYA Annual General Meeting at la Salle des Associations, Antibes. Members only. Contact [info@pya.org](mailto:info@pya.org)

### ASSOCIATION FRANCE-ETATS-UNIS THANKSGIVING

Thurs Nov 28, noonish:  
Thanksgiving lunch at Koudou, Promenade des Anglais (next to the Masséna parking lot); €29 for members (plus €1 tip to be left), REAL roast turkey and the trimmings. Members can bring a guest for the same price. Non-members add a €5 donation. Cheques to be made out to France-Etats-Unis, Nice; they can be sent to the Association France-Etats-Unis, Nice, Maison des Associations, 3 bis rue Guigonis, 06300 Nice. Short program before the meal is served.

### FRANCE - GRANDE BRETAGNE NICE

Thurs Nov 28, 15h30:  
Presentation in French by Denise Santi: *Les Façades peintes à Nice: frises et décors, expression d'un moment de l'histoire niçoise.*  
Thurs Dec 5, 15h30: Tea, biscuits, conversation and Scrabble in English or French  
Thurs Dec 12, 15h30: Christmas lunch in a restaurant in Nice.  
At the Anglican Church Hall, 11 bis rue de la Buffa, 06000 Nice. For info: 04 93 81 76 74 or see [fgb-nice.com](http://fgb-nice.com)

### FOIRE AUX SANTONS

Until Dec 24, 14h-18h (Wed also 10h-12h): the largest Santon Fair in the region at the Médiathèque La Strada in Mouan Sartoux. Free entry.

### DAF-RIVIERA EVENING FOR JANET RUIZ



Fri Dec 6: Janet Ruiz, a French national, has been serving the American community in this region for over 42 years at the US Consular Agency in Nice. She regularly made her expertise available to DAF-Riviera and it's our honor to express our appreciation to her and her years of service at Club B-Spot (24 ave du Maréchal Foch, Nice). The evening includes a night of exceptional music from Lisa Chavous and The Philadelphia Blues Messengers, a Philadelphia based rhythm and blues ensemble on their tour of the Côte d'Azur. DAF-Riviera invites all our members and friends to come out and help show our appreciation to Janet. Please do not RSVP with DAF-Riviera, but directly reserve your table at Club B-Spot with Nicolas 06 24 25 48 81. Tickets €18 at door €14 in [advancebspot.fr](http://advancebspot.fr)

### ECUMENICAL KERMESSE MONACO

Sat Nov 30, from 10h: Entry is free at Fontvieille Chapiteau (Circus Tent). Over 25 stalls of clothes, books, CDs, DVDs, antiques, Christmas decorations, Monegasque, Greek, Spanish and English speciality stands plus shoes, bags ... This year's Tombola has over 40 exciting prizes; tickets €2 each. Snack Bar open 10h-18h. For more info, especially if you would like to donate any items (a great opportunity to declutter), please call Merville Spiers on +377 93 15 02 89. See <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Kermesse-Monacos-Charity-Bazaar/303928089717327>

### CANNES XMAS VILLAGE

Nov 30 to Jan 5: workshops, entertainment, vendor chalets and of course, a visit from Santa.

### NICE XMAS MARKET

Nov 30 to Jan 1: At Place Masséna with its usual gift stalls, Ferris wheel and public ice rink.

## december

### TOY EXCHANGE

Sun Dec 1, 9h-18h: 21st *Bourse aux Jouets de la Saint Nicolas* in Ste-Maxime (Promenade A. Simon-Lorière & Boulodrome du Prince Bertil). Children can sell or exchange old or new toys and celebrate the arrival of Saint Nicolas with a candy shower. Contact 06 83 38 72 45.

### AMIAc

Mon Dec 2: Christmas lunch at the Carlton Cannes. Please contact Doug on 04 92 97 50 72 for reservation form.

### DAF RIVIERA'S POLITICAL WINE

Wed Dec 4, 18h30: At La Canne à Sucre/Sports 11 (11 Prom. des Anglais, Nice). This social is open to all Democrats Abroad France members and guests. Come and engage in political discussions with fellow Americans in the region. Price: you must order at least one drink. [dafrance.riviera@gmail.com](mailto:dafrance.riviera@gmail.com)

### RIVIERA BUSINESS CLUB

Thurs Dec 5, 19h30: Business Person of the Year Awards 2013 at the Riviera Marriott Hotel de la Porte de Monaco, Cap d'Ail. For info: 06 21 20 60 10 or [www.rivierabusinessclub.fr](http://www.rivierabusinessclub.fr)

### MONACO'S CHRISTMAS VILLAGE

Dec 5 to Jan 5: at Quai Albert 1er. Artisanal chalets sell regional specialties with themed animations guaranteed to transport big and small kids into an enchanted universe. The market is open daily from 11h-21h and until 22h on Friday and Saturday. Dec 24th it closes at 19h30 but it's open on Christmas and New Year's Day from 14h30-22h. For information call the *mairie* in Monaco: +377 93 15 06 03. New Year's Eve a DJ spins from 21h-3h with fireworks at midnight.

