SPECIAL OFFER FOR PEBBLE’S READERS:

-10%*

To benefit from this 10%* discount, present this guide and your foreign ID before payment at any main cash register. This discount is not refundable once the payment is made and cannot be cumulated with other discounts. Offre réservé à la clientèle Internationale.

* Except on services, food & beverages, books and items and areas marked with a red dot. Valid until Dec. 31th, 2013.
Editors Letter

Welcome to the 4th edition of the Pebbles Guide

So what’s happened this year? Again, it’s been a rollercoaster year and we’re delighted to have grown our property portfolio by another 50%. As I write this, we have over 170 apartments and villas to offer our guests, and I know there is a waiting list of some 20 more: and what a selection!

We’re so proud of the standards we can offer you, and we’re delighted to see so many of our guests returning year after year to stay with us. Full credit has to go to our owners who work with us to provide such stylish, comfortable and well maintained properties.

To cope with our ever expanding business we had to find our third office. Our team is just getting settled in so that we can make room for more office staff at our office on rue Gioffredo. Yet we’re all still very busy so we’re currently recruiting more team members.

The BIG news as we were putting the final pages of this Guide together was the winning of ‘Entrepreneur of the Year’ on the French Riviera. This award was given by Sir Stelios (founder of Easyjet) Philanthropic Foundation in conjunction with Riviera Radio. We were absolutely delighted and proud to be recognised. We’re sure the award will enable us to take Pebbles to the next level. There is more on our special night on page 93.

We can never stress enough that Pebbles is what it is because of our hardworking, loyal and just all round amazing team. We hope you get to meet as many of them as possible. Everyone tries their best to make sure our guests are well looked after and our owners’ properties well maintained.

We know how important relaxing holidays are, and we look forward to sharing this special part of the world with you. We all love hearing about your holidays and finding out about new restaurants and special places to go so please do share your discoveries with us: by email, any of our social media pages, or just the old fashioned way of popping into our offices to see us.

Happy Holidays,

Gayle

…and the entire Pebbles’ team

Sir Stelios presents Matt and Gayle of Nice Pebbles with the winning cheque (with Paul Kavanagh of Riviera Radio)
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## The Pebbles Guide

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The Pebbles Guide is published annually for our guests and owners and distributed in leading tourism venues, Monoprix, participating bars, restaurants and retailers.

If you would like to distribute the Pebbles Guide or discuss advertising in our next issue please email guide@nicepebbles.com or visit www.nicepebbles.com

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Pebbles is recognised by leading travel guides, and is the only apartment rental company listed in Lonely Planet, Fodor’s, TimeOut, Footprint and Frommer’s.
Welcome over 15,000 guests a year into our holiday rental properties in Nice and the French Riviera. We offer guests a concierge service, welcome baskets and toiletries packages, complimentary beach towels and their own Pebbles Guide. Not forgetting to mention personal meet and greets, a complimentary luggage store, office facilities for faxing and printing, and the security of a point of contact to deal with the unexpected.

Give something back to our guests and the local community by offering a complimentary copy of our Pebbles Guide across outlets on the French Riviera including the supermarket chain Monoprix and selected tourist offices.

Need a copy? You can also pick up a copy of our Guide outside our office in Nice.

Offer our owners a complete management service including keeping their properties highly maintained and achieving a high net annual return. All under the mandatory professional license in France. Our owners can be assured that their property and any monies held are insured and safe at all times.

Help buyers and sellers with their property transaction. We have a track record with investment purchasers of where to buy and how to furnish to achieve the best rental return possible. We have a proven record with sellers to find investment or second home owner buyers, and we can often complete the transaction with all the bookings intact so both the buyer and seller have no downtime on their investment.

Pebbles is proud to...

FNAIM
**July 2012**

Music lovers flock to the Côte d’Azur in July to enjoy performances from world renowned acts. The Nice Jazz Festival takes place mid-month in the Jardins Albert Ier. Those still longing for more should head along the coast to Juan les Pins for Jazz à Juan to enjoy concerts in a beautiful setting by the sea. If you’re here for the 14th July, known as Bastille Day, head to the beach for a spectacular firework display; every town will have its own. Shopaholics will want to take advantage of the summer sales, from mid-July to mid-August, throughout France.

**August 2012**

Over the months of July and August Cannes sparkles with its Festival Pyrotechnique: a firework competition in which countries battle it out to have the best display. In Haut-de-Cagnes, the medieval Festival, la Fête Médiévale de Cagnes, celebrates its history with authentic costumes, jousting tournaments, and numerous stalls and exhibitions. The Fête de la Sainte Claire takes over St-Paul-de-Vence from the 10th–12th August. It’s celebrated annually with two days and three nights of festivities ending with a dazzling firework display. Back in Nice the Concerts du Cloître make a perfect relaxing ending to a hot summer day. Well worth the trip up to Cimiez.

**September 2012**

The Festival de la Plaisance, Cannes’ International Boat and Yacht Show, attracts yacht enthusiasts to the port of Cannes to marvel at the luxurious yachts on display. You can catch some of the most extravagant boats around, from all corners of the world, maybe even tempting you to buy a slice of the Riviera high life! In Nice too the spotlight is on the port where the annual Fête du Port takes place. Join in the festivities including food, drink, music and fireworks. For the more active among us the International Nice Triathlon also takes place this month.

**October 2012**

This month the MIPCOM is held in Cannes. It’s an annual get together for the entertainment industry to buy and sell hit TV shows to other countries. You never know who you might see outside the Palais des Festivals! Halloween isn’t widely celebrated in France though you can join in the fun with the expats at several of the bars, and some shops in the Nice Old Town offer sweets to children in costume.

**November 2012**

The Nice-Cannes Marathon takes place on the 4th of this month. Brave athletes complete a demanding (albeit scenic) 42 km race starting on the Promenade des Anglais and crossing the finish line on the Croisette in Cannes. In Monaco the Salon de la Gastronomie welcomes all foodies to watch professional chefs whip up mouth-watering dishes, as well as tasting sessions and much more.

**December 2012**

With its 300 days of sunshine a year the French Riviera may not be the obvious Christmas destination, yet there’s no shortage of festivities. Christmas markets spring up in most towns and villages on the Riviera throughout the month of
December; the perfect setting to enjoy mulled wine or freshly made crêpes smothered with Nutella. In Nice an ice rink opens in Place Masséna and Santa is on hand to welcome the kids. If you’re dreaming of a white Christmas hit the slopes at Isola 2000, Auron or Valberg. The torch lit descents on the 24th provide a film-worthy setting for a real French Christmas.

January 2013

Epiphany may mark the end of the festive season, but it’s the perfect reason to indulge in the galette des rois traditionally eaten at this time of year. The Fête du Citron runs from 22nd of the month. Menton is well known for its exceptional lemons. In 1929 a local hotelier held a lemon and flower festival in the hotel gardens. It was such a success that in 1934 the Fête du Citron was officially born.

March 2013

The Foire Internationale de Nice is an exhibition, unlike any other, held annually in the spring. You’ll find innovative furniture and home improvement ideas along with beauty products and massage. In Monaco choose between the Monaco Marathon and the less strenuous Monte Carlo Spring Arts Festival where you can enjoy music, theatre and more.

April 2013

Tennis fans shouldn’t miss the ATP Masters Series in Monte Carlo: a popular stop on the Masters tour for many of the top players in preparation for the French Open. Lucky spectators can watch Rafael Nadal or Roger Federer battle it out for the title at the Monte Carlo country club; so be sure to book your tickets in advance. Sailing fans look out for the Régates de la Baie des Anges, a weekend of sailing races in Nice’s bay, organised by local sailing clubs.

May 2013

Action-packed May is one of the busiest months of the year on the Riviera. Jet-setters and celebrities hit the coast for the 66th Cannes Film Festival which takes centre stage from the 15th-26th of the month. In Monaco, another highlight in the Riviera’s calendar, the Grand Prix, comes to town. If you’re looking for a little less glitz and glamour, the Fêtes de Mai are held every Sunday throughout May in the gardens and amphitheatre of Cimiez, Nice, featuring music, picnics and festivities.

June 2013

The town of Menton opens the doors of its beautiful subtropical gardens to the public this month, the microclimate in Menton make its gardens unique and especially popular with visitors. If you’re here on the 21st, you’ll experience the annual Fête de la Musique, an event that takes place in towns and cities all over France. In Nice you’ll see plenty of free concerts in the streets and bars, especially in the Old Town of Nice.

The Ironman competition makes its annual visit to Nice on June 23rd, attracting hoards of competitors and spectators alike. This gruelling triathlon features a 3.8km swim and 180 km bike ride, followed by a marathon, all under the blazing Niçois sun.

For further events…

Tune into Riviera Radio’s ‘What’s on’ 9.30am, 12.30pm, 5.30pm, 7.30pm
Vibrant Nice has so much going on – the beach and sparkling Mediterranean, the shops, the markets, the restaurants, the parks and the museums – there really is something for everyone! What’s more, with its abundance of transport links, it’s the ideal base for exploring other towns and villages on the Côte d’Azur.

**Things to see and do…**

**The Beach and Promenade des Anglais**
The pebbled beach is a mixture of private and public spots. For a beach holiday to remember, head to one of the private beaches. Our favourites are **Castel** or the Beau Rivage Beach Club. **The Blue Beach** further down the Promenade, is also good as a cheaper alternative. A day at the beach club will cost around €25 per person in peak season.

The public beaches are well-maintained with flushing toilets, showers and a lifeguard.

Paddle boats, water-skiing, wind-surfing and paragliding are all on offer from the beach front. The pebbly beach in Nice may not be for everyone, and those desperately seeking a sandy beach should head to Antibes, Cannes, or Juan-les-Pins.

All walks of life parade along the Promenade, and it’s great for a stroll in the early morning or the evening. For the more energetic hiring a bike or skates, or taking a jog on the Promenade, are must. Reaching the Port or going past the airport to Cagnes, and even beyond, are options for the skaters, cyclists and (very fit) joggers amongst you.

**Open Top Tourist Bus: Le Grand Bus Tour**

**Directions:** The main stop is where the Promenade des Anglais merges with Quai des Etats-Unis. Look for the Beau Rivage Beach Club.

Departing from the Promenade des Anglais, with stops at the Port, Cap de Nice and Cimiez Hill (for the Chagall and Matisse museums), the bus can be a good way to get your bearings around the city. The full route takes an hour and a half, and you can hire headphones with English commentary. At around €20 a person for a day ticket this is an expensive but a good way to pack a lot in, especially if you want to visit the two museums. A two day pass is also available for €23, and the good news is for children (4–11 years old) a one or two day pass costs just €5.

[www.nicelegrandtour.com](http://www.nicelegrandtour.com)

**The Tourist Train**

**Directions:** Next to Le Grand Bus Tour (see above).

Good if you are with small children, or for those who prefer not to walk too far. The little train cruises around the Old Town and up to the Château Hill. You can stop off at the Château for as long as you wish and take another train down when you are ready. It takes around 45 minutes for the round trip.
and costs around €8 for adults and €4 for the under 9 year olds.
www.trainstouristiquesdenice.com

MobilBoard
Directions: Head to 2 rue Halévy to start the tour or to the Tourist Office on the Promenade for more information. See page 27 for special Key Ring Offer.
Glide and ride is the modern way to take a two-hour Segway tour of the city with English commentary and photo stops. The tour costs €45 per person. There is also a shorter tour if time or budget are limited. Tours run every two hours.

Château Hill
Directions: Walk along the Promenade des Anglais towards the Port. Look for the Hotel Suisse. The steps to the Château are next door. There is also an elevator, open from 10am to 7pm, for around €1.
There is actually very little left to see of the Château itself, and it is no longer this that attracts visitors up to the top of this 92-metre high hill. The landscaped park of the Colline du Château is now more famous for the spectacular view of the sun-drenched rooftops, gleaming yachts bobbing gently at anchor and the never-ending sweep of the Promenade des Anglais. Don’t forget your camera!

Worth a look here are the Roman ruins of two cathedrals, the mosaics, the dramatic artificial waterfall, the Bellenda Tour, the Cimitière du Château and a Jewish cemetery: hailed as one of the most beautiful resting grounds in the world.

With plenty of running around space, a play area and some cafés, selling drinks, snacks and ice creams, the Château is a great spot for children. The park closes at 8pm in summer and around 7pm in winter.

St Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church
Directions: boulevard du Tzarévitch. A ten minute walk from Nice train station (off map).
Inaugurated in 1912, this ornate cathedral is considered to be one of the most beautiful outside of Russia. It was built by Tsar Nicholas II in the early 1900s for the community of wealthy Russians who resided here in winter. Not all Russians saw him as a hero however, and not long afterwards he was assassinated. It is generally open from 9am–5.30pm with a lunch break between noon and 2.30pm. Entry is around €3. There is an English information leaflet which is given out on entry.

Palais Lascaris
Directions: rue Droite Vieux Nice. Almost hidden in the winding streets of Vieux Nice, on rue Droite, is the fading beauty of the small Palais Lascaris which dates back to the 18th century. It is probably best appreciated after you have been inside. The Baroque palace, which is now a museum, houses a large collection of antiques, including a recreation of a 19th century French pharmacy. It was the residency of the Lascaris-Vintimille family and remained their home until the French Revolution. The vaulted ceilings of the room are decorated with frescoes depicting mythological themes, and the furniture and Flemish tapestries are reminiscent of a bygone era.

It will only take 20 minutes to an hour to walk around as it is small and there is not a lot of information offered about the history. We wouldn’t advise a special trip for this, but, since entry is free, it is worth just popping in as you explore the Old Town. If you are very interested in the history and antiques, guided tours are offered for around €5. These operate on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday at 3pm, but check as English tours are not guaranteed. The Palais is open from 10am–6pm every day except Tuesday and some Bank Holidays.
www.palais-lascaris-nice.org
Entertainment

Casino Ruhl & Casino Palais de la Méditerranée
Monaco might have the reputation, but not the monopoly on the playboy lifestyle. If you want a taste of the high life, without the travel and excessive prices, head to Nice's own casinos on the Promenade des Anglais. You will need a passport and smart clothes to enter. Once inside you can enjoy the cabaret, play the machines and sip cocktails until dawn. www.lucienbarriere.com and www.casinomediterranee.com

The Cinema: Films shown in English
Generally films here are only released a few weeks later than in the UK. There are two cinemas in Nice which have version originale showings: look for VO on the billboards. The Mercury (16 Place Garibaldi) is just off the Old Town, and the Rialto (4 rue Rivoli) is near the Hotel Negresco. Showings start at around 8pm. For further details of films and times go to www.cote.azur.fr/cinema.htm?ville=Nice

The Opéra de Nice
Located at 4 rue St-François-de-Paule, tickets can be difficult to come by with people paying over €100 for the best seats. To avoid disappointment, it’s best to book tickets as far in advance as possible. The box office is open 10am–6pm every day except Sun. For details of upcoming performances see www.opera-nice.org

The Acropolis Exhibition Centre
As well as hosting a wide variety of shows and concerts there are also exhibitions and trade shows that may be of interest. You can find out more on their website www.nice-acropolis.com or at the information desk at 1 Esplanade du Président Kennedy.

The Théâtre National de Nice
The esteemed Théâtre de Nice has a well-deserved reputation. The information desk is located opposite the Musée d’Art Moderne et d’Art Contemporain, near Place Garibaldi, and is open each afternoon except Sunday and Monday until 7pm. Ticket prices vary, and you can expect to pay anything from €10 to €50 for a ticket. To see all listings go to www.tnn.fr

Palais Nikaïa
This stadium, and its adjoining park on the Route de Grenoble (off map), hosts some big name acts including Coldplay, Elton John, Lady Gaga and Madonna. Tickets for some acts can be easier to come by than in the acts’ home country. A concert is a great excuse for another trip to Nice.

If you want to see what’s on, or to buy tickets, go to FNAC or Virgin on Jean Médecin high street. To see the forthcoming line-up go to www.nikaia.fr
Getting Around

Buses
Thanks to SYMITAM, there is now one ticket for all the local buses and trams throughout the region. Tickets cost just €1 for a single ride of any distance (though there are some exceptions like the airport shuttle). Validate your tickets in the yellow ticket machines after boarding.

Nice, St-Laurent-du-Var, Cagnes-sur-Mer, Villefranche-sur-Mer and St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat routes are managed by Ligne d’Azur. The routes and comprehensive information can be found at www.lignedazur.com

Cannes and Mandelieu-la-Napoule are managed by Bus Azur. The routes and further information can be found on their website (in French only) www.busazur.com

Antibes, Juan-les-Pins, Vallauris, Golfe Juan, Biot and St-Paul-de-Vence are all served by Envibus. The routes and further information can be found at www.envibus.com

RCA (Rapides Cote d’Azur) covers Grasse through to Menton with their express limited stop routes between towns, mainly with Nice as the central core. The routes and comprehensive information can be found on their website (in French only) www.rca.tm.fr

The French Riviera bus service is run by TAM. For their timetables (in French only) go to www.cg06.fr/fr/servir-les-habitants/deplacements/transport-collectifs/lignes-et-horaires/lignes-et-horaires/

You buy your €1 tickets for any one-way trip on the bus and validate it in the yellow machines on board.

Popular routes are: 100 Nice–Monaco, 110 Nice–Menton, 200 Nice–Cannes and 600 Nice–Grasse

The €1 ticket is a great deal, but, be warned, the buses are often busy and the train is generally much faster.

Trains
The regional trains are controlled by TER and information about the services can be found at www.ter-sncf.com. The national service is run by SNCF and information can be found at www.sncf.fr

For the fast, efficient TGV service, that has links around France and to most of Europe, go to www.tgv.fr

Cycling
Guests who are based in Nice and want to take advantage of the free and cheap bikes on offer should head to the one-time automated telephone registration points armed with a credit card and mobile phone. You use your phone to dial the number given on the machines and then enter your card details to authorise Vélo Bleu to debit your account for use of the bike and also 150 euros should you fail to return it. Once registered, you can use the bikes for up to half an hour for free, then €1 per day, €5 per week, or €10 per month. The Nice map on page 23 shows the central bike stands, you can get started from any of these stands and then collect and drop off the bikes as you wish. www.velobleu.org

Trams
At just €1 a journey, the tram is a welcome addition to the city of Nice. You should buy your ticket before travelling and validate it in the yellow machines once you get on. Currently there is only one line which runs from Las Planas to Pont Michel. Relevant stops with map references:

From Las Planas
Libération (for the market)
Gare Thiers (train station) 
Jean Médecin (high street shopping) 
Masséna (Place Massena) 
Opéra Vieille Ville (Old Town) 
Cathédrale Vieille Ville (Old Town) 
Garibaldi (Place Garibaldi)
Acropolis (Exhibition Centre) – off map
Palais des Expositions (Exhibition Centre) – off map
To Pont Michel
tramway.nice.fr
Nice enjoys a lively bar and club scene for all ages, and most of the nightlife centres around the Cours Saleya and the Old Town. Many bars will offer happy hours until 9pm, and several have live music of varying quality. There are, of course, many other bars and nightclubs around town too.

Everyone wants to soak up the atmosphere of the Cours Saleya and enjoy the pavement terraces outside. Two of our favourites are Blast American Bar and Restaurant (8 Place Charles Félix) and Akathor (32 Cours Saleya). Blast is the more upmarket of the two with an open-air cocktail bar, great terrace with lounge furniture, fresh modern décor and well-maintained wash rooms, not forgetting to mention their extensive Tex-Mex style food and their legendary pancakes. Akathor is more spit and sawdust, but the outside terrace somehow has us migrating there in the height of summer. Both bars have live music (sometimes good, sometimes not), but both are always atmospheric.

If you head away from the Cours Saleya you will find the Snug and Cellar Irish Bar (22 rue Droite) on the corner of rue Droite and rue Rossetti. Our guests often tell us that they have spent many a night there during their stay with us. The friendly and efficient staff, a generous happy hour from 8pm–10pm, and the gastro-pub style food on offer are probably the main reasons the Snug is the favourite haunt of most of our team and many of our owners and regular guests.

While the Snug remains our favourite, there are several other good Irish bars in Nice. Ma Nolan’s (2 rue St-François-de-Paule and 5 Quai des Deux Emmanuels) is possibly the slickest of them all and is the place to go for live sporting events and a weekly pub quiz, as well as to enjoy their outdoor terraces. We also like the very friendly Paddy’s Irish Pub (40 rue Droite).
If you are looking for jazz with class, head to Shapko Bar (5 rue Rossetti), Cave Wilson (16 rue Gubernatis), or The Wine Room (1 Descente du Marché). We are also fans of the champagne bar, L’Effervescence (10 rue de la Loge), tucked away behind Place Centrale in the Old Town.

Finally, for the party animals amongst you who fancy a wild night out dancing on tables (yes, really), the place to be is Wayne’s (13 rue de la Préfecture). It’s an institution in Nice and some of our younger guests won’t go anywhere else on a Friday and Saturday night. Another trendy hotspot for a more refined night out is Gossip Bar (7 rue Bonaparte). With an in-house DJ Wednesday to Saturday, this is the perfect place to unwind and catch up on all the gossip!

There are also several wine bars that serve good complimentary food alongside their tipples. Customers can also just browse and buy their wines by the bottle or case. The most well-known ones, offering exceptional bottles at reasonable prices, are La Part des Anges (17 rue Gubernatis) and Vinivore (32 avenue de la République). We’ve recently discovered the newly-opened Cave 35 (35 rue de la Buffa) which has a great mixed crowd and friendly service, and our local favourite is Palao Bistro (14 rue Defly) on the corner of rue Giofreddo and rue Defly. For a truly Niçois experience head to the Cave de la Tour (3 rue de la Tour); the owner is a real character and their lunchtime dish of the day is always a great example of hearty Niçois cuisine.

For hazy summer nights it is hard to beat the beach bars, such as the Beau Rivage Beach Club or the Hi Beach, where you can sip wine or cocktails and listen to the lapping of the waves. Chilled rosé is a must in Nice, particularly in the summer. If you are feeling plush, sipping cocktails at the top floor bar of Le Meridian Hotel (1 Promenade des Anglais) or the Grand Hotel Aston (12 avenue Félix Faure) can be a real holiday treat.
The good news is that the majority of Nice’s museums are free, and even those that you have to pay for are free on the first Sunday of the month! Some museums are closed on Mondays, others on Tuesdays. Usual opening hours are from 10am–6pm in the summer and from 10am–5pm in the winter. We would recommend visiting one, where they will provide information about all the others, and then planning your itinerary from there. Art history guides can also enhance your enjoyment of the museums.

The Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art (MAMAC)
Promenade des Arts. ☏ 04.97.13.42.01
www.mamac-nice.org

Directions: Head to Place Garibaldi and you can’t miss it: it’s behind Monoprix.
This hosts classics from the 1960s and 1970s. Works by Andy Warhol, Yves Klein, Niki de Saint Phalle, Alexander Calder and Jean-Pierre Reynaud are all featured. One room is devoted entirely to Klein and his famous shade of blue. For a great view follow the glass and steel bridges, which link the four marble towers, all the way up to the roof-top garden and terrace.

Open 10am–6pm daily except Monday. Closed some Bank Holidays. Entry is free. A guided English tour is by appointment only and at an extra fee, but we don’t think you’ll need one.

The Matisse Museum
164 avenue des Arènes de Cimiez (off map).
☎ 04.93.81.08.08
www.musee-matisse-nice.org

Directions: Head up the hill through Cimiez. Unless you are an avid walker, we recommend taking bus number 15, 17 or 22 from rue Giofreddo, just off Place Masséna. It is about a 15 minute journey, and the stop to get off at is Arènes-Matisse. For those with a car there is parking, just behind the museum, in front of the monastery.
The museum boasts a huge collection of engravings, drawings and cut-outs spanning Matisse’s entire career, but concentrating on the period, from 1917 to 1954, when he settled in Nice. The setting of the museum is impressive: in a recently renovated Genoese villa in the heart of an olive grove.

Open 10am–6pm daily except Tuesday. Closed some Bank Holidays. Entry is free.

Tip: The park surrounding the museum is a pleasant and popular spot often used by locals for picnics.

The National Bible Museum of Marc Chagall
avenue du Doctor Ménard (off map).
☎ 04.93.53.87.20.
www.musee-chagall.fr

Directions: Head up the hill through Cimiez. For those who prefer not to walk too far, take buses 15 or 22 from rue Giofreddo, just off Place Masséna. It is about a ten minute journey, and the stop to get off at is Musée Chagall.
This houses the work of the Russian-born graphic artist. It is one of the 33 national heritage museums in France. After the Second World War Chagall settled in Vence and, between 1954 and 1967,
 painted 17 large religious-themed murals, all of which are on display here with several other sculptures, sketches and mosaics. The Chagall museum is well worth a visit and is best explored with a book on his work or a little museum guide.

Open 10am–6pm (May to Oct) and 10am–5pm (Nov to Apr). Closed Tues. and some Bank Holidays. Entry fee varies from €7.50 to €10 depending on what’s on.

The Museum of Archaeology
160 avenue des Arènes-de-Cimiez (off map).
☎ 04.93.81.59.57
www.musee-archeologique-nice.org

Directions: Head up the hill through Cimiez. Unless you are an avid walker, we recommend taking bus number 15, 17 or 22 from rue Giofreddo, just off Place Masséna. It is about a 15 minute journey, and the stop to get off at is Arènes-Matisse. For those with a car there is parking, just behind the museum, in front of the monastery.

This museum displays all the finds and details of Nice’s history up to the middle ages. The public baths and the amphitheatre can both be visited here. This is worth a stop off if you are visiting the Matisse museum, but we do not think it is worth a special trip. There is very little information in English so your French knowledge of archaeological finds will need to be quite good.

Open 10am–6pm daily except Tuesday. Closed some Bank Holidays. Entry is free.

Masséna Museum
65 rue de France. [B7]
☎ 04.97.43.34.45

Directions: Walk along the Promenade up to the Hotel Negresco. The address is misleading, rue de France is one street behind the Promenade, but you can also use the entrance on the Promenade which is much easier to find.

Set in a 19th century Italian-influenced villa, here you can see exhibits, sculptures and religious works, as well as ancient artwork by Niçois primitives.

Open 10am–6pm every day except Tuesday. Closed some Bank Holidays. Entry is free.

The Fine Arts Museum (Musée de Beaux Arts)
33 avenue des Baumettes (off map).
☎ 04.92.15.28.28
www.musee-beaux-arts-nice.org

Directions: West of Nice. Follow the Promenade des Anglais towards the airport. Head inland when you reach Hotel Elysée Palace. Alternatively take bus 38 from rue Alberti.

In a beautiful villa, with sumptuous grounds, there are over 6,000 works from the 17th to 20th centuries: including Flemish paintings of the 17th century, Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and some works by Picasso, Monet and Jules Cheret. The collections stem from those sent by Napoleon III after Nice joined France in 1860.

Open 10am–6pm daily except Monday. Closed some Bank Holidays. Entry is free.
Théâtre de la Photographie et de l’Image
27 boulevard Dubouchage.  
☎ 04.97.13.42.20
www.tpi-nice.org

**Directions:** Head to avenue Jean Médicin, just off Place Masséna, and then walk north until you reach boulevard Dubouchage.  
In this restored theatre house you can find an interesting display of modern photography and imagery.

*Open 10am–6pm. Closed on Monday and some Bank Holidays. Entry is free.*

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Palaeontology Museum
25 boulevard Carnot.  
☎ 04.93.55.59.93
www.musee-terra-amata.org

**Directions:** Walk to the far side of the Port and then take boulevard Stalingrad followed by boulevard Carnot (off map).  
This small museum is a prehistoric site, which was discovered in 1966, and dates back some 400,000 years. Protected in part by the sea, it has been preserved and can now teach us about prehistoric travelling hunters. This will mainly interest those who have a passion for archaeological finds and also a good grasp of French: otherwise the stone age relics are a little baffling.

*Open 10am–6pm. Closed Monday and some Bank Holidays. Entry is free.*

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Museum of Asian Arts
405 Promenade des Anglais (off map).  
☎ 04.92.29.37.00
www.arts-asiatiques.com

**Directions:** Walk (or cycle) along the Promenade almost to the airport. You will see Parc Phoenix on the other side of the road: the museum is in here. Alternatively, you can take bus number 59 or 70 from the stop on the corner of Jean Médicin and rue de l’Hôtel des Postes. The stop to get off at is Arénas.  
This museum is quite a surprise, and the verdant, peaceful setting is an added bonus. Set on a lake in Parc Phoenix, this small museum houses beautiful pieces of art from Japan, China and Cambodia. The pieces on display are a mix of contemporary and traditional works.

*Open 10am–6pm (May to mid-Oct), 10am–5pm (mid-Oct–Apr). Closed Tuesday and some Bank Holidays. Entry is free, but you will have to pay €10 to experience a tea ceremony or other performances.*

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Museum of Natural History
60 boulevard Risso.  
☎ 04.97.13.46.80
www.mhnnice.org

**Directions:** From Place Masséna, walk down avenue Félix Faure.  
This is the oldest museum in Nice and it is small, but very family friendly. It was set up to raise awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. You can see display cabinets of birds, fungi, vertebrates and invertebrates as well as some temporary exhibits. It’s not the most impressive of museums, but can hold the interest of young children, especially on a rainy day. And best of all it’s free!

*Open 10am–6pm every day except Monday. Closed some Bank Holidays. Entry is free.*
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Nice is a great place to shop all year round and is normally thought of when seeking only high-priced designer clothes, but the large number of boutiques and wide range of choice promises something for everyone regardless of their style or budget.

The annual sales in July and January are a great time to pick up a bargain. Sales are a big event in Nice and some real deals can be found, especially in the expensive shops. The sales last for around six weeks, and the official dates are set by the French government. Look for the ‘soldes’ signs on shop windows.

The central hub of the shopping district centres on avenue Jean Médecin. Here you can find the usual high street names of Zara, H&M, Morgan, Etam, Virgin and FNAC along with the very popular perfume and make up chain, Sephora. Midway along Jean Médecin is the Étoile Shopping Mall where you can buy sportswear, fashion, homeware, and jewellery. Dads will find the ever popular Tie Rack, Mums stunning lingerie from Aubade, and for teenage girls Claire’s accessories.

Other shops you should discover here are Maison du Monde: a favourite for home deco, Nature & Decouvertes: great unusual gifts, and BCBG Max Azria: stunning clothes to take home and wow your friends with.

Turning off Jean Médecin onto rue Masséna will bring you even more high street chains such as Darjeeling, Blanc Bleu, Footlocker and MAC, all surrounded by lots of other reasonably priced boutiques and shoe shops. The t-shirt shop, Petit Bateau, is well worth a look and women will love Arrato, a little further down, for its low-cost fashion jewellery. Take a ticket if you want to purchase anything, and then wait to be served. This bustling shopping area also has many cafés and restaurants to stop at should you fancy a bite to eat and do a spot of people watching.

Shopping
At the top of Place Masséna is a four-storey branch of Galeries Lafayette: the French equivalent of Selfridges and Harvey Nichols. If you have an appetite for designer fashion then head to rue de la Liberté, just off Place Magenta. Here you can easily spend a whole day in the twenty or so upmarket chains such as Scapa, Guess, G-Star and Tara Jarmon. The well-regarded French chain Arche is also found here which sells good quality boots and shoes, tailored towards walking not toppling.

For the very best, such as Armani, Façonnable and Chanel, head for rue Paradis and avenue de Suède, and avenue de Verdun (running parallel to rue de la Liberté) for other famous designers like Hermes, Longchamp and Escada. Designer jewellery, Cartier, Mont Blanc, Bijoux Burma, Ferret and Barichella, are all here as well.

For designer labels at bargain prices search out a depot de vente: a shop that specialises in second-hand clothes in excellent condition. Head for Andrea T on rue Blacas and Renaissance Vidini on rue Congres. Also watch out for the ladies vintage clothes shop, Caprice on rue Droite, Old Town, the mens retro clothes and home décor shop, Le Chéri de Caprice on rue Martin Seytour as well as new arrivals opening soon at the top of rue Cassini just off Place Garibaldi.

If you’re after individualism and gifts, then the winding streets of the Old Town is where to obtain modern art, classic paintings, period furnishings, garments of every cloth from leather to lace, hats, shoes, herbs, spices, olive oil and toiletries. You can pick up some of the finest fresh produce and fresh flowers on the Cours Saleya every morning except Monday. Monday gives way to a large antiques market that lasts all day until about 5:30pm. From June to September you can spend the summer evenings strolling around the Cours Saleya when the local food and flower market is replaced by stalls selling jewellery, artwork, bags and local crafts which can be purchased until around midnight.

If you fancy sampling the local fare the fish market at the end of these streets, at Place St-François, offers fish aplenty every day except Monday.

Late November sees the arrival of the Christmas market (Le Marché de Noël) which is set up on Place Massena. Adults can browse the numerous wooden chalets that act as the temporary shop fronts selling traditional gifts for all the family, while the children enjoy the winter wonderlands, ice skating, giant ferris wheel, trampolines and fun houses. You may even be tempted to grab a glass of freshly made mulled wine while your little ones soak up the seasonal atmosphere, and who could blame you!
So many women love to shop, but it’s a skill or passion I have never ever acquired. I hate it – and it shows! Added to my decade long dispassion about shopping, my recent child-bearing years have not helped. End result: I avoid shops and mirrors as often as I can.

So, in a thinly veiled attempt to torture the boss, I was nominated as the ideal candidate to take up the invitation of **Galeries Lafayette’s personal shopping experience**. I went with some trepidation (and so did Matt when he caught me covertly putting the credit cards in my purse).

Met by Veronique (French speaking) and Aurore (English speaking), it was immediately obvious they knew what they were doing. After being asked if I was looking for anything in particular (other than a new body, I wasn’t), and my budget (mid-range) I was shepherded around the store, which made me instantly less out of my comfort zone. They swished, showcased and carried garments (all that I would have never found by myself) back to my personal changing room.

I appreciated their blunt honesty when a few times we all just looked in the mirror and said – NO! It was refreshing that they could just pop off to get another size. I also enjoyed feeling a little bit special for an hour.

I tried on ten items and learnt in the process that some colours I never go for suit me very well. I learnt about length, sizes, accessories and generally that shopping can actually be fun. I left with three items that I love, a desire to book another session, and even better, a smile at the cash desk when I realised I could use my Pebbles voucher for 10% off.

**by Gayle Roberts**

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**Personal Shopping**

Call the general line: ☎️ **04.92.17.36.36** to make an appointment (they will speak English).

Ask for the **Personal Shopping Service**. They will make an appointment for you. You meet them on the second floor. The service is free of charge and designed to help us if we are busy or unsure of what to buy to keep up to date with current trends.

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Want to give Galeries Lafayette’s Personal Shopping Service a try?
“Since 1976, L’OCCITANE, a brand committed to natural beauty care, has been devoted to your well-being through natural, authentic, effective and irresistible skincare products and fragrances inspired by the traditions and skills of Provence.”

Olivier Baussan, founder of L’OCCITANE.

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* Offer valid in the stores listed below. One per person, as long as stocks last.

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Tel: 04.93.80.43.22 • www.snugandcellar.com
Rue de la Liberté is one of the main shopping streets in the heart of Nice’s Carré d’Or, or Golden Square. The area is highly sought after, and it’s easy to see why.

An abundance of shops and restaurants, as well as easy access to all Nice’s attractions, makes it popular with everyone from serious shoppers to laid back tourists.

A stroll down this road will take you past major clothing chains such as Guess, Ikks and Jacadi: French style for the little ones. If you’re looking for plush cushions or curtains Madura is a good place to start, but you’ll probably also want to pop your head into Bath Bazar and Olivier Desforges.

When you reach the point where you need a well-earned break, take a seat and enjoy a drink at Liberté, the large café that overlooks Place Magenta, a favourite aperitif spot for the locals, with excellent people watching guaranteed.

**Palais des Thés**
Join the connoisseurs at the Palais des Thés where you can enjoy a refreshing cup of tea and be guided around the well stocked shelves by the knowledgeable staff.

The shop stocks a large variety of black, green and white teas (among others) from China, India, Japan and more, all carefully selected for their flavour or specific health benefits. Organic? Decaffeinated? There’s a tea for every taste here.

Want to learn more? In Paris you can even attend their Ecole de Thé where a selection of courses are on offer!

3 rue de la Liberté  
☎ 04.93.81.56.16  
Open Mon–Sat: 10am–7pm

**Pole Sud**
A great place for girly gifts, pastel coloured Pole Sud offers a range of handmade jewellery and accessories. Treat yourself, or a loved one, to one of the pretty offerings, or pick up a gift for someone at home. A range of designs is available including the original ‘No Comment’ line, jewellery engraved with quirky messages. Pole Sud also stocks watches, bags and fragrances.

22 rue de la Liberté  
☎ 04 93 82 16 62  
Open Tues–Sat: 10am–1pm & 2pm–7pm

**Kitchen Bazaar**
A fun place to browse, especially for those who like to cook (or to eat!). Kitchen gadgets and useful utensils are what you’ll find here, perfect for those who want to cook up a storm using the best of the regions fresh produce found at local markets. Delve deeper into the store to find everything from whisks, Tupperware and colourful cutlery, as well as cooking books (if your French is up to it) advising on everything from classic patisserie making to useful recipes for soups and casseroles. Bon appétit!

20 rue de la Liberté  
☎ 04.93.82.01.02  
Open Mon–Sat: 10am–1pm, 2pm–7pm
Starting at the Cours Saleya and running all the way down to the Jardins Albert Ier, it would be unthinkable for a visitor to Nice to miss rue Saint François de Paule.

Start your journey with a coffee at the Pain Quotidien café on the corner of the Cours Saleya, and take your time enjoying the views of the flower market just across the street.

One landmark you’re unlikely to miss on your stroll down this famous street is Nice’s beautiful Opera, a listed historic building that oozes Belle Époque elegance. Further down you’ll pass the legendary La Petite Maison: a popular haunt for celebrities and politicians alike. The park opposite is currently undergoing works to build an underground car park; it’s not currently at its prettiest, but after a facelift, it’ll be back to its scenic self.

**Maison Auer**

Founded in 1820 by Henri Auer, Maison Auer has prospered as it passed through five generations, right up to the current owner Thierry Auer. This family of confectioners is famous for creating sweet sensations in their Vieux Nice boutique.

The shop itself is worthy of one of your holiday snaps, with its Florentine-inspired chandeliers and opulent displays. Those with a sweet tooth will be spoilt for choice, from handmade chocolates to local specialities such as Provencal calissons (an almond based confection from the region). At the heart of the business are the famous glacé fruits which have been produced by the family ever since Henri Auer fell in love with the abundant Mediterranean fruits he discovered on the Côte d’Azur. So don’t miss out on tasting a piece of history!

7 rue St François de Paule
☎ 04.93.85.77.98
[www.maison-auer.com](http://www.maison-auer.com)
Open Tues–Sat: 9am–1.30pm, 2.30pm–6pm

**Huiles Alziari**

While you may have spotted the famous Alziari olive oil on restaurant tables their shop offers many more local delicacies which make perfect souvenirs to take home.

As well as their oil, stock up on olive oil based products including soaps and beauty products. You can also pick up a variety of olives flavoured with different herbs and spices and other local produce such as tapenade, pistou and homemade preserves.

The shop additionally offers a nice selection of gift packs such as the ‘Cours Saleya’ featuring speciality olive oil, tapenade and anchovy spread.

If you’re longing for more, when you’re back at home, they also have a website which you can order from, though you really shouldn’t miss out on a visit to their rustic premises in the Old Town.

14 rue St François de Paule
Mon–Sat: 8.30am–12.30pm, 2.15pm–7pm

**Côté Vin**

This is my local cave à vin. I just love the cosy, traditional feel and the warm welcome each time I go.

It goes without saying that the owner keeps his collection well stocked with French wines, featuring some great local offerings too. Many smaller, lesser known wines and champagnes make their way onto the shelves here and can be well worth trying on the owner’s recommendation. You’ll also find a selection of beers and spirits too.

Pick up a chilled bottle of rosé to enjoy on your balcony or watching the sunset across the coast – this is the life!

14 rue St François de Paule
☎ 04.93.84.63.60
Open 7 days a week 9.30am–1pm, 2pm–8pm.
(opens 10am Sunday)

Many of our guests will have met Keely already. If you have found your own ruby while staying with us Keely would love to hear from you. Please contact her at [keely@nicepebbles.com](mailto:keely@nicepebbles.com)
There are places our guests and our team visit quite a lot that are happy to give our guests discounts and special offers. From tourist attractions to individual shops, Pebbles has an extensive network of local spots which welcome our guests with open arms.

Leisure

You shouldn’t be stuck for things to do in Nice. If all day sunbathing isn’t for you why not enjoy some of these offers from local businesses? Try rollerblading along the Promenade, renting a car to explore further afield, or relax with a cocktail on a private beach. Welcome to the high life!

Roller Station

49 Quai des Etas Unis

Nice is full of sports enthusiasts, so why not join them? The Promenade is ideal for cycling and rollerblading, and Nice’s mild climate makes it the perfect place for doing outdoor sports year round.

At Roller Station you can hire rollerblades, bikes and skateboards for adults and children, as well as scooters for kids, at very reasonable prices.

Cyclopolitain

To reserve call 04.93.81.76.15

www.nice.cyclopolitain.com

A different way to see the sights of Nice! Hop in for your own personal bike tour of the city. You can spend thirty minutes or a full hour enjoying the view from the back seat of one of Cyclopolitain’s bicycle taxis. Pick one up in Place Masséna or from other local points. Reservations can be made by phone or online.

Aside from local tours, Cyclopolitain also offers a taxi-style service should you want a lift home at any time during your stay.

Hi Beach

47 Promenade des Anglais.

To reserve call 04.97.17.00.83

www.hi-beach.net/fr

Hi Beach is the perfect place to relax and unwind while overlooking the deep blue Mediterranean. You can also enjoy massage, personal training or yoga on the beach. This is our favourite private beach because they serve great food accompanied by fresh-from-the-market salads. There is also a cocktail bar with cocktails that are great to sip at the end of a long day sunbathing.

Hi Beach is fun for all the family with a kiddie’s activity area too.

Alpha B Language School

2 rue d’Angleterre

www.alpha-b.fr

There’s nothing like learning a language from natives while being immerged in the culture and language you’re trying to get a grip on. Alpha B is a local language school offering French courses for foreigners. There are several options to choose from: intensive courses, business French classes or more relaxed family classes. The school is family run and is a great place to learn French.

Special Offers

Key Ring Discounts & Offers

FREE drink with any rental

FREE Hi cocktail with food

Special rate of €20 for two for a 30 min. tour or £35 for two for one hour

No enrolment fee
Elite Rent-a-Car
To reserve call ☏ 04.93.82.12.12
www.asdlocation.com

While public transport links are very good in the region, nothing can beat exploring the French Riviera in the comfort of a car. A car is also essential for visiting those hard-to-reach villages and to avoid the constraints of transport timetables.

Elite is our preferred car rental agency because of their professionalism and dedication to customer service. Offering a range of cars for daily or long-term rental, they’ll be happy to help you find the right car for your stay.

Mobilboard
2 rue Halévy
www.mobilboard.com

A great way to see a lot of Nice in a short space of time. This company specialise in Segway tours which offer a unique way to sightsee. Tours can last from 30 minutes to over two hours and they even run trips that go round the beautiful Cap de Nice: all the way to Villefranche.

Shopping

Jeff de Bruges
32 rue de l’Hôtel-des-Postes & 22 avenue de la République
Enjoy gourmet chocolates from one of the most respected chains in France. The two outlets are run by the very friendly Marc and Chantal who speak English and can help you pick and mix their favourites from their mouth-watering selection.

La Part des Anges
17 rue Gubernatis
Taste and take home your favourite bottle or case from this well-stocked wine cellar. Cases come in bottles of three, six, nine or twelve, and the staff can even organise for them to be sent back home for you (shipping costs apply), so you don’t need to worry about lugging them back in your suitcase!

L’Occitane
8 rue Masséna
L’Occitane offers a whole range of skin care products for men and women, many of which are inspired by local ingredients such as lavender and verbena.

To give our guests a taster of these high quality products, each of the Pebbles apartments is supplied with L’Occitane toiletries.

Please show your copy of the Guide or your key ring to benefit from any of the above offers from some of our favourite local businesses.
Hi Beach is a private oasis on the Promenade des Anglais where you can relax and unwind overlooking the deep blue Mediterranean. Uniquely designed to provide as little or as much privacy as you require, we offer a wide range of resort amenities and services plus contemporary beach cuisine. 

Get some breathing space.

Hi Beach is the perfect place to say “time out” in comfort and focus on you and relax in a peaceful place.

Hi Body - Enjoy yoga, personal training, and massage on the beach.

Hi Relax - Rejuvenate with a good book or your iPod, or simply rest in our quiet and peaceful sanctuaries designed for calmness.

Unwind with family and friends.

Snack on the beach with the pub-inspired Hi Burger and fresh-from-today's-market salads. Enjoy a cocktail or beverage at the Bar de la Plage and our DJ on weekend evenings.

Hi Play - An area just for families and activities for children.

Hi Beach Events - Let us host your wedding, birthday, or business celebration.

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ON FAIT QUOI POUR VOUS AUJOURD’HUI? MONOPRIX.fr

* Vous allez adorer. **Côte d’Azur.

There have been substantial improvements to the City Centre of Nice over recent years. Keely caught up with the man responsible and asked about what changes residents and visitors can expect to see in the months and years ahead. Please put your hands together for our Mayor of Nice, Christian Estrosi.

Keely: We’ve heard a lot about the renovation works going on in the city. Can you explain a little about the advantages that projects such as ‘La Coulée Verte’ will offer to locals and visitors to Nice?

M. Estrosi: Ever since I was elected Mayor I’ve tried to give a new lease of life to Nice through the renovation of its city centre.

This has become a reality through various projects including: the pedestrianisation of avenue Jean Medecin, the transformation of the Gare du Sud and the future tramline running from the east to the west of Nice (which will link the airport to the port in less than 30 minutes).

The Coulée Verte (the park that is planned to stretch from Place Garibaldi up to Massena) is an integral part of the city’s facelift. We are creating an urban park area spanning twelve hectares right in the heart of the city. We worked with famous landscape architects Péna & Pena to conceive this area of tranquility linking the new town to the baroque buildings of the Old Town.

I want to redesign the landscape and open up new perspectives of the city. The Coulée Verte will have its own unique character thanks to the choice of materials, plants and
the mirrored effect created by the fountain. Another plus is that it is also allowing us to remove buildings, such as the bus station and the multi-storey car park, which disrupted the urban landscape of the area.

This is a project particularly close to my heart and, like all locals and visitors to Nice, I can’t wait to see the finished product: a magnificent space in the heart of the city to showcase our exceptional architectural heritage.

_Keely:_ You must be proud of the ‘Autobleu’ electric car system. Was it important for you to be the first community to have this sort of system in place? Do you have any other similarly innovative and sustainable projects in mind for the town?

_M. Estrosi:_ In today’s world it is essential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, I decided to introduce innovative methods of transport, which are both sustainable and environmentally friendly, thus allowing each person to change the way they get from one place to another.

As we see it, the future lies in electric or hybrid vehicles. This combines several major issues: strengthening the competitiveness of our businesses in the automobile sector, reducing dependence on methods of transport which run on fossil fuels, and fighting against global warming by reducing greenhouse gases. All of these issues Nice has understood, and so we are in favour of increasing the number of electric cars in the area.

The launch of ‘Autobleu’, the car sharing system using 100% electric cars, is one of the things I am most proud of. Since April 2011 Nice has become one of the pioneering towns in electric transport, with 210 electric vehicles available for car sharing from 70 drop off and pick up points. With over 2195 subscribers and on average 55 reservations per day, the system has become a huge success.

As well as offering a new way of getting around, each Autobleu point has two free parking spaces for those who have their own electric car: providing a place in town where they can recharge the vehicle.

For the future, we are working towards a wider scheme which will see Nice become the Green Metropolis of the Mediterranean with an extended tram network and a real sense of coherence between the various methods of transport on offer (planes, trains, trams, buses, cars, bikes and footpaths).

We are also working on a project, called Agenda 21, which will soon be introduced to local residents. This focuses on the realisation of an Eco-Valley. The aim is to set up a Laboratory for Sustainable Development and also to develop, and get more residents involved in, recycling. Essentially, we are looking to change the mentality and habits of the local population and orientate them towards a more ecological way of living. This willingness is the duty of any responsible community!

_Keely:_ How would you spend your ideal day in Nice? What would you recommend to visitors to the area?

_M. Estrosi:_ After an early morning jog or walk on the Promenade des Anglais, I’d recommend a stroll around the colourful flower market on the Cours Saleya. Then I’d suggest a wander around the streets of the Vieux Nice, where I spot a charming new detail each time I visit, surely proof of the rich history of our city.

Next, I’d definitely recommend a coffee break on a terrace on one of our beautiful squares, Place Rossetti or perhaps Place Garibaldi: recently reacquainted with its former charm, it boasts uniquely painted façades.

Modern art enthusiasts won’t want to miss the Modern Art Museum (MAMAC) where you can enjoy top quality temporary exhibitions as well as a good selection of permanent collections.
When lunch time comes around I’d recommend you go up to Cimiez for a picnic in the gardens surrounded by masses of olive trees. If you’re in the mood for some history, the archaeological site Nice Cemenelum is just minutes away and will reveal the ancient history of the city through its ruins.

Within the park, you’re sure to see the pink, Niçoise building that is the Matisse museum. Henri Matisse lived and worked in this neighbourhood and the city luckily inherited some of his paintings.

A trip to the Monastery in Cimiez could be next, where you can enjoy a panoramic view of Nice and the Mediterranean.

To end the day come back down into the centre to browse the antiques quarter near the Port. Have a drink, snack on some socca and enjoy the sight of the fishermen returning home and the sun setting…

Keely: In your opinion, what are the advantages of living in Nice or having a second home here?

M. Estrosi: Being ideally situated on the Mediterranean coast, between both the sea and the mountains, Nice enjoys an exceptional climate. Living or owning a piece of the first Metropolis in France offers certain advantages. Nice offers all the assets and charms of an innovative city that respects its environment.

I intend to give this region all the means necessary for its expansion with ambitious projects for transport, renovation, sustainable development and economic growth.

We are concentrating on a project to develop an Eco Valley in the Plaine du Var; a place for business, technology and the new Nice Stadium: the first eco stadium in Europe.

I also have a strong desire to improve the quality of daily life for the Niçois people all over the city and suburbs by improving rail and road links and public transport.

This all contributes to the rejuvenation of the different neighbourhoods of Nice and will also increase the value of the properties in these areas.

It has always been my aim to run a city where people can live a better quality of life together.
Keely: You’re known to participate in lots of sporting events in Nice. Are you planning on entering any competitions this year?

M. Estrosi: I do compete regularly in sporting events. One of my favourite sports is running. I run on the Promenade des Anglais almost every morning before starting my working day as Mayor of Nice and President of Nice Cote d’Azur (NCA).

If my schedule allows, I always try to sign up to the first sporting event of the year: the 10 km Prom Classic (a run the length of Promenade and back). In April it’s a real pleasure for me to take part in the Ronde des collines niçoises: a series of hills making an 18.2 km course through our local vineyards (Château de Crémat, Clos Saint-Vincent, les Séoules, propriété Gilli, Coteaux de Bellet, chemin de Saquier et domaine de Toasc, to mention a few).

In April I took part in the semi-marathon’s crowning event, the 21.1 km: a flat course of intense running.

Finally, on the 29th November, I’ll be proud to be once again signed up to compete in the challenge that is the Alps-Maritimes Nice-Cannes Marathon. It will be a special moment for me, and for the other 10,000 participants in the marathon, following the coast along to Cannes, passing some of the Riviera’s most beautiful tourist spots on the way: Saint Laurent du Var, Cagnes sur Mer, Antibes-Juan-les-Pins and of course Cannes and its Croisette.

Another of my passions is cycling and I also take part in several cycling competitions over the year.

I have also set myself a challenge: to reach the top of one famous peak each summer. I’ve previously done Mont Cervin and Mont Blanc and last August I climbed Mont Viso one of the highest points in the southern Alps.

Free Community Wi-Fi

In July 2012 Christian Estrosi also launched Community Wi-Fi: free outdoor Wi-Fi hotspots for mobile phones, laptops and iPads.

You simply take your Wi-Fi device, search for the Orange network and connect. During the hours between 8am and 10pm, each user can be connected for up to 30 minutes, but there is no limit to how often you can use the service during this time.

Starting as a six month pilot scheme, there are three Wi-Fi community hotspots at Place du Palais de Justice, Cours Saleya and the Jardin Albert 1er. If successful, Mayor Estrosi plans to launch further hotspots in 2013 including Place Massena, Place Garibaldi and the new Coulée Verte.
Antibes and Juan-les-Pins combine so many facets; it’s really not hard to see why people the world over are drawn here. Live it up in Juan-les-Pins, wander the atmospheric streets of Antibes’ Old Town, or relax completely in one of the coves on the refined Cap d’Antibes: the choice is yours!

**Beaches**
Sandy beaches are a rare find along the French Riviera so it’s good to know about the three small public beaches in Antibes, all of them ideal for families on a budget. The first, *La Gravette*, is a gentle cove just steps away from the ancient ramparts of the Old Town and the Port. Particularly popular in high season, it’s a lovely place to while away an afternoon at any time of the year. Follow the ramparts and you’ll pass a small sandy beach, *Le Ponteil*, before arriving at Antibes’ largest public beach, *Le Salis*, at the start of the Cap d’Antibes.

Juan-les-Pins has the advantage of having one of the longest sandy beaches on the Riviera. On the part that stretches along the boulevard du Littoral you’ll find all the private beaches, our favourite being the classy *Bijou Plage*, where a full day will cost you around €14. For the public beaches visitors will have to head further down towards the Cap d’Antibes.

**Cap d’Antibes**
The Cap d’Antibes, the exclusive peninsula between Antibes and Juan-Les-Pins, is a quiet haven from the hustle and bustle of the town. There are several quiet little pebbled coves, perfect for sunbathing or picnics. Walkers or cyclists will love the scenic path around the Cap, finishing in Juan-Les-Pins. This is also the perfect spot for scuba diving or snorkelling.

**The Safranier Area**
When wandering through the Old Town in Antibes don’t miss the area known as the Commune Libre de Safranier in the streets around rue du Safranier. With its own mayor, this part of town is very community focused; local residents organise several traditional fêtes throughout the year including the quirky square boules competition on the 14th July and a wine harvest festival in September. Even if there’s no festival on while you’re there the quiet traditional streets, with their shuttered houses and cascading window boxes, are a great place for a stroll away from the crowds.
Jazz Festival
If you’re anywhere near Juan-les-Pins in July make sure not to miss out on the incredible Jazz Festival. It’s been running for over 50 years and has attracted celebrated artists such as Charles Mingus, Ray Charles, Dizzy Gillespie and BB King to name but a few. This year the festival runs from the 12th–22nd July. For further details go to www.jazzajuan.com

Voiles d’Antibes
This regatta, featuring vintage and classic yachts as well as more modern sailboats, marks the start of the season for many of those on the pro circuit. Throughout the competition, which normally takes place in the first week of June, there are various events, including live music, organised in the port of Antibes and the Old Town. For more information go to www.voilesdantibes.com

Marineland and Aquasplash
Marineland, famous for its 30 metre shark tunnel and breath-taking dolphin and orca shows, offers close contact with sea lions, giant turtles and other marine wildlife. New this year visitors can observe two young polar bears in their custom made Arctic enclosure.

Aquasplash (open June-Sept) is a great place to cool off with a whole array of water slides and the newly installed Pirate Island. A combined two-day pass for these two parks costs €52 per adult and €41 per child. For a two-day pass which also includes access to Adventure Golf and the Wild West Farm it costs €62 per adult and €51 per child.

Le Petit Train
The Petit Train Touristique is a great way to see the Antibes area, especially if you are travelling with children. The train departs from near the carousel on rue de la République and weaves around the streets of the Old Town before crossing the Cap d’Antibes and finishing up in Juan-les-Pins.

The commentary, in French or English, provides historical and cultural details about the buildings and sights you pass. It operates between April and October and costs around €8 for adults and €4 for kids.
Antibes
With its lively international community, Antibes has a variety of great places to go out at night.

Those looking for a unique experience should head to the Absinthe Bar (25 Cours Masséna). The passionate owners will happily tell you the history of this traditional drink and show the uninitiated how to use the various bits of equipment involved in drinking it. With the piano and occasional distribution of random hats, there’s always a great atmosphere and it’s hard not to have a good night!

For a more international crowd the Hop Store (boulevard Aguillon) is the place to go. With a terrace outside, and live music inside, there is always a buzz here. Similarly the lively Blue Lady (rue Lacan) tends to attract a real mix of nationalities, many of whom work on the yachts docked nearby.

While Antibes’ nightlife keeps going year-round Juan-les-Pins really comes alive in the summer. For the ultimate holiday feel try one of the spectacular cocktails or ice creams at the local institution Pam Pam (137 bld du Président Wilson). It may not be the cheapest place in town, but we love the tropical decoration, and the Brazilian music and dancers ensure that the party carries on late into the night. Just across the road is Le Crystal, the perfect people watching spot with its huge terrace.

Juan Les Pins
Famous for its nightlife as well as its sandy beaches, why not combine the two and finish up your day in the sun on the seafront at the chic open air L’Up Side Café (2 Bld Édouard Baudoin). What could be better than sipping a cocktail as the sun sets during its early evening happy hour?

In the heart of Juan Les Pins La Reserve (Avenue George Gallice) is the perfect place to go before hitting the clubs. With its reasonable priced drinks, Safari themed décor and friendly waiters this bar will certainly not disappoint. Just a short stroll away is Kiss Club (5 avenue George Gallice). If you feel like dancing the night away then this is the perfect place. Whilst it is a small club it has great music and an even better atmosphere, dress up smart and party into the early hours of the morning!
Museums in Antibes

Le Fort Carré
ave du 11 Novembre. ☏ 04.97.23.11.11
www.antibes-juanlespings.com/les-musees/du-fort-carre

**Directions:** Walk around to the far side of the port and then up the hill to the fort. For those who prefer not to walk too far you can take bus number 13 from avenue de Verdun.

This 16th century fortress dominates the town of Antibes and characterises the coastline. It was built during the reign of Henry II of France to protect the border between France and the separate Comté de Nice. On a clear day the Fort Carré is visible from Nice. The fortress is surrounded by parkland from which visitors can enjoy beautiful views.

Opening hours vary throughout the year, for the latest details visit the website. Closed Sundays, Mondays and some Bank Holidays. Entry is €3 for adults, €1.50 for students and seniors, and free for under 18s.

Musée Picasso
Château Grimaldi/Place Mariéjol. ☏ 04.92.90.54.20.
www.antibes-juanlespings.com/les-musees/picasso

**Directions:** From the Gare Routière head towards the sea and ramparts. The museum is inside the Château Grimaldi.

This airy seaside château is home to more than 50 of Picasso’s paintings, drawing and objects, mainly from the 1940s when he rented a studio here. The most famous work on display is the huge La Joie de Vivre, depicting flute players, a voluptuous dancing woman and delighted prancing animals. The rest of the collection is colourful, bursting with imagination and often humorous, so it may just hold the children’s interest too. You’ll also find works by Nicolas de Staël, Ernst and Miró, and visitors have access to the terrace garden.

Villa Eilenroc
avenue Mrs Beaumont (off map). ☏ 04.93.67.74.33
www.antibes-juanlespings.com/les-autres-lieuxculturels/la-villa-eilenroc

**Directions:** Take bus number 2 from the Gare Routière in Antibes; get off at ‘Fontaine’ and then walk down Ave Mrs Beaumont until you reach the gate of the villa.

This elegant neoclassical villa was left to the town of Antibes by Mrs Beaumont on the proviso that the council open the gardens to the public and that the heritage of the building is respected. Set in eleven hectares of grounds, visitors can make the most of the rose garden, olive grove, newly opened scented garden and stunning views, as well as the villa itself.

**Open Wed and Sat 1pm–4pm (Oct-Mar), Wed and Sat 10am–5pm (Apr-June), Wed and Sat 3pm–7pm (Jul-Sept). Entry is free Oct–Mar, otherwise it costs €2 per adult (under 12s go free).**
Villa Thuret
90 Chemin Raymond (off map).
☎ 04.97.21.25.00
www.sophia.inra.fr/jardin_thuret

Directions: Take bus number 2 from the Gare Routière in Antibes and get off at ‘Chemin de la Salis’. Walk down the boulevard du Cap until you reach Chemin Raymond on your right.

Gustave Thuret was a botanist who fell in love with the rugged Cap d’Antibes and turned the grounds around his villa into a botanical garden. The garden was later taken over by the state, and is now home to over 1600 species of plants from all over the world. They flourish in the Riviera’s mild climate, and visitors will be drawn in by the sights and smells as they wander around.

Open 8am–6pm summer, 8.30am–5.30pm winter. Closed weekends and Bank Holidays. Entry is free.

Musée Archéologique
Bastion St André (off map).
☎ 04.93.95.85.98
www.antibes-juanlespins.com/les-musees/darcheologie

Directions: Walk south along the ramparts on Promenade Admiral de Grasse. The museum is next door to a restaurant called Le Bastion.

Squeezed into the ramparts is one of the many fortifications built under Louis XIV. Representing some 4000 years of history, this small museum exhibits some interesting excavations from the area including shipwreck salvages and a bread oven. There is also a well-presented model of Antibes prior to some of the ramparts being torn down in the 19th century to accommodate the city’s growth.

Open 10am–1pm, 2pm–5pm (mid-Sept to mid-June) and 10am–12pm, 2pm–6pm (mid-June to mid-Sept). Closed Mondays and Bank Holidays. Entry is €3 for adults, €1.50 for students and seniors, and free for under 18 year olds.

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Shopping in Antibes

The old quarter of Antibes is a popular place to start your shopping if you are looking for small independent shops selling specialist products.

Starting at Place de Gaulle and walking along rue de la République you will find several specialty food boutiques and art galleries tucked away in discreet alleyways. Definitely worth a visit is Christian Cottard, a master confectioner and chocolate maker in Antibes, who worked for the most famous restaurants before setting up shop, on the rue de la République, in the heart of the old town.

The streets surrounding rue de la République, such as rue Thuret, are great for picking up a few gifts. Covering a relatively small area, it’s an enjoyable and non-taxing area to browse and you are sure to find something that catches your eye. Don’t miss rue James Close where you’ll find gadgets, clothes, gifts and toys. This is the best area for securing an individual piece of homeware from candles to handmade furniture. A visit to Antibes is not complete without a trip to the Provençal market. The market is situated on the Cours Masséna and is open every morning, except Monday, until around 1 pm. Local producers from the surrounding villages sell fresh fruits and vegetables, along with meat, cheese, herbs and spices. Buy a portion of hot socca (the Niçois chickpea pancake) to nibble on while you browse.

If you take a stroll along the ramparts on a summer evening you’ll come across a small market selling jewellery and artwork. Local artists also sell their work on the Cours Masséna on a Sunday afternoon.

If Antibes shopping leaves you wanting more it’s worth going slightly further afield: to Juan-les-Pins. Here there are plenty of small, hip, fashion boutiques that cover all price ranges. Head over to boulevard Baudoin for an eclectic mix of all things girly. There you will find Rosanita, who offers original designs, a multitude of trendy jewellery, clothes and shoes, or for the more daring step into Architecture and release the rock chick rebel in you.

Juan-les-Pins is especially great for picking the latest bikinis, sarongs and beach and summer wear. Visit the boutique of the south of France’s most famous designer swimwear brand, Pain de Sucre (boulevard Baudoin), or float past Flower Sea & Sun (rue Georges Clémenceau) or Tabou (boulevard Wilson) who offers lingerie and swimwear from labels such as Just Cavalli, Moschino and Coton Club. Just a few streets back from the main strip you will find another great street called avenue Guy de Maupassant that has a wide variety of shops for all the family. Step into Adel Sand and be tempted by the wonderful array of mens and womens shoes; we dare you not to step out in a new pair! If a tipple or two is top of your list head for Résidence l’Eden (boulevard Raymond Poincaré) where they have a large selection of wine all chosen by a Maître-Sommelier. If beachfront shopping is all your weary feet will allow you then you will find a host of shops stocking novelty gifts and seaside goodies.
Paintbrushes at Dawn: Picasso vs Matisse

Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse were the undisputed masters of modern art. During the decades the two artists spent on the French Riviera, they cultivated a tentative friendship – and a serious rivalry to boot.
Matisse was bourgeois, reserved and highly systematic. Picasso was ambitious, passionate and utterly unconventional. Matisse described their personalities:

“As different as the North Pole is from the South Pole”

Yet each artist managed to inspire the other through his strikingly different approach, attitude and technique. In fact, both Matisse and Picasso have been credited with saying to the other: “We must talk to each other as much as we can. When one of us dies, there will be some things the other will never be able to talk of with anyone else.”

Matisse moved to Nice in 1917. Picasso began visiting the Riviera soon after in preparation for his definitive move South. The two artists started swapping paintings in the early 1940s. Picasso gifted Matisse his tormented *Portrait of Dora Maar*, then selected Matisse’s colourful *Seated Young Woman in a Persian Dress* in exchange. The Frenchman’s descendants were no doubt pleased with Pablo’s present: the canvas sold to an anonymous Russian bidder at New York’s Sotheby’s in 2006 for US$95m.

Art deals aside, this particular exchange was an insightful one. Picasso’s painting was a study in pain – an emotion the Frenchman found difficult to convey – while Matisse’s gift shimmered with contrasting colours, a technique Picasso wanted to learn. As Picasso once claimed: “No one has ever looked at Matisse’s painting more carefully than I; and no one has looked at mine more carefully than he.”

It’s been suggested that had either artist’s genius failed to spur the other along both Matisse’s and Picasso’s creative output would have remained stunted. Instead, a lifelong challenge meant that both artists became two of the 20th century’s greats.

For a first-hand peek at Matisse and Picasso’s tale of friendship and rivalry hit our contemporary art trail. Needless to say, their ateliers, residences, chapels and museums are tucked in some of the French Riviera’s most inspiring landscapes.
The Chapels

Matisse’s Chapelle du Rosaire
466 avenue Henri Matisse, Vence
☎️ 04.93.58.03.26
www.vence.fr

Directions: Bus 400 to the ‘Halter Routière’ stop, followed by a ten-minute walk out of Vence’s town centre. Tickets €1.

Inspired by Matisse’s former nurse, Monique Bourgeois, who went on to enter the Dominican convent, the Chapelle du Rosaire is a colourful three-dimensional artwork. Matisse designed each aspect of this petite chapel, including its architecture and vibrant yellow, blue and green stained windows. The central crucifix and the Frenchman’s own contemporary interpretations of the Stations of the Cross are minimalist gems. Seemingly modern, even today, the chapel was built between 1949 and 1951.

Open Mon, Wed and Sat 2–5.30pm, Tue and Thur 10–11.30am and 2–5.30pm. €3 adult, free for children 11 and under.

Picasso’s La Guerre et la Paix
Place de la Libération, Vallauris
☎️ 04.93.64.71.83
www.musees-nationaux-alpesmaritimes.fr

Directions: Frequent trains run along the coast to Vallauris’ nearest station, Golfe-Juan. A single ticket from Nice to Golfe-Juan costs €4.20. Envibus number 20 runs from Golfe-Juan’s train station to Vallauris’ ‘Place de la Libération’ stop. Tickets €1.

In the aftermath of World War II Picasso’s artworks became increasingly political. In 1952 conflict and religion collided to create La Guerre et la Paix (War and Peace), a painting inspired by the Korean War. Picasso then fitted it snugly into the interior of Vallauris’ former chapel. One panel of the painting depicts war (skeletons, swords and tanks), while the other is a peaceful sea of trees, docile jugglers and a giant Pegasus. The chapel’s entry fee also includes access to the Musée Magnelli, the Ceramic Museum and Vallauris’ Museum of Modern Art, all on the same site.

Open Wed–Mon 10am–12.15pm and 2–5pm. €3.25 adult, free for European citizens under 26.
The Museums

**Musée Matisse**  
164 avenue des Arènes de Cimiez, Nice  
☎ 04.93.81.08.08  
[www.musee-matisse-nice.org](http://www.musee-matisse-nice.org)

*Directions*: Bus 15, 17, 20, 22 or 25 to the ‘Arènes/Musée Matisse’ stop. Tickets €1.

Matisse’s earliest paintings, chunky bronze sculptures and brilliant blue Jazz collages are exhibited throughout the interiors of a 17th century Genoese villa in Nice’s wealthy suburb of Cimiez. Also on display is a selection of Matisse’s personal furnishings that feature prominently in his most famous artworks, as well as studies for the Chapelle du Rosaire in Vence. The elegant Hotel Régina, just opposite the museum, was Matisse’s home for many years.

*Open* Wed–Mon 10am–6pm. Free.

**Musée Picasso Château Grimaldi**  
Place Mariejol, Antibes  
☎ 04.92.90.54.20  
[www.antibes-juanlespins.com](http://www.antibes-juanlespins.com)

*Directions*: Bus 200 to the ‘Briand’ stop. Tickets €1. Alternatively, frequent trains run along the coast. A single from Nice to Antibes costs €3.40. Both the bus and the train require a 15-minute walk to the museum through Antibes’ Old Town.

Picasso spent much of 1946 living and working in this former castle. The following year he dedicated all of the artworks he created during this period to the local municipality. Meander past Picasso’s stunning frescos (painted directly onto the Château’s walls), drawings and ceramics. Additional works by ‘Nice School’ artists such as Arman and Yves Klein are also on display.

*Open* Tue–Sun 15 June–15 Sept 10am–6pm, 16 Sept–14 June 10am–noon and 2–6pm. During July and Aug, the museum remains open until 8pm on Wednesdays and Fridays. €6 adult, €3 students/over 65 year olds.

by Kathryn Tomasetti
Perched Villages

Eze

**Access:** From Nice take bus number 82 or 112. Alternatively, take the train to Eze-sur-Mer and take bus 83 up the hill.

A picture postcard perfect little town perched on a rock 427 metres above sea level. Steep winding streets lined with Provencal boutiques will bring you to the summit of the town. It’s worth the walk for the serene tropical plant and cactus garden (Jardin Exotique) at the top, complete with statues and a small man-made waterfall. Take a picnic and relax at the top looking out at sun-drenched rooftops and the dazzling Mediterranean below.

As a special treat dine at La Chèvre d’Or (reservations essential), or just pop in for a drink. The nucleus of the village, this unique hotel (complete with gastronomic restaurant), is a landmark in its own right, and more than worthy of its two Michelin stars.

Perfume enthusiasts will enjoy visiting the Fragonard Factory where the friendly staff will show you around for free. For the active among you, the rugged Nietzsche Path, which links Eze village to Eze-sur-Mer down below, is a great walk. From personal experience, we would recommend walking down rather than up though, especially when it’s warm!

**Tip:** Eze gets its fair share of tourists, particularly in the high season when coach loads of visitors arrive. To see it at its best, try to go early in the day.

Haut-de-Cagnes

**Access:** Take the train or bus to Cagnes-sur-Mer. From the central bus station there is a regular free shuttle (number 44) to transport those who don’t fancy the uphill walk to the village.

Just four kilometres from the coast, Haut-de-Cagnes is one of the easiest hilltop villages to access, yet it remains refreshingly untouched by mass tourism. Dominated by the medieval Château Musée Grimaldi, it’s a real pleasure just to meander slowly around the quiet cobbled streets, drinking in the history.

Renoir lived here from 1903 to his death in 1919, and his house and studio just down below have since been transformed into a museum set in stunning grounds with mature olive, palm, and orange trees. The museum is currently closed for renovations until the summer of 2013, but, in the meantime, the collection of 12 paintings is on show at the Château.
Roquebrune

Access: Take the train to Roquebrune-Cap-Martin or bus number 100 from Nice.

A handsome village which rises above the Cap Martin peninsula, and an ideal starting point for a walk or hike, Roquebrune is divided into an Old Town and a New Town. The medieval Old Town is dotted with little squares and fountains, narrow stone streets and vaulted passageways, making it a delightful place to wander around.

The area is famous for its 1000-year-old Olive Tree, with visible roots that stretch over 20 metres, and also for its 10th century Château that hosts a decent museum. If you fancy trying some really traditional French food nearby, head to Au Grand Inquisiteur.

The Promenade Corbusier walk around Cap Martin is highly recommended; the dramatic scenery of pine trees, white rocks and the bright blue sea just can’t be beaten, and it offers a whole new perspective on Monaco as you go round the southern tip.

Mougins

Access: Take the train to Cannes and then bus number 600 from Place Vauban. Get off at the stop ‘Mougins La Crémaillère’ and walk up the hill to the village. Alternatively, take the train to Mouans-Sartoux and then bus number 650 or a taxi up to the village. Journey time about 1 hour 30 minutes.

Some 260 metres above sea level and surrounded by the Valmasque forest, Mougins, with its characteristic stone houses and 360 degree views of the Côte d’Azur, is a stunning village to visit.

The village is famous for its gastronomy; several well-known chefs including Alain Ducasse have spent part of their careers here, and the village’s association with all things culinary culminates in the food festival (Les Etoiles de Mougins) which takes place in September. For an upmarket spot to have lunch the foodies amongst you should look no further than La Place de Mougins (reservations recommended).

The village’s history also has many ties to art – this is where Picasso spent his last years – and the small Photography Museum exhibits several portraits of Picasso amongst others. While you’re here, make sure not to miss out on the stylish, newly-opened Museum of Classical Art with its remarkable private collection of over 700 ancient, neoclassical and modern works of art.
Monaco

Musée Océanographique
avenue St-Martin
☎ 03.77.93.15.36.00
www.oceano.mc

Directions: From Place du Palais, follow well-marked signs to take you around a few small winding streets to the museum. Look for the yellow submarine outside.

Perhaps our favourite Monaco tourist attraction, the Oceanographic Museum is impressive, informative and fun. Founded by Prince Albert I, a keen oceanographer, it has a floor dedicated to his adventures and finds: both at sea and from his laboratory-style yacht on Monaco’s harbour. You can see maps of the ocean floor, weird specimens preserved in dodgy looking liquids, and explorer yachts and diving suits from eras gone by. The main attractions are the fantastic whale skeleton hanging from the ceiling and the shark tank in the aquarium. The aquarium is one of the best in the world with hundreds of beautiful species of coral reefs and tropical fish from around the world.

Open 10am–6pm (Oct–Mar), 9.30am–7pm (Apr–June), 9.30am–7.30pm (July–Aug).
Adults €13, concessions €6.50

Cannes

Musée de la Castre
Le Suquet
☎ 04.93.38.55.26

Directions: From the Gare Routière, head towards Le Suquet. The museum is inside the Castle.

Built by Iles de Lérins monks, this small museum is the token cultural attraction of Cannes. You can see Impressionist paintings, interesting pictures of old Cannes and some archeology displays. The best bit though is climbing the tower in the museum for breathtaking views.

Open 10am–1pm, 2-5pm (Tue–Sun).
Adults €3, students/children free.

OCEANOGRAPHIC MUSEUM
Cagnes-sur-Mer
Musée Renoir
Chemin des Collettes, Haut-de-Cagnes
☎ 04.93.20.61.07

**Directions:** *Take the free shuttle from the centre of Cagnes to Haut-de-Cagnes to the last stop.*
Fans of Pierre-Auguste Renoir may wish to visit the home where he spent the last twelve years of his life in Haut-de-Cagnes. The Domaine des Collettes is a beautiful house surrounded by orange and olive groves. It was designed by Renoir to his own specifications so the outlooks from the windows are practically canvasses themselves. The house is wonderfully preserved and carefully arranged as though Renoir has just stepped out for coffee. Eleven original paintings and most of his sculpture, preparatory sketches, lithographs, and photographs can be viewed here as well as his personal possessions. There are also several tributes to him by his closest friends including Albert Andre and Richard Guido.

**Open** 10am–noon, 2–6pm (July–Sept), 10am–12.30pm, 2–5pm (Oct–June). Closed Tue. Adults €4, 18–25s €2, children free.

**Note:** The Renoir museum is closed for substantial restoration work until July 2013. While closed, the collection has been transferred for safe keeping to the 1st floor of Château-Musée Grimaldi, below.

Grasse
Musée International de la Parfumerie
8 Place du Cours
☎ 04.97.05.58.00
www.museesdegrose.com

**Directions:** *From the Gare Routière, walk along rue Admiral de Grasse to Place du Cours.*
Re-opened in 2008 after an €11 million renovation, this museum built into the ramparts traces the 4000-year history of perfume and its production. It is enjoyable even if you are not a perfume fan, and more substantial than any of the perfume house museums. As well as the expected bottles and cosmetics, you can also smell scents as you tour. The highlight is the gorgeous-smelling greenhouse and gardens. Here you are likely to smell and touch rare plants for the first time. Amongst the roses you will find more unusual plants and flowers including Ylang-ylang, clary sage, patchouli, vanilla orchid, bergamot, cinnamon tree, cardamom and tuberose.

**Open** 10am–7pm Mon–Fri, Sun, 10am–9pm Sat (May–Sept); 11am–6pm Mon, Wed–Sun (Oct–April). Closed 25 Dec, 1 Jan, 1 May, 8–20 Nov. Adults €11, students €9, children free.

Saint-Paul-de-Vence
Fondation Maeght
Colline des Gardettes
☎ 04.93.32.81.63
www.fondation-maeght.com

**Directions:** *A 10 minute walk from St-Paul-de-Vence. Free parking.*
Thanks to the art dealers Aimé and Marguerite Maeght, the French Riviera is home to one of the world’s finest modern and contemporary art museums. The superbly designed building and well-kept gardens attract some 250,000 visitors a year for the temporary and permanent exhibitions, which include works by Matisse, Miró and Chagall.

**Open** 10am–7pm (July–Sept) 10am–6pm (Oct–June) daily. Adults €11, students €9, children free.
Beyond Nice: From Grasse to Menton

There are scores of different places to visit along the French Riviera, each with its own unique attractions and style. These pages will give you a flavour of what is on offer, as well as basic transport information.

Since the majority of our apartments are located in Nice, and it’s the regional core for transport links, the transport section presumes your base is Nice.

The Old Town is a warren of narrow shaded streets; the central hub being the tree-lined Place aux Aires with its tiered fountain and arcade of shops. There is also a flower and local food market here every Saturday.

On the outskirts of Grasse you’ll find the Parc Communal de la Corniche with magnificent views. The Jardin de la Princesse Pauline (avenue Reine Jeanne) is also recommended; here you can sit and breathe in the mountain air and gaze over the Esterel Mountains, all the way out to the sea.

Grasse

Bus: 500 (every 40 minutes). Journey time 1 hour.
Train: (every hour). Journey time 1 hour 15 minutes.
Grasse is the perfume centre of the world. Visit Fragonard (20 bld Fragonard, www.fragonard.com), Molinard (60 bld Victor Hugo, www.molinard.com), and Galimard (73 rte de Cannes, www.galimard.com), the perfumeries still in operation today; free guided tours in English are offered around their museums, and you can even make your own unique scent to take home. Built into the ramparts, the International Perfume Museum (2 bld du Jeu de Ballon, www.mussedegrasse.com), with its gorgeous-smelling greenhouse and gardens, traces the 4000-year history of perfume and its production.

We have more comprehensive information on all the towns along the French Riviera, including transport links, on our websites www.nicepebbles.com and www.rivierapebbles.com. Also guidebooks can really enhance your stay and we would recommend purchasing one if you have not done so already.
Cannes

**Bus:** 200 (4 per hour). Journey time 1 hour 50 mins
**Train:** (about 4 per hr). Journey time 40 mins.

The Croisette embodies all that people imagine the Riviera high life to be; with the golden sandy beach on one side and designer shops and luxury cars on the other. The blue chairs lining this two kilometre stretch are ideal for people watching.

The rue d'Antibes offers more down-to-earth shopping options, and for local produce don’t miss the [Forville Provençal Market](http://rue Marche), one of the best markets on the Riviera, open every morning except Monday.

At the western end of the Croisette is the [Palais de Festivals](http://www.palaisfestivals.com); exhibitions are held year round here, but it really comes to life in May when world famous film stars make their way up the red carpet for the International Film Festival.

No first time visitor should leave Cannes without seeing the city’s Old Town [Le Suquet]. This picturesque neighbourhood is perched on a hill facing the sea and those who make it all the way up will be rewarded with a breath-taking view of the bay below.

At the foot of Le Suquet is the [Vieux Port], where super yachts and weathered fishing boats bob side by side. From here you can take a boat to the exquisite [Lérins Islands](http://www.cannes.com), a world away from flashy Cannes.

Golfe-Juan and Vallauris

**Bus:** 200 (about 3-4 per hr). Journey time 1 hr 20 mins.
**Train:** (2 per hour). Journey time 40 minutes.

Boasting two marinas and beaches of fine sand, Golfe-Juan is arguably the best beach resort along the French Riviera. The curved bay is sheltered from the wind: something which bathers and swimmers take advantage of year round.

Just inland, Vallauris is Golfe-Juan’s twin city where you can buy, make and admire ceramics, and also view the frescoes painted in the chapel by Picasso.

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**For apartments in Cannes & Golfe-Juan:**

[RIVIERAPEBBLES.COM](http://RIVIERAPEBBLES.COM)
Biot

**Bus:** 200 (3-4 per hour). Journey time 1 hour.

**Train:** (2 per hour). Journey time 30 minutes. Bus number 10 runs from the station up to the village for those who don’t fancy the walk.

A pretty medieval village perched high on the hills behind Antibes, Biot is known for its glass and pottery making. Visitors flock to the Verrierie de Biot ([5 chemin Combes, www.verrieriebiot.com](http://www.verrieriebiot.com)) to see years of family tradition in glass making and pick up some souvenirs.

The village itself has plenty of arts and crafts on offer; children and adults alike will love trying their hand at painting their own ceramics at the Tasse de Couleur ([9 rue du Portugon, www.latassede couleur.com](http://www.latassede couleur.com)). Biot is also home to some great restaurants which are perfect for a leisurely lunch.

Before heading home, be warned, the kids may beg you to stop off at Marineland ([306 av Mozart, www.marineland.fr](http://www.marineland.fr)), just minutes away from the bus and train stops.

St-Paul-de-Vence

**Bus:** 400 (every 50 minutes). Journey time 1 hour.

Well known for its rocky setting in the middle of impressive hillsides, Saint-Paul is a highly popular tourist spot and a regular haunt for art and culture enthusiasts. Saint-Paul was once a rendezvous point for the poets Jacques Prevert and Jean Cocteau, as well as artists like Braque, Derain, Dufy, Matisse and Picasso.

The acclaimed hotel La Colombe d’Or ([Place du General de gaulle, www.la-colombe-dor.com](http://www.la-colombe-dor.com)), with its famous adjoining restaurant, was built after World War I. Struggling artists such as Miro, Leger and Lurcat settled their hotel and supper bills by leaving one of their canvasses. As a result, this exclusive abode is as much a museum of art as a hotel and restaurant.

Art aficionados should definitely pay a visit to the nearby Fondation Maeght ([623 Chemin des Gardettes, www.fondation-maeght.com](http://www.fondation-maeght.com)) which, thanks to art dealers Aimé and Marguerite Maeght, is home to one of the world’s finest modern and contemporary art museums. The superbly designed building and well-kept gardens house both permanent and temporary exhibitions including pieces by Matisse, Miró and Chagall.
Cros-de-Cagnes

**Bus:** 200, 217, 400 or 500. **Journey time 40 mins.**

**Train:** (2 per hour). **Journey time 15 minutes.**

This is a seafront town with a fisherman’s port and a wide palm tree-lined promenade. You can cycle along the cycle path between Nice and Cros-de-Cagnes in approximately 30 minutes, which is, for the most part, a very safe and pleasant ride.

With a shingle and pebble beach this is a less crowded option for beach lovers. Cros-de-Cagnes is also a little town brimming with restaurants, several of which, including the Michelin starred **Bistrot de la Marine** (96 Promenade de la Plage, [www.bistrotdelamarine.com](http://www.bistrotdelamarine.com)), have terraces with sea views (see page 73).

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Villefranche

**Bus:** 100 (3-4 per hour) **Journey time 15 minutes.**

**Train:** (2 per hour) **Journey time 10 minutes.**

The simply stunning, self-contained bay of Villefranche holds a traditional little village inhabited by local fishermen as well as a few celebrities. Enjoy ambling around the uneven winding streets shaded by the pastel Provençal buildings which date back to the 12th and 13th century. Peek inside the tiny boutiques for treasures to take home. You might also like to visit the soap factory at **La Savonnerie** (10 Av Sadi Carnot, [www.terres-dorees.com](http://www.terres-dorees.com))

The seafront of this pretty village is lined with restaurants and brasseries. If you are planning a day trip at the weekend try to arrive early: on Saturday mornings there is a small Provençal market and on Sunday mornings an antiques and bric-a-brac market.

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For apartments in Biot, St-Paul-de-Vence, Cros-de-Cagnes & Villefranche:

[www.rivierapebbles.com](http://www.rivierapebbles.com)
Beaulieu-sur-Mer

**Bus:** 100 (3-4 per hour). Journey time 30 minutes.
**Train:** (3 per hour). Journey time 15 minutes.

The well-manicured beaches of Beaulieu-sur-Mer are ideal for the tourists who want to get away from the crowds; a mix of sand and pebbles, there are both public and private areas available. The shallow bay of the **Plage des Formis** is great for families and the **Plage Petite Afrique**, on the far side of the attractive Port, is literally sandwiched between the mountains and the sea.

From the western end of the Plage des Formis visitors will find the **Promenade Maurice Rouvier** which leads all the way past **Place David Niven** to St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat. This flat walk makes for a lovely stroll with sparkling sea views the whole way.

As well as being a charming resort to walk around, Beaulieu is also famous for its tribute to ancient Greece with a faithful reconstruction of a fifth century Greek villa: the **Villa Greque Kérylos** (**impasse Gustave Eiffel, www.villa-kerylos.com**).

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Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat

**Bus:** 81 (2 per hour). Journey time 30 minutes.

The main attraction in exclusive St-Jean is the **Villa Ephrussi-de-Rothschild** (**www.villa-ephrussi.com**). Here you can see the priceless collection of royal porcelain, but the main draw is the famous gardens. Consisting of seven hectares, and decorated with patios, fountains, ponds and flowerbeds, these nine gardens have arresting views over the Mediterranean.

Cap Ferrat is a great place for walking with a well-signed 10 km path that winds all the way around the Cap: past the **Plage des Fosses**, a pebbly beach which is ideal for small children. Swimmers can also drive or walk to **Paloma Beach** (**1 Chemin de Saint-Hospice, www.paloma-beach.com**) with its tree-lined bay 500 metres south of Port St-Jean.

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For apartments in St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat & Beausoleil: **RIVIERAPEBBLES.COM**
Monaco

**Bus:** 100 (4 per hour). Journey time 60 minutes.

**Train:** (min. 2 per hour). Journey time 20 mins.

Famed for its casinos, elitist crowd, and of course the Grand Prix, Monaco is hugely popular with tourists who want to experience the high life first-hand. The principality measures a mere 1.5 square miles, so all the sights are easily accessible.

For people watching and flashy car spotting head straight to the Casino Square. Those who want to try their luck in the Monte Carlo Casino (Place du casino, www.montecarlocasinos.com) the majestic gambling home for the idle rich, should remember to bring their passport and dress up a little.

If gazing at the jaw-dropping yachts in Port Hercule (www.ports-monaco.com) leaves you wishing you could set sail, you can always take to the water on the slightly less impressive Bateau Bus (3 av President J.F Kennedy, www.cam.mc) which, for a meagre €1, will transport you from one side of the port to the other.

Right up at the top of Le Rocher you will find the fairytale Palais de Princes (www.palais.mc), protected by cannons and guards. With much pomp and circumstance, the Changing of the Guards takes place every day at 11.55am sharp and lasts for about 15 minutes.

For an incredible view of the principality, head to the Jardins Exotiques (62 Bd du Jardin Exotique, www.jardin-exotique.mc). Complete with underground caverns, the sheer size and beauty of these tropical gardens have wowed many of our guests. The plants displayed come from all over the world and it’s believed that the caves were inhabited by both humans and bears over 200,000 years ago.

Menton

**Bus:** 100 (3-4 per hr). Journey time 1 hr 25 mins.

**Train:** (minimum 2 per hr). Journey time 35 mins.

Menton is the last stop on the coast before the Italian border, and it has the mildest climate on the Riviera. Lemon trees thrive here and this is celebrated each year in February with the Fête du Citron (www.feteducitron.com).

Food enthusiasts should make a point of booking a table at the gastronomic restaurant Mirazur (30 av Aristide Briand, www.mirazur.fr) which, with its highly creative menus, gained a second Michelin star in 2012.

Several tourists decide to nip across the border and combine a trip to Menton with bargain hunting at Ventimiglia Market (www.ventimiglia.it) where you can stock up on olive oil, Parmesan cheese and Italian wine.
Living it up in Monaco is de rigueur. Its most sumptuous square, Place du Casino, is a glorified car park with million-dollar motors on display. Some evenings kick off with a chopper ride back from St Tropez, others commence with a jeroboam of Champagne (yup, that’s six pints of fizz). Whether you’re a racing driver, an oligarch or a merchant banker with a bonus to blow, this petite principality is the place to spend, spend, spend.
Unfortunately, for most of us mere mortals, the phrase ‘put it on my tab’ just doesn’t add up. Nevertheless, with just one full day in Monaco in 2012, what would spending a whopping €2012 truly entail? The good news is that relieving even one item from this à la carte menu will make you feel like a millionaire.

**Helicopter to Monaco**

www.heliairmonaco.com  
The price tag: €105 single

If you’re going to make the most of your 24 hours in Monaco there’s no time to lose. Hopping aboard one of Héli Air Monaco’s scheduled flights from Nice Airport (30 per day, departures roughly every 30 minutes) means you’ll hit the principality’s streets in seven minutes flat. Sublime views over the French Riviera – plus a shuttle on to your hotel – are included in the package.

**Check in to the Hôtel de Paris**

www.hoteldeparismonaco.com  
The price tag: €670 junior suite

A Monaco crash pad is a necessity for any holidaying hedonist. Even billionaires have to bed down and use the bathroom. In Monaco, there’s no more sumptuous spot than the legendary Hôtel de Paris. Plump for a Junior Suite, complete with La Prairie-stocked marble bathroom and views over the Monegasque skyline towards Italy.

**Nibble sushi at Yoshi**

www.metropole.com  
The price tag: €35 set lunch menu

Diminutive Monaco boasts more Michelin stars than Marseille, France’s second largest city. But starry menus are not necessarily all truffles and foie gras. At Michelin-starred Yoshi, super-chef Joël Robuchon dishes up sublime Japanese fare, including marinated black cod, kombu consommé, wagyu beef and bento boxes.

**Relax at the Thermes Marins Monte-Carlo**

www.thermesmarinsmontecarlo.com  
The price tag: €395 Monte-Carlo Diamond Treatment

Les Thermes overlooks the super yachts in Monaco’s illustrious port. (Renting one of these would set you back between €50,000 and €500,000 a week, slightly beyond my budget). This spa complex offers a myriad of treatments, from spicy exfoliating scrubs and coloured salt crystal hydromassage baths, to self-heating ginger wraps and deep full...
body massages. But it’s the spa’s Monte-Carlo Diamond Combo treatment that takes the biscuit. Diamonds, gold and precious oils free up tension in reflex zones, then a shimmering mother-of-pearl cream is used to massage your body into utter bliss. Ready for a power doze back at your hotel? A network of underground passageways – read guests only – connects the spa directly to the Hôtel de Paris.

Aperitif at Buddha Bar
www.buddhabarmontecarlo.com
The price tag: €17 cocktail

The Monegasque outpost of the Parisian super-club, the principality’s branch of Buddha Bar is just as chic. The ceilings are a cavernous seven metres high, with carved mahogany furnishings and rich frescoes. Sip the favourite house cocktail, Golden Square (port, amaretto, apple juice, vodka, ginger ale and fresh ginger), under the serene gaze of the resident giant Buddha.

Dine at Le Louis XV
www.alain-ducasse.com
The price tag: €280 set menu, plus €145 for accompanying wines = €425

Alain Ducasse’s triple Michelin-starred restaurant Le Louis XV is categorically the finest restaurant on the entire Mediterranean. In honour of its 25th anniversary this year, the establishment is dishing up an extravagant nine-course celebratory menu. Giant San Remo prawns cower under heaps of caviar, while the tender roasted lamb is paired with baby peas and green garlic. Melt-in-your-mouth Cantal cheese, crackling with flakes of crunchy French sea salt, is followed by the puff of a Piedmont hazelnut soufflé. Premier Crus plucked from the 400,000 bottles stored in the Louis XV’s cellar flow faster than an F1 safety car. Best of all is the restaurant’s dazzling décor: chandeliers illuminate the portraits of Louis XV’s mistresses, the clusters of orchids are monumental, and each diner’s Christofle cutlery selection (57 pieces are used per person per meal) is worth more than a second-hand Ferrari.

Tristan Rutherford is a freelance travel journalist based in Nice. His writing appears in The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph.
Hit the jackpot at the Casino de Monte-Carlo’s Salons Privés

www.casinomontecarlo.com

The price tag: €20 entrance, plus €80 for gambling = €100

There is no wealthier company than the dapper crowd that frequents the Casino de Monte-Carlo’s Salons Privés. Gianni Agnelli spun the wheel at these private gaming tables, as did Cary Grant, Tiger Woods, Brad Pitt, George Clooney and Prince Charles. Today, the casino even sports three Super Privés: luxurious, invitation-only rooms for the most serious of risk-takers. The Casino’s new outdoor terraces (open July and August) mean players can even play Texas Hold’em under a starry Mediterranean sky.

Breakfast at Hôtel de Paris

www.hoteldeparismontecarlo.com

The price tag: €55

Roll out of bed and down to the Hôtel de Paris’ buffet breakfast, served on the terrace of the Côté Jardin. The piles of exquisite pastries, cooked-to-order omelettes and French cheeses would have filled the wedding party of Prince Albert and Charlene Wittstock back in 2011.

Dance until dawn at Jimmy’z

fr.jimmyzmontecarlo.com

The price tag: free entry, plus €100 for drinks = €100

Bono, Jensen Button, Penelope Cruz and Leonardo Di Caprio all party here. Sure, a bottle of Heineken weighs in at a whopping €50, but counting your pennies is considered parsimonious in such esteemed company. The crew of international DJs, including Boy George, Charles Schillings and Axwell, ensures the dance floor throbs until dawn.

Helicopter back to Nice Airport

www.heliairmonaco.com

The price tag: €105 single

A farewell lift off from Monaco’s helipad is the icing on the cake – or the caviar on a smoked-salmon blini. A quick tally shows a total expenditure of €2007. The fiver that remains should just cover the bus fare into Nice centre. Or grab a newspaper to read about the real world before your easyJet flight home.

by Tristan Rutherford
The French Riviera’s most famous town, St Tropez has a mythical allure. Brigitte Bardot frolicked on its beaches, celebrity-stocked mega-yachts moor stern-to in the town’s pastel-washed port, and, come summertime, Kate Moss and family wander its tiny streets, while Beyoncé, Rihanna and Paris Hilton hit the heaving nightclubs, where a bottle of Bollinger costs more than a return ticket home.

Dreamt about sipping sundowners where Bardot, Richards and Jagger once sat? Then read on. Seeing St Tropez in a day is possible from every Riviera resort. Note that your choice of transport (see box opposite) will dictate how long you have in town: mix and match our suggested itinerary to suit your schedule.

St Tropez is petite and entirely walkable. Start off by exploring the town’s picturesque vieux port. The busy Tourist Office (www.ot-saint-tropez.com) may sit in its southeastern corner, but St Tropez is not just for holidaymakers. A stroll past the raucous Porte de la Poissonnerie fish market, where fishermen spread their morning catch under the ancient city gate, quickly puts paid to that premise. If you’re visiting on a Tuesday or a Saturday head to place des Lices. Here, a vast alfresco market sells delectable Provençal treats – from croissants and savoury fougasse bread, to soft goat’s cheese and homemade marmalades – that make a perfect breakfast on the go. Alternatively, drop into La Tarte Tropézienne (Place des Lices, www.tarte-tropezienne.com) for freshly baked treats. This famed boulangerie takes its name from its renowned tarte Tropézienne, a soft sponge and custard layered cake, although their sandwiches, salads and raisin swirls are spot-on too.

Steel yourself for a steep hike up to the Citadelle (€2.50 per person). This 17th century fort has a small museum charting the town’s pre-Bardot history, but best of all are the bird’s eye views over the stunning St Tropez Bay. Too taxing? Slip in a swim in the sea instead. Locals cool off on the petite beach Plage de la Ponche, at the eastern end of town.

Two of St Tropez’s lunch favourites have been going strong for decades. Pizzeria Bruno (2 rue de l’Eglise) is a tiny spot that’s been firing up crispy pizzas, along with giant fresh salads, for over 60 years. Since 1953, the petite, portside bar Le Gorille’s (1 Quai Suffren, www.legorille.com) specialty has always been beef tartare and chips – although they also make a mean croque-monsieur (hot ham and cheese sandwich). No matter where you dine, be sure to sample a glass of St Tropez rosé from the vineyards that surround the town.
For a dose of local culture, head over to Musée l’Annonciade (Place Grammont, €5 per person). This 16th century chapel has been turned into a must-see arty snapshot of Riviera life. The collection includes depictions of the Provence coastline by major modern artists such as Paul Signac, Henri Matisse, Pierre Bonnard and Raoul Dufy. If browsing St Tropez’s boutiques sounds more your speed, rest assured you’ll be spoiled for choice. Window shop the big designer names from Armani to Zegna that line rue François Sibilli. Alternatively, try La Chemise Tropézienne (23 rue Gambetta, www.lachemisetropeszienne.com) for crisp cotton shirts, or K. Jacques (25 rue Allard, www.kestropeziennes.com) for handcrafted strappy leather sandals.

Pop over to Place des Lices for a game of pétanque, Provence’s favourite pastime. Le Café and Café des Arts will both happily lend patrons a set or two of pétanque balls (also called boules) to toss around for free. It gets easier after the second glass of pastis, the regional tipple of choice.

Finish off your day with (or make the pétanque loser pay for) a round of aperitifs back in St Tropez’s charming harbour. Papagayo (www.papagayo-club.net) may be a celebrity-studded club come midnight, but, before J.Lo and P.Diddy hit the dancefloor, it also boasts one of St Tropez’s prettiest portside terraces.

by Kathryn Tomasetti

Getting to St Tropez

BY ROAD

Driving to St Tropez can be a cinch. That is, if the traffic gods smile on you – in summer, these roads can be one long bouchon. Take the A8 motorway south to Fréjus-St Raphaël. From here, the pine-dappled D559 runs along the coast, eventually skirting the St Tropez Bay, before bringing you into the town itself. Allow an hour and a half diving time from Nice. There are two main car parks in St Tropez, Parking des Lices (Place des Lices) or Parking du Port (Nouveau Port).

BY RAIL

Hop any of the Riviera’s regular coastal trains (www.voyages-sncf.com) to St Raphaël. It’s an hour from Nice, or 30 minutes from Cannes. From here, Les Bateaux de St Raphaël (www.bateauxsaintraphael.com) runs two to four ferries per day to St Tropez depending on the season. The cruise between the super-yachts in the gulf takes an hour. Day returns cost €24 per adult, €14 per child aged 2–9 years and are free for kids one or under.

BY SEA

The Trans Côte d’Azur (www.trans-cote-azur.com) fleet transports passengers to St Tropez from Nice and Cannes. Ferries have open-air and interior decks, onboard bar and toilets. The ride itself is sublime, taking in the Riviera’s breathtaking coastline including the Iles des Lérins and the Cap d’Antibes.

From both Nice and Cannes, ferries depart daily between 9th July and 2nd September. Between 31st May and 8th July, as well as between 14th and 30th September, there are transfers on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Boats depart from Nice at 9am, arriving in St Tropez at 11.30am. The passage back sets off at 4.30pm, arriving back at Nice’s port at 7pm. Return tickets cost €58 per adult, €44 per child aged 4–10 years and are free for kids 3 years and under.

Boats depart from Cannes at 10.15am, arriving in St Tropez at 11.30am. The passage back sets off at 4.30pm, arriving back at Cannes’ port at 5.45pm. Return tickets cost €44 per adult, €32 per child aged 4–10 years and are free for kids 3 years and under.

by Kathryn Tomasetti
Nice Cuisine

There’s no denying that tasting the local cuisine is a highlight of anyone’s trip to the French Riviera. Niçois cooking is a wonderful mix of Mediterranean specialities with a strong Italian influence.

From shopping in the daily markets to tasting the fresh, local produce, to some of the country’s best restaurants, Nice is a culinary paradise.

When you first arrive in Nice it’s easy to be overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of restaurants. With possibly only a week to test the mouthwatering local cuisine; there’s no time to waste on a bad meal!

All of our recommended restaurants have been carefully handpicked by us. We’ve all tried and tested plenty, but only the best make the cut.

So what is so special about the ones we list here? Quite simply, after several years of trying and testing, they are our favourites. We have received feedback in the past that some of our readers thought these were advertising listings – we promise they are not. None of the restaurants featured in this section have paid to be in this guide. Trust us, they do not need the business, and for almost all the restaurants we suggest here you should try to book ahead. If you don’t feel comfortable reserving a table in French, either pop in to see them, send them an email via their website, or ask us to do it for you.

If you see restaurants featured in last year’s guide, this means we’ve continued to eat at these restaurants throughout the year and they’re still just as good as ever. We’ve also replaced some because of less than perfect feedback from our guests or the Pebbles team.

There are some exciting new additions to this year’s restaurants, which prove that, however long you live somewhere, there are still some gems to be found.

If you want to find even more spots to grab a bite, visit our cuisine pages at www.nicepebbles.com and www.rivierapebbles.com for more detailed restaurant reviews and interesting facts about local cuisine.

As ever, we love hearing about your dining experiences. This helps us give accurate recommendations to future guests. Please feel free to share your dining experiences with us. Contact us by email at info@nicepebbles.com or drop by and see us at our office.

English speaking staff and/or menu
Map references: Nice p.23, Antibes p.39
La Maison de Marie
5 rue Massena
04.93.82.15.93

Set right in the heart of the Pedestrian Zone, the delightful courtyard of this restaurant is a real haven away from the crowds. The food is a combination of typical Niçois and Mediterranean dishes, and the varied menu offers meat, fish and pasta options.

We are particularly fond of the three-course Menu Niçois, which at €22.50 offers a good insight into the local cuisine. The lunch menu is also good value at €14.50 for two courses and €18.50 for three. Alternatively, à la carte main courses start at around €14.

Open daily.
www.lamaisondemarie.com

Luc Salsedo
14 rue Maccarani
04.93.82.24.12

Having trained with several highly regarded chefs including Alain Ducasse, it’s no surprise that Luc Salsedo offers some of the best contemporary French cuisine in Nice: all with the chef’s own personality, and often ingredients fresh out of his own garden. The service, wine list and elegant crisp surroundings all add to the class. The menu changes every 10 days depending on what’s in season. Not at all stuffy, it’s a firm favourite of ours for a special occasion. Three courses menus start at €44.

Closed Wednesday.
www.restaurant-salsedo.com

Amada
17 rue Tonduti de l’Escarène
04.93.62.00.81

This tiny Japanese restaurant exudes authenticity. We love everything from the décor and the discrete service, to the soft background music, the original place settings and of course the food. Perfect for everything from a light lunch to a romantic night out, the chef focuses on high quality ingredients which are simply prepared. The lunchtime specials, complete with soup and salad to start, are great value at €13. In the evening we would expect most diners to opt for the more elaborate three course €35 menu which includes five starter dishes, a choice of four mains and a dessert. Our tip: try the chef’s more unusual dish of his version of the Niçois staple, petits farcis.

Closed Sunday. Closed for lunch on Monday and Wednesday.
Flaveur
25b rue Gubernatis
☎ 04.93.62.53.95

From the moment Flaveur opened in November 2008, it became a huge hit with our guests, locals and the Pebbles team alike. The décor is refreshingly chic and the service impeccable. Taking Mediterranean cuisine and giving it a contemporary twist, often with hints of unusual spices, is Flaveur’s speciality. Rightly keeping a firm hold of the Michelin star it earned last year, Flaveur is a gastronomic experience not to be missed.

Closed Sunday and Monday.
Closed Saturday lunch.
www.flaveur.net

Le Luna Rossa
3 rue Chauvain
☎ 04.93.85.55.66

Cosy and welcoming, Le Luna Rossa is ideal for a romantic evening for two with its softly lit dining rooms. That said, friends and families also come here to enjoy the fresh Mediterranean cuisine on offer. The chef creates his mouth-watering ‘plats du jour’ according to what he has found at the market that day. Provençal classics with a modern touch make it a favourite with the local French and Italian crowd. Fresh fish, vegetables, meat and pasta take centre stage, and the desserts are also well worth saving space for! Three courses will work out at around €35.

Closed Sundays & Monday lunch.
www.lelunarossa.com

Au Vieux Four
1 rue Emmanuel Philibert
☎ 04.93.89.00.89

Baked to perfection with a paper-thin crust, these pizzas are hard to beat. Pizza chef Pascal Fritsch was awarded the best pizza on the Côte d’Azur for his Pizza Campagnarde. If pizza is not for you, they also do good meat dishes and fantastic scallops. Whoever makes the tiramisu should also win an award. Lots of our guests love the place for the food, the service and the bustling atmosphere.

Closed Sunday and Monday.
Closed Saturday lunch, Sunday and Monday.
www.auvieufour.com
Oliviera
8 bis rue du Collet
☎️ 04.93.13.06.45

Half olive oil shop, half restaurant, Oliviera is the perfect stage to showcase the wonderful local oils on sale here. Each dish complements the aroma and taste of one of the olive oils. Sample an olive oil to be used with avocado, another for goat’s cheese, and another for lasagne. There's even an oil for the tiramisu! The friendly owner, Nadim, is very charming and enthusiastic about his oils. Once you’ve tasted them, you'll understand why. The menu is made up of fresh local produce, and, if you're up early, you're likely to see Nadim at the Cours Saleya market choosing the day's vegetables. Specialty dishes from €14.

Closed Sunday and Monday.
www.oliviera.com

Les Épicuriens
6 Place Wilson
☎️ 04.93.80.85.00

Classy, yet very friendly and decidedy unstuffly, Les Épicuriens celebrates the art of enjoying a good meal. Classic meat and fish dishes are incredibly well cooked, beautifully presented and accompanied by expertly chosen wines by the glass, specifically selected to complement each individual dish. A local, business crowd flocks here at lunch time to enjoy the formule. In the evening it's à la carte only, with mains ranging from €16–30 and starters and desserts from €10. A real find, les Épicuriens is perfect for anyone who appreciates good food as much as we do!

Closed Sunday and Monday
www.lesépicuriens.com

Darlington
11 rue Delille
☎️ 04.93.87.92.32

Introduced to us by one of our owners, Darlington is another consistently good member of the new town’s thriving restaurant scene. Simple, honest, and reliable sums up this contemporarily designed bistro run by husband and wife team Nixu (Finnish) and Anne-Charlotte (French). Diners can expect starters of Caesar salads, cold meat platters, and warm vegetables dressed in truffle oil. For mains, simple favourites like sirloin steak with mash potatoes, asparagus risotto and their ‘real bacon cheeseburger’ are on offer as well as more surprising dishes. Expect to pay around €25 for 3 courses.

Open Monday–Saturday lunch. Open Friday–Saturday dinner.
La Rossetisserie
8 rue Mascoinat  
☎ 04.93.76.18.80

Intimate and friendly, the chef cooks up a feast in this cute little bistro, just a stone’s throw away from Place Rossetti. Blink and you’ll walk straight past – but you’ll be missing out if you do! Serving uniquely roast meats, with scrumptious homemade accompaniments, it’s simple, fresh and great value. Choose from slow roasted lamb, pork, chicken, veal or beef served with mashed or roasted potatoes, ratatouille or salad for just €12. Homemade desserts, which change daily, complete the menu and finish off your meal perfectly.

Closed Sunday and Monday.

La Voglia
2 rue Saint François de Paule  
☎ 04.93.80.99.16

Simple, good quality Italian cuisine served in copious portions is what you can expect at La Voglia and its sister restaurants La Favola (just opposite) and Villa d’Este on the pedestrian zone. Hearty pasta dishes, mouth-watering pizzas and delicious desserts are the stars of the menu. It’s a firm favourite with our team who are regulars. The queue out of the door is a year round fixture and surely proof of its popularity with locals and tourists alike. Pizzas and pastas start at €10.

Open daily.
www.lavoglia.com

Le Tire Bouchon
19 rue de la Préfecture  
☎ 04.93.92.63.64

Very popular with our guests, this is a cosy, romantic, bistro-style restaurant with two dining rooms and decent outside space at the back. The menu is weighted towards rich dishes from south western France, including roasted duck fillet, artichokes and green apple chips, and braised lamb, and the desserts are divine. Situated in the heart of the Old Town, Le Tire Bouchon is convenient for many of our guests. Three course set menu from €28 per person.

Open daily.
www.le-tire-bouchon.com
Le Comptoir du Marché
8 rue du Marché, Vieux Nice  🌐  04.93.13.45.01

The new kid on the block, this charmingly quaint French bistro is already one of the most sought after tables in town. Following in the footsteps of its sister restaurant (the locally renowned Bistrot d’Antoine), the sumptuous French classics on offer ensure its cute dining rooms fill up night after night.

Expect to pay between €12–15 for the reasonably priced mains and €7 for starters and desserts.

The portions are just the right size to allow you to take a starter, main and dessert: ideal for sampling as much of the chef’s tasty offerings as possible!

Closed Sunday and Monday

La Mise au Verre
17 rue Pastorelli  🌐  04.93.85.69.90

From the owners of local wine shop La Part des Anges comes their friendly bistro La Mise au Verre. With the emphasis on lesser known, quality wines and fresh, seasonal produce, the menu changes daily, so you never know what you’re going to get. Over the course of the year we’ve enjoyed sea bass with wild rice, steak with Niçois panisse and a tasty springtime vegetable risotto. The staff are knowledgeable about both their wines and their produce, and you can enjoy wines by either the glass or the bottle along with a selection of champagnes. Mains are around €15 and desserts and starters from €7.

Closed Saturday and Sunday lunchtime.

Les Pecheurs
18, quai des Docks, Nice Port  🌐  04.93.89.59.61

Perfect for a summer lunch or dinner watching the sun set over the port, Les Pecheurs has been recommended to us by owners and guests alike. As the name suggests, this is a great spot to enjoy fresh fish and the finest seafood. Enjoy starters of scallops or langoustines, mains including sea bass, red mullet or share a delicious bouillabaisse.

While there are other options, the carte leans heavily towards seafood. You can order à la carte or opt for one of the menus at €29–47.

Closed Monday and Tuesday noon in summer and all day Monday and Tuesday in winter.

www.lespecheurs.com
La P’tite Cocotte
10 rue Saint-Augustin, Vieux Nice  
☎ 04.97.08.48.61

We doubt many tourists stumble across La P’tite Cocotte by accident, though perhaps it’s the smell of delicious cooking that lures hungry tummies up the tiny, cobbled rue Saint-Augustin in the Vieux Nice.

The lucky ones who do come across it won’t be disappointed. Run by a husband and wife team, this gourmet hideaway is a real treat. The couple serve up a small menu in their cosy dining room, and the rustic, exposed stone walls just add to the charm of the setting.

Mains, including cod with a fennel sauce, polenta and fresh veg, are often served in their speciality ‘cocottes’. A word of advice: be sure to save space for dessert; the chocolate fondant cocotte with pistachio ice cream is to die for! Evening menus start at €19.50 and two courses at lunch costs just €13.

Closed Tuesday and Wednesday.
www.la-ptitecocotte.fr

Acchiardo
38 rue Droite, Vieux Nice  
☎ 04.93.85.51.16

Run by the Acchiardo family since its opening in 1927, this unassuming restaurant may not look like much from the outside, but it’s been one of the locals’ worst kept secrets for years. With more and more tourists stumbling across this hidden gem you’re likely to hear conversations in several languages from your neighbouring tables, however, testament to its success, Acchiardo has never lost its solid, local following.

The food is typically Niçois: expect to tuck into specialities such as petits farcis nicois, daube and soupe de poisson, just how they’re meant to be served. Enjoy a carafe of the house rosé with your meal and you’ll feel like a local in no time! The best news is you won’t be out of pocket at this down to earth eatery, mains start at around €13, but be aware, as with a couple of other local institutions, Acchiardo doesn’t take credit cards.

Closed Saturday and Sunday.
La Taille de Guêpe  
24 rue de Fersen, Antibes.  
☎️ 04.93.74.03.58

This delightful restaurant, a favourite with the locals, is all about eating well, so the dishes are good for both your taste buds and your waistline! Fresh edible flowers often feature in the cuisine, adding a real touch of elegance to the presentation and giving diners a chance to taste flavours that they may not yet have experienced.

Great care is taken with the selection of ingredients, and the menu, which focuses on simple dishes cooked with a dash of originality, changes regularly. The atmosphere, perfect for a light lunch or romantic dinner under the twinkling fairy lights, really adds to the restaurant’s appeal, so we’d recommend booking ahead!

Closed Sun and Mon

Le Figuier de Saint Esprit  
14 rue Saint Esprit, Antibes.  
☎️ 04.93.34.50.12

Christian Morriset is the celebrity chef at this chic restaurant which is certainly worthy of its Michelin star. Christian had previously worked at other well-known establishments on the Riviera such as La Chevre d’Or and Le Moulin de Mougins, and for this venture is cooking alongside his son, Jordan.

Eating here is an unforgettable dining experience for all the right reasons – we love it! As well as the gorgeous setting (especially on the vine-wrapped indoor terrace), impeccable service and excellent wine list, the delicious food is highly creative. Dinner menus are available at €62 and €83, and at lunchtime it’s possible to have the dish of the day with wine and a coffee for €29.

Closed Tues and Wed (Nov to Apr), Mon and Wed lunch and Tues all day (May to Oct)  
www.restaurant-figuier-saint-esprit.com

L’Enoteca  
6 rue Auberon, Antibes.  
☎️ 04.93.34.03.90

In this welcoming wine bar, just minutes from the market square, there are over 30 wines available by the glass. With prices ranging from €5 to €18, amateurs can try well-chosen wines from the Provence, Languedoc, and Rhone Valley regions, amongst many others.

Those feeling peckish after a glass or two can move through to the vaulted stone dining room where Mediterranean dishes, some with an Asian twist, are attentively served. The staff here will happily help you to pair wine to your chosen dishes, prolonging the wine enthusiast’s pleasure!

Open daily
**L’Armoise**  
2 rue de la Tourraque, Antibes.  
☎ 04.92.94.96.13

This tiny restaurant is a delightful surprise, and if you’re a gastronome this should definitely be on your list! Once a hidden gem, this restaurant is gaining in recognition and we wouldn’t be surprised to see it get its first Michelin star in the not too distant future.

Set menus range in price from €38 to €69, and the emphasis here is on seasonal produce cooked exceptionally well. Example dishes include a risotto with shavings of summer truffles, catch of the day with Piedmontais gnocchi, and honey roasted apricots served with almond milk ice cream. Yum!

*Closed Mon all day and Tues and Wed at lunch. Holidays: First two weeks of July, two weeks before Christmas*

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**L’Oursin**  
16 rue de la République, Antibes.  
☎ 04.93.34.13.46

When you’re by the sea the temptation is always to eat some of the local catch, and when in Antibes the place to go is L’Oursin. Eating in this reliable restaurant is an experience in its own right, the maritime decoration, brass portholes and all, will make you feel like you have literally set sail on a yacht of days gone by!

The friendly staff will show you the catch of the day, and, as well as the à la carte menu, there are several set menus and seafood platters on offer. Prices for three-course set menus start at €21.50 and the platters start at €20. There is also a children’s menu available for €10.

*Closed Mon (Oct to May)*

[www.restaurant-loursin.fr](http://www.restaurant-loursin.fr)
La Cafetière Félée
18 rue de Marc, Antibes.
☎ 04.93.34.51.86

It would be hard to stumble across this restaurant discreetly tucked away on a side street, but for those who enjoy fusion cooking it’s worth hunting down! The restaurant is owned by a young local chef, Julien Fiengo, whose passion for mixing new and traditional flavours is clearly evident in the stunningly-presented dishes his restaurant is reputed for.

At lunch there are several set menus available, ranging from €14.50 to €35. Example dishes include the foie-gras and roasted prawn maki served with a white porto and mango jelly and a ponzu vinaigrette or the lamb shank confit with a thai curry sauce. Take away bento boxes are also available for those who would rather dine al fresco.

Closed Sun and Mon
www.lacafetierefelee.com

Festival de la Mer
146 bld Président Wilson, Juan-les-Pins.
☎ 04.93.61.04.62

Situated in a lively part of Juan-les-Pins, and with a great terrace for people watching, this seafood restaurant is known locally for the freshness of its products. There are several platters on offer from €42, as well as an incredible choice of oysters, other shellfish and fresh fish.

The three-course €39 ‘Menu Festival’ includes Moules Marinières and a Fisherman’s pot, and weekday lunchtimes you can have the starter and main, or main and dessert of the day for a very reasonable €17.

Open daily
www.restaurant-festivaldelamer.com
Rest of Riviera Restaurants

**Mocca**  
1 boulevard la Croisette, Cannes  
☎ 04.93.68.93.00

Mocca’s, situated just opposite Palais des Festivals, boasts a menu that takes you on a journey of exploration; expect to taste classic and exotic dishes at this restaurant. The interior is elegant and cosy, almost lounge-like, making you feel instantly relaxed, and their large terrace allows you to take in all the glamour of Cannes.

Tempting dishes include warm goat cheese, almond crumble and dry fruits (€15.60), and truffle cream penne pasta (€21.50). Bottles of wine from €25. Refined cuisine with a creative touch.

*Open Mon–Sun 8pm–8.30am with a non-stop service 11.30pm–1am.*

[www.moccarestaurant.com](http://www.moccarestaurant.com)

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**La Voglia di Pasta**  
73 rue Félix-Faure, Cannes.  
☎ 04.93.33.80.59

Popular with locals, this inconspicuous matchbox of a restaurant is wonderful for people watching as it’s directly opposite the morning flower market on the Croisette.

The linguini scoglia is not to be missed: al dente pasta with a mix of the freshest seafood available. Wash it down with a sparkling red Lambrusco, perfect for lazy afternoons! Main dishes start at around €13.

*Open daily.*

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**La Place de Mougins**  
Place du Commandant Lamy, Mougins.  
☎ 04.93.90.15.78

Formerly the Feu Follet, this restaurant has recently undergone extensive renovations. The terrace is undeniably appealing, but the restaurant itself, decorated with original works by artists such as Dufy, Matisse and Warhol (from the English owner’s private collection), is also a delightful place to dine.

The chef, Denis Fetisson, really draws on produce according to the season, and there is always a menu based around an ‘ingredient of the moment’ which varies from lemons, to asparagus, to wild mushrooms as the year goes on. Set menus range from €25 at lunch to €75 for the seven course Menu Gourmandise.

*Open Tues–Sun (no dinner service Sun).*

[www.laplacedemougins.com](http://www.laplacedemougins.com)
**Bistrot de la Marine**

96 Promenade de la Plage, 
Cros-de-Cagnes
☎️ 04.93.26.43.46

This upmarket bistrot is a great find on a seafront lined with restaurants. On the terrace, which is set back a little from the road, it is possible just to sit and have a drink, but venture inside this former fisherman’s cottage and you will find a smart restaurant dotted with seafaring artifacts; the highlight being the bar which is beautifully decorated with what must be hundreds of anchovy tins!

The two-course menu at €25 comes highly recommended. Sample dishes include sea bass roasted Niçois style with artichokes, courgettes, potatoes, tomatoes, olive oil and lemon, and fresh scallops grilled with a Niçois risotto.

*Open Wed–Sun.*  
[www.bistrotdelamarine.com](http://www.bistrotdelamarine.com)

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**La Tilleul**

2 Place Tilleul, St-Paul-de-Vence  
☎️ 04.93.59.84.04

On a cobbled square in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, the enticing terrace under the shade of the linden tree (tilleul in French) is reason alone to try out this restaurant which has been recommended by several of our guests.

Open from breakfast through to dinner, we would suggest stopping by for at least an afternoon tea as their pastries and desserts are phenomenal. For those with a little more time on their hands, the €25 lunch menu is a great way to sample some of the gastronomic cuisine, and the more elaborate dinner menu includes dishes such as homemade ravioli filled with lobster and leek in a consommé of beef flavoured with truffle.

*Open daily.*  
[www.restaurant-letilleul.com](http://www.restaurant-letilleul.com)

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**La Mère Germaine**

9 Quai de l’Admiral Courbet, Villefranche  
☎️ 04.93.01.71.39

An institution in Villefranche, this restaurant has been serving up fish and seafood to locals, tourists and celebrities since the 1930s. The location couldn’t be better: right by the water with a view over the sublime Villefranche bay. It really is an idyllic place to spend an evening.

Fresh fish is never cheap, but the €42 three-course menu is reasonable, and includes dishes such as rock fish soup and a mixed fish and seafood platter grilled à la plancha.

*Open daily. Holidays mid-Nov to Christmas.*  
[www.meregermaine.com](http://www.meregermaine.com)
Les Garçons
18 rue Poilu, Villefranche
☎ 04.93.76.62.40

A favourite with the locals, tucked just one street back from the port, Les Garçons is run by two brothers. The focus is on market-bought ingredients and simple home cooking with an occasional Asian twist.

Diners can choose to eat in the restaurant or outside on the pretty terrace, and at lunch the regularly changing two-course set menu is a modest €15. Sample dishes include risotto with fresh scallops and truffle oil, and yakitori chicken salad with bean sprouts and crunchy vegetables.

Open Thur–Mon.

African Queen
Port de Plaisance, Beaulieu-sur-Mer
☎ 04.93.34.50.12

This is an infamous good quality restaurant which is always busy, and it has a warm and relaxed atmosphere. You can choose to have a gastronomic feast (their huge fish platters are legendary) for around €50, or, more simply, a pizza from their wood-burning oven, a salad or a char-grilled burger for around €10.

There is a spacious indoor eating area, but most diners favour basking in the sun on the large terrace. The African Queen may be pricier than others on the same port-side strip, but, in our eyes, it’s worth paying that little bit extra.

Open daily.
www.africanqueen.fr

Café Llorca
10 avenue Princesse Grace, Monaco
☎ 003.77.99.99.29.29

Situated on the first floor of the Grimaldi Forum, this stylish café-restaurant (Alain Llorca’s latest venture) comes complete with a 220 square metre terrace and an impressive Mediterranean backdrop.

You would expect prices to be sky high in such a setting, especially in Monaco, but starters begin at a mere €10 and mains at €14. Every day there is a dish of the day on offer for €15 to €20, and this is a great chance to try traditional recipes such as Daube (beef stew) or Aioli. Particularly good value are the lunchtime set menus: €20 for a main, a dessert and glass of wine, or €22 for a starter and main with a glass of wine. With prices this reasonable, it’s hard to resist!

Restaurant open daily for lunch. The Olive Bar is open until 6pm for drinks and snacks.
www.cafellorca.mc
Adagio
1 rue Biovès, Monaco
☎ 003.77.99.98.15.56

This homely restaurant, which can be a little tricky to find, is a breath of fresh air in Monaco. The Italians who run the place serve up Ligurian specialities using high quality ingredients, and the pasta, meat and fish dishes all come in generous portions.

Mains include rare beef thinly sliced with a thyme and rosemary jus, and we loved the homemade desserts – in particular the lemon tiramisu! The €15 lunch menu (for two-courses with wine) changes frequently and offers great value in this otherwise expensive corner of the world.

Open Mon–Fri.

Au Grand Inquisiteur
18 rue du Château,
Roquebrune-Cap-Martin
☎ 04.93.35.05.37

Minutes from the Château, this tiny restaurant – a former sheepcote – just exudes history from its 14th century stone walls. There is always a great atmosphere in the vaulted dining room, due in particular to the warm welcome from the staff.

Here it’s all about French home cooking, and the dishes include Coq-au-Vin and Crème Brulée as well as frogs legs and snails for those brave enough to try them! Prices range from €25 for two courses to €39 for the very generous two starters, a main course and a dessert.

Open Tues–Sun, lunch Sat and Sun only.

www.augrandinquisiteur.com

Mirazur
30 Ave. Aristide Briