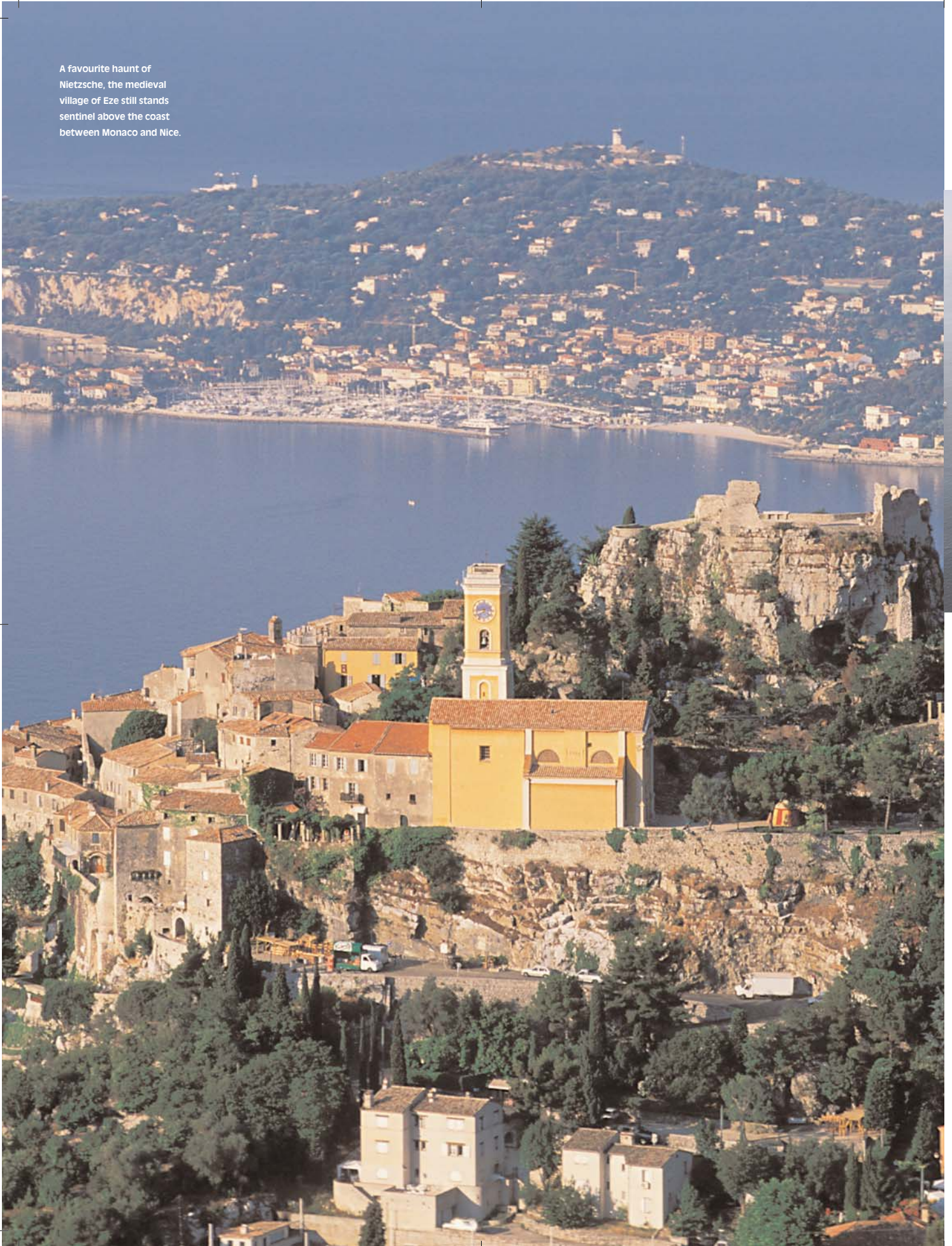
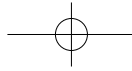


A favourite haunt of Nietzsche, the medieval village of Eze still stands sentinel above the coast between Monaco and Nice.





SPECIAL FEATURE

By Debra Moffitt



Just coasting along

Chanel, Picasso, Le Corbusier and many more have been drawn to the Riviera's beaches, coves and seafront promenades. Follow in the footsteps of the rich and famous...

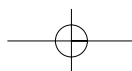
For centuries, the Riviera's expanse of sandy beaches, pebbly shores and rocky cliffs with shimmering water the colour of lapis-lazuli before the palm and pine studded coast has been a source of inspiration and passion for artists, royalty and even politicians. From Menton to Saint-Tropez, the Côte d'Azur's dazzling beaches, secret coves and privileged climate have attracted celebrities of all nationalities and from all walks of life to sip a *flûte* of champagne or a *kir royal* while painting a masterpiece or sketching their next

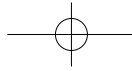
collection of *haute couture*. Just across the border from Italy, the *Promenade du Soleil* curves around the Bay of Menton, scented with orange blossom or jasmine from the town's many parks and gardens. The tranquillity of the Garavan beach and picturesque port conquered Katherine Mansfield and also Jean Cocteau, whose work can be seen in the old Bastion, now the Cocteau Museum. Overlooked by the medieval village of Roquebrune, Cap Martin was once home to Coco Chanel whose

lover, the Duke of Westminster, gave her the villa *La Pausa*. Winston Churchill found inspiration for painting here and visited so frequently he was named an honorary citizen. A walk around the cape's seaside path lined with pines, mimosa, cypresses and olive-trees offers spectacular views of Monte-Carlo. Architect Le Corbusier also loved Cap Martin and built a tiny cabin which still exists, hidden just off the *Promenade Le Corbusier*. Discovering a place which had long welcomed crowned heads, famed opera-singers, ballet-dancers, tennis champions and

WALKS ON THE WILD SEASIDE

After a 3-course lunch at a beach restaurant, take a stroll around one of the Riviera's capes to walk off the calories while admiring the Med. Follow in the footsteps of Le Corbusier and Coco Chanel on a walk around Cap Martin, dotted with typical Mediterranean vegetation such as myrtle and Aleppo pines. Tackle the exhilarating hour-long walk around Cap d'Ail or the 11-kilometer trek around the "millionaires' peninsula" of Cap Ferrat. On Cap d'Antibes, a path starts at La Garoupe and winds along the coast at the foot of luxurious properties, providing access to once private areas that were later nationalized under a French law making the seafront public property. Terraced areas where private boats once moored and lavish beach parties were held are now accessible to hikers and picnickers. At the end of the Chemin des Douaniers, pause at the Villa Eilenroc designed by Charles Garnier (architect of the Paris and Monte-Carlo Opera houses) for a sneak peak into the luxury of another era. Donated to the city of Antibes, the villa and its lush gardens are frequently used for film shoots and exclusive receptions.





SPECIAL FEATURE

By Debra Moffitt

ISLANDS IN THE SUN

A short boat-ride away, the two Lérins Islands situated off the coast of Cannes are a real change of pace from hectic Croisette shopping. Long alleys lined with eucalyptus trees and lavender make the larger island, Sainte-Marguerite, a pleasant area for shady hikes and picnics or swimming in secluded coves. Its main landmark is the fortress which served as a prison for the Man in the Iron Mask, rumored to be of noble blood and possibly Louis XIV's brother and potential rival. The smaller island, Saint-Honorat (photo below), still houses Cistercian monks at the Abbaye de Lérins: they make fine wines and liqueurs and offer spiritual retreats to the world-weary. A spectacular overview of the island and coast is afforded by the fortified 10th-C. monastery at the edge of the sea.

The Iles d'Or, or Golden Islands, off the coast of Hyères have pristine nature reserves, rocky coves and no cars. Made up of the Ile de Porquerolles, Port Cros and Le Levant, they are reached by sailboat or ferry and offer secluded areas and sandy coves away from the crowds. With its 3,000 acres, Porquerolles is the largest of the three islands and features ruins of ancient forts. The area is a haven for scuba divers thanks to a strictly protected marine reserve.

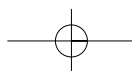


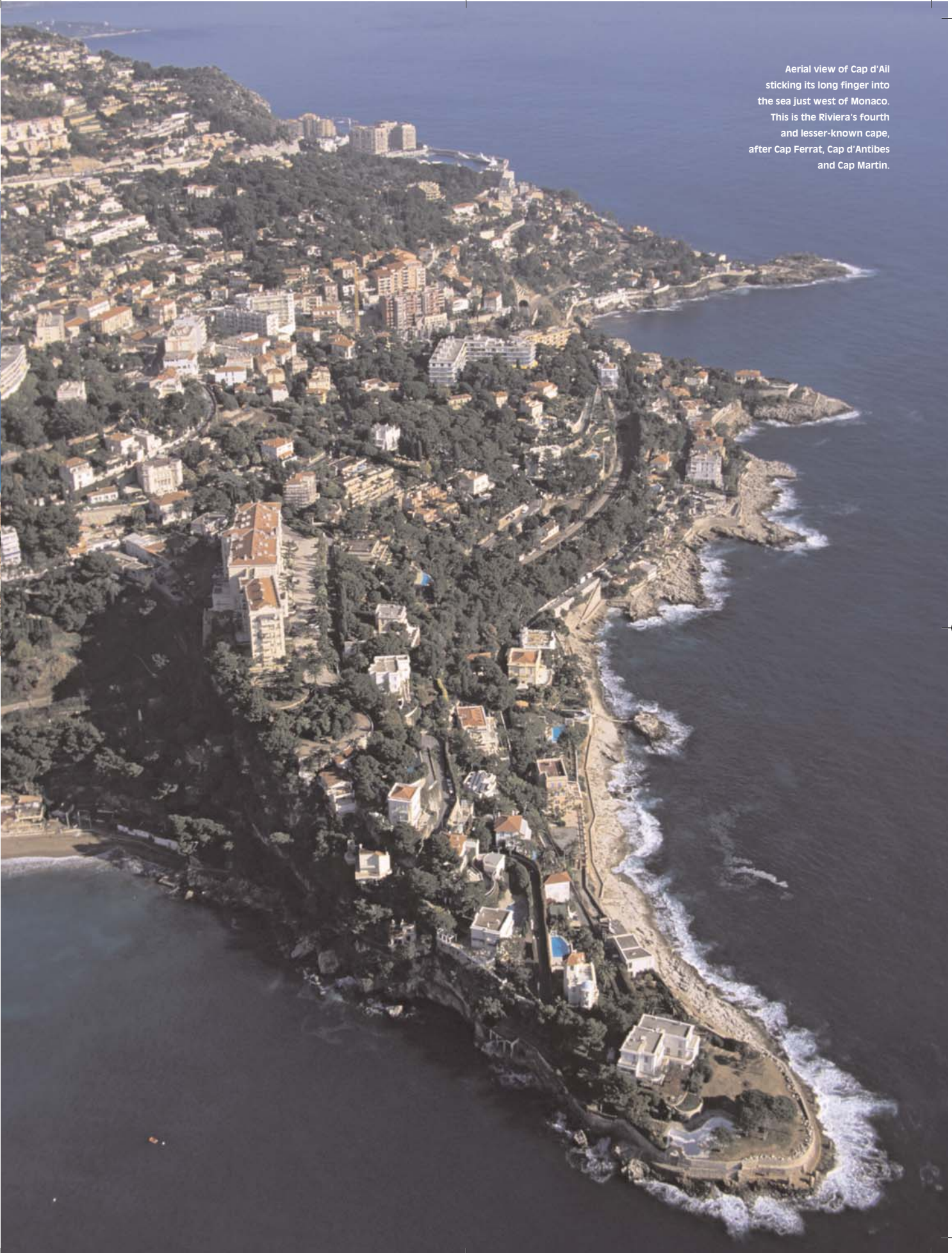
racing-drivers, Grace Kelly fell for her Prince and the charm of Monaco in 1955. Today, the Principality continues to welcome an elite (residents include Roger Moore and Formula 1 driver David Coulthard), whose top priority is not necessarily the beach. *The Plage du Larvotto* does, however, offer a man-made stretch of sand along water so clear you can see the fish. A rather challenging, wave-lashed path around the rocks from Plage Marquet to the picturesque cove of Mala Plage on Cap d'Ail is one of many magnificent walks that hug the Riviera coastline and were once patrolled by customs officers. This lesser-known cape has some superb, discreet residences which once hosted Sacha Guitry, Greta Garbo, Princess Soraya, Lord Beaverbrook and many more. Napoleon visited the next town along the coast, declaring it a "bello loco" and Beaulieu-

sur-Mer holds true to its name. In addition to a lovely yacht marina and its seafront casino, Beaulieu is home to *La Reserve de Beaulieu*, which has welcomed guests such as Pablo Picasso, Walt Disney and Gustav Eiffel, designer of the Eiffel tower. Archeologist Theodore Reinach built the Villa Kérylos here, a replica of a Greek villa at the edge of the Med, which is open to visitors. Cap Ferrat is still the Riviera's most exclusive cape. Its natural charm and privacy made it a favourite with aristocrats and millionaires. King Leopold II of Belgium built several residences here. His neighbour was Baroness Béatrice Ephrussi de Rothschild whose opulent, Tuscan-style villa is now a museum containing her antiques and artworks. Later on, Somerset Maugham bought a property on Cap Ferrat, and David Niven was a frequent visitor. A pleasant path winds its way around the peninsula

with a network of trails giving exquisite views of the sea and the little village of Saint-Jean, nestled around a cove that provides shelter for the harbour. With its unique Old Town, imposing 16th-century citadel, the royal port of La Darse and a chapel decorated by Cocteau, Villefranche-sur-Mer has been a popular location for shooting films. Scenes from famous movies like Alfred Hitchcock's *To Catch a Thief*, *Never Say Never* with Sean Connery and *The Jewel of the Nile* with Michael Douglas were filmed here. Writer Aldous Huxley also called this town home. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Russians and British made Nice (photo above) a fashionable place to visit. Grand-Dukes, princesses and other members of Europe's high society arrived during the winters to enjoy the mild climate and a social season that glittered with concerts, balls and tea-parties. *The Promenade des*

Photos : © CFI Riviera Côte d'Azur/Agence Images.com/Palombu/Loi - Courtesy Abbaye de Lérins



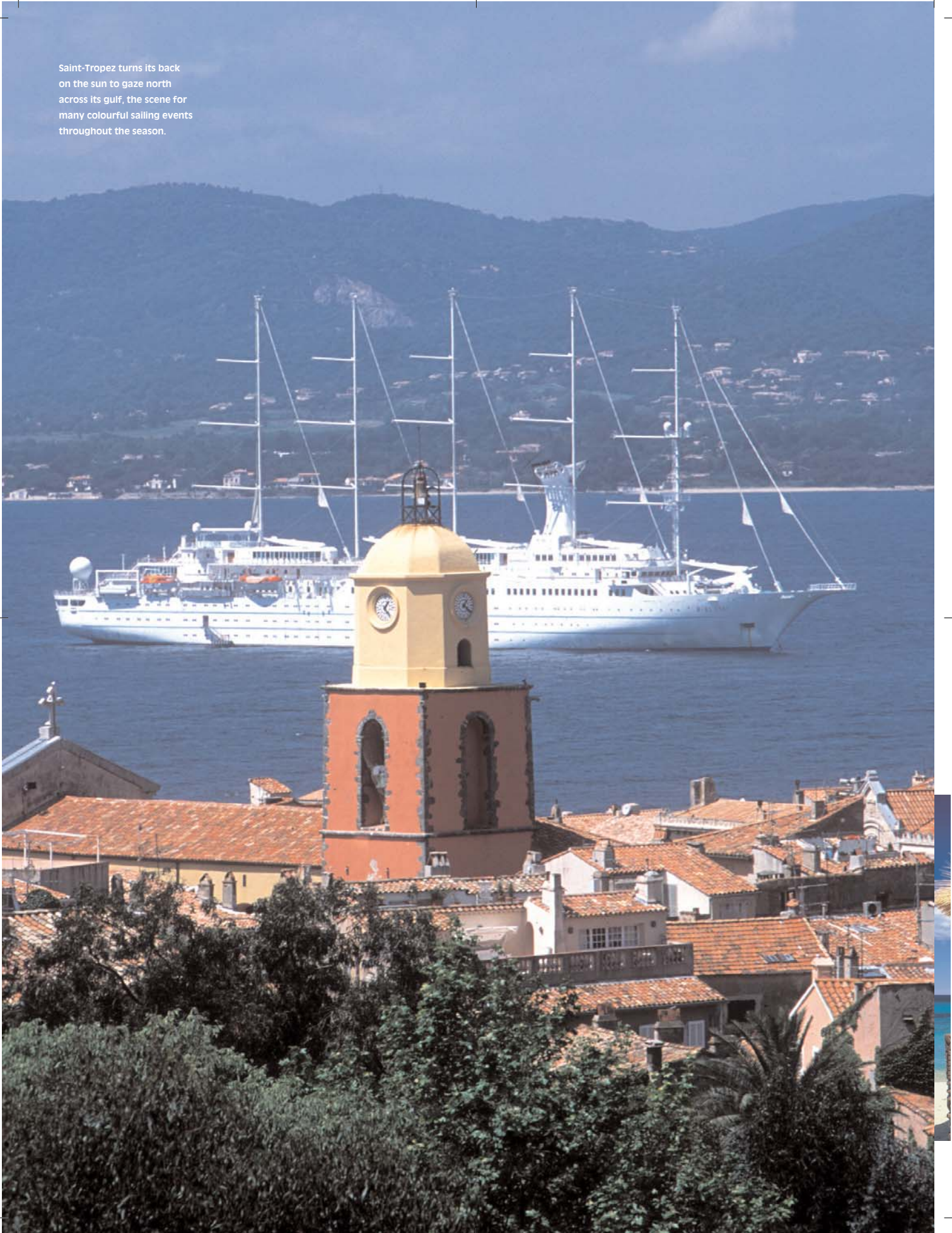


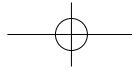
Aerial view of Cap d'All sticking its long finger into the sea just west of Monaco. This is the Riviera's fourth and lesser-known cape, after Cap Ferrat, Cap d'Antibes and Cap Martin.





Saint-Tropez turns its back on the sun to gaze north across its gulf, the scene for many colourful sailing events throughout the season.





SPECIAL FEATURE

By Debra Moffitt

Anglais still pays tribute to the British connection with this glorious past. The pebbly beach curves around the Bay of Angels, while to the east the rocky cliff of the *Colline du Château* offers public gardens with a bird's-eye view of the coast. At Cagnes-sur-Mer, once home to the artist Auguste Renoir, local fishermen still haul their nets onto the pebbly beach at dawn. In the distance, the ancient *Fort Carré* stands sentinel on a hill next to the port of Antibes, birthplace of writer Jacques Audiberti and home to painter Nicolas de Staël before he committed suicide here in 1955. Picasso painted the local fishermen during his stay at the Château Grimaldi in the Old Town of Antibes, now a Museum that bears his name. A stroll down the Millionaires' Quayside in Port Vauban reveals some of the world's most luxurious yachts. The old town, which was home to English writer Graham Greene from 1966 to 1991, is still protected by sturdy walls. Once past the sandy public beach, one arrives at Cap d'Antibes with its very popular creek, the *Plage de la Garoupe*. A path follows the rocky shore

at the foot of secluded properties with vast walled gardens. On the west side of the cape, the very splendid Hôtel du Cap-Eden Roc and the smaller hotel, *Les Belles Rives*, were the haunts of American pleasure-seekers in the Roaring 'Twenties: Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Frank Jay Gould, Ernest Hemingway, Dos Passos... In neighbouring Juanles-Pins, the Pinède Gould, a big square shaded by parasol pines, hosts the summer jazz festival launched in 1960. Handprints of world-famous jazz singers and musicians line the sidewalk: Sidney Bechet, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie, Charlie Mingus, Miles Davis, Ray Charles, Duke Ellington, B.B. King, etc. During the Cannes Film Festival, movie-stars have left their hand-prints in front of the Palais des Festivals on the Allée des Stars. Their lavish life-style means not only a strip of the Riviera's loveliest sand, but also sun-loungers and parasols, sea-bass, rosé wine and *café glacée* at the elegant beach-restaurants run by the hotels Martinez, Majestic or Carlton etc. One can imagine Coco Chanel under a parasol pond-

ering the next perfume she would create in Grasse. And one thanks Lord Brougham who first made Cannes famous with the English-speaking world, from 1835 onwards. On the far side of the old harbour, the sandy *Plages du Midi* promise gentle surf and relaxed afternoons in the sun. Then, from Mandelieu-La Napoule and Théoule, the flat shore turns to red rock and the Estérel mountains glow reddish-pink in the sunset. Beyond, the coast stretches out to Sainte-Maxime, finally turning back on itself to form the Gulf of Saint-Tropez. As all true sun-worshippers know, the town made famous by Brigitte Bardot faces north: one has to cross the peninsula to reach the south-facing beaches of Pampelonne and Ramatuelle (*photo below, Kontiki Beach*). In fact, the fishing village was discovered in the 1880's by writer Guy de Maupassant and artists Henri Manguin, Paul Signac, Dunoyer de Segonzac... and was later adopted by the author Colette. Yet another example of a beautiful site on this legendary coast, first appreciated by sensitive, artistic souls with an eye for natural beauty.



HARBORING DESIRES

Sailing and motor-yachting are traditional Riviera activities, but after dropping anchor in sheltered coves for an afternoon swim, every boat seeks a safe port. Port Vauban in Antibes is the largest pleasureboat harbour in Europe and home to some of the most enviable superyachts in the Mediterranean. The 282 ft *Kingdom*, once Donald Trump's *Trump Princess*, docks on the *Quai de Grande Plaisance*. It's not uncommon to find ships here equipped with jacuzzis on deck and even helicopter landing pads. Other prestigious harbours include Monaco's Port Hercule, a deep water port where the Monaco Yacht Show will welcome international boat-lovers from September 20th to 23rd. The old harbour of Cannes is home to the annual *Festival International de la Plaisance* (*photo above*), this year scheduled from September 13th to 18th. The Riviera's ports are, of course, fully equipped to offer electricity, Wi-Fi and all other amenities for visiting yachts.

Photos: Ville de Saint-Tropez, droits réservés - T. Cagnoni - Nicolas Charis