### IWCR CHRISTMAS FAIR

Fri Dec 6, 10h-14h: Entry €5, includes refreshments, at La Lune de Mougins. A fun and festive way to get together to sell and purchase items made by other members. Stallholders will be asked to contribute 10% of their takings to charity. All stallholders must be members of the IWCR and pay for their own refreshments. If you would like to be a stallholder, please get in touch with Lucia by email: [lucia.director@iwcr.org](mailto:lucia.director@iwcr.org). Your stall needs to be connected with Christmas so please let her know what you will be offering.

### MENTON AND THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS

Dec 6 to Jan 5, daily 10h-19h: the *illuminations de Menton* will once again light up the town using 1 million low-energy LED bulbs, more than 10km of string lights. This Christmas Menton invites you to share the "American Dream". Yes, New York comes to Menton this holiday with lots of activities for kids; 20 vendors on hand selling products.

## FRANCE GRANDE-BRETAGNE TOULON/VAR

Sat Dec 7: Christmas lunch at the Holiday Inn, Toulon. Please contact for complete information on 04 94 30 69 77. See [afgb-toulon.net](http://afgb-toulon.net)

## BRITISH ASSOCIATION NICE BRANCH

Sun Dec 8, 18h-20h: Christmas party in the hall of Holy Trinity Church, 11 rue de la Buffa, Nice. For details please contact Marion Courtonne at [mcourtonne@gmail.com](mailto:mcourtonne@gmail.com)

## PROFESSIONAL YACHTING ASSOCIATION

Fri Dec 13: PYA Christmas Ball at the Carlton InterContinental Hotel in Cannes. We welcome back the ever-popular band, Blah Blah and DJ Peter Mackley. Open to all. Contact [info@pya.org](mailto:info@pya.org)

## MARCHÉ DE NOËL VENCE

Fri Dec 13 to Sat Dec 15: producers from all over France, street entertainment including a giant on stilts, a magician and storytelling. Santa arrives on the Saturday at Santa's Village, where you can take a carriage ride. On Dec 21st, there's a Gala dinner with a magic show (reservations 04 93 58 06 38).

## IWCR CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Fri Dec 13: Les Pierres Rouges, Valbonne (1615 route de Cannes). Send your booking form and cheque by Dec 10.

## A FERTILE CITY: MOVING TOWARDS URBAN NATURE

Until Jan 4: Exhibition designed and produced by the City of Architecture and Heritage. A series of activities and tools around the relationship between the contemporary city and nature. Free entry Mon-Fri 8h30-17h and Sat 9:30-13h30 at the Forum d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture, Place Yves-Klein, Nice.

## FRANCE GRANDE-BRETAGNE ASSOCIATION CANNES

Sat Dec 14, 12h30: Christmas Lunch with crackers to be celebrated at the Bijou Plage Juan-les-Pins. All welcome. Telephone Betty on 04 93 99 48 83 or Iris on 04 93 97 86 32.

## BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF THE VAR

Sat Dec 14, 12h: Christmas Lunch at the Saint Gulf Hotel. Cost: €28. Bookings to [events@baofthevar.com](mailto:events@baofthevar.com)

## CANADIAN CLUB MONACO

Sun Dec 15, 12h30: Traditional Christmas lunch at Le St-Benoit (10 ter, ave de la Costa, Monaco). Come and enjoy seeing friends for a memorable meal. €65/ members; €75 non-members. Please choose either meat or fish and send your payment to the club before Dec 10. [canadianclubmonaco@gmail.com](mailto:canadianclubmonaco@gmail.com)

## CHRISTMAS MARKET VALBONNE

Wed Dec 19- Mon Dec 24: Artisans stalls and local producers, animations and workshops for children, fireworks.

## THE NUTCRACKER

Dec 26th to Jan 5th: *La Casse-Noisette* by the Ballets de Monte-Carlo with the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra at the Grimaldi Forum. Show time 20h30 (except for matinee on Sundays at 16h). After an absence of thirteen years, the classic ballet returns to Monte-Carlo with an interpretation from choreographer Jean-Christophe Maillot that echoes his own experience when he arrived in the Principality 20 years ago. Tickets €19 to €33 (€32-€48 on New Year's Eve). Contact +377 99 99 30 00

## BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF THE VAR

Tues Dec 31: BAV New Year's Eve Dinner Dance at the Auberge Grand Chêne, Sillans-la-Cascade. Bookings to [events@baofthevar.com](mailto:events@baofthevar.com)

## LE KIDS CLUB HOLIDAY WORKSHOP



Dec 30, 31 & Jan 2, 3: For children 3-10 years of age, "Our action hero with five legends" workshop in Nice. Our valiant protectors will combine the five legends: Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy, the Easter Bunny, the Sandman and Jack Frost to protect the hopes and dreams of children around the world ... The program: English, dance, music, art, gym. Half-day 9h-12h or 14h-17h. Cost: €115/4 days. Full days 9h-17h; cost €205/4 days. Lunch: Parents preparing picnic in the bag. Outing to the park if the weather permits! Contact [lekidsclub.com](http://lekidsclub.com) or 04 93 82 44 43

For Christmas Choir  
& Church Services  
see page 21.

## NEW YEAR'S EVE/ DAY FIREWORKS

Tues Dec 31: Bay of Cannes and also in Monaco (along with a DJ from 21h30). Also on Jan 1st, 18h, in the Bay of Juan-les-Pins.

## january 2014

## BAIGNADE DU NOUVEL AN

Wed Jan 1, 11h30: Traditional New Year's Day swim takes place in Antibes at place de la Salis.

## PROM CLASSIC

Sun Jan 5, 10h: Start the year off with a 10km fun run along the Promenade des Anglais. See [promclassic.com](http://promclassic.com)

## FRANCE GRANDE-BRETAGNE TOULON/VAR

Wed Jan 8: Galette des Rois, Salle Frank Arnal, Toulon. Also in January, the Théâtre Liberté and Châteauvallon present two plays from Shakespeare: *Macbeth* at the Théâtre Liberté and *The Winter's Tale* at Châteauvallon. Tickets €26. Members interested in attending can contact the president to sign up. Tel: 06 82 11 89 26. See [afgb-toulon.net](http://afgb-toulon.net)

## COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF THE RIVIERA

Thurs Jan 16 (TBC): Ten-pin Bowling. See website for details. [commonwealthclubriviera.com](http://commonwealthclubriviera.com)

## 38TH MONTE-CARLO INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS FESTIVAL

Thurs Jan 16-Sun Jan 26: See the best circus acts and clowns in the world and much more. See [montecarlofestival.mc](http://montecarlofestival.mc)

## SALON DU MARIAGE

Sat Jan 18 and Sun Jan 19, 10h-19h: Wedding Fair at the Acropolis in Nice with dozens of exhibitors. See [lunedemiel.com](http://lunedemiel.com)

## AMIAI

Thurs Jan 23: Le Chaudron Mouans Sartoux. Please ring Doug on 04 92 97 50 72 to reserve.



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holds French and English classes from beginners to advanced including conversation every Saturday from 5th October 2013 from 2pm to 5pm followed by tea and biscuits. We also organise a social event every month. We are on the first floor of the Maison des Association Cannes, 9 rue Louis Maille, in Cannes (behind the train station off rue d'Alsace). Cannes. Parking free and available. More info: Tel. Iris on 04 93 97 86 32 or Odette on 04 93 49 37 01

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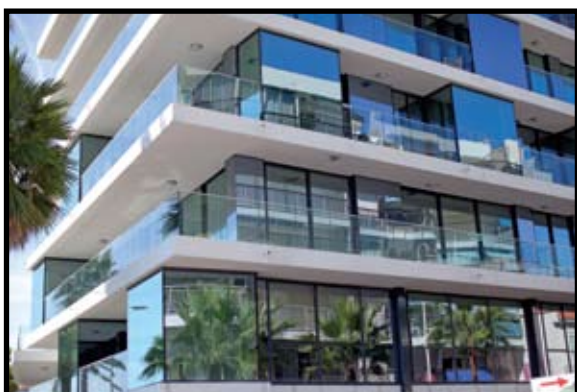
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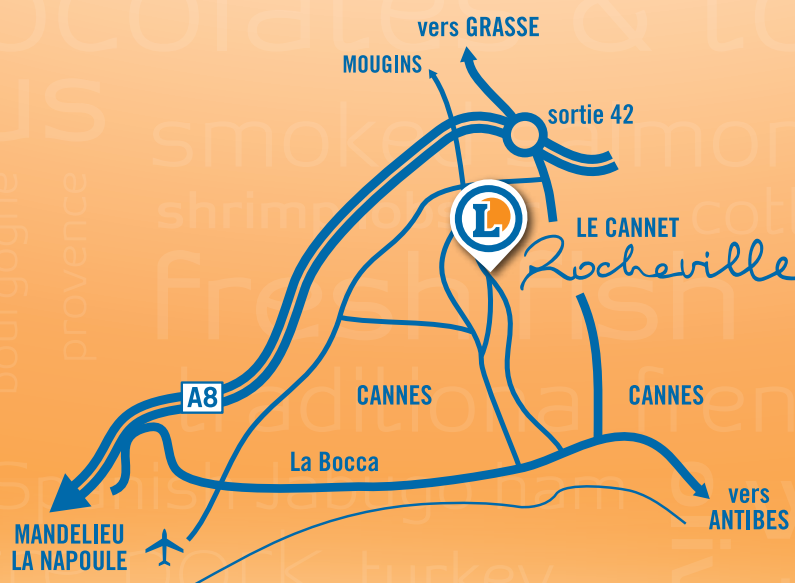
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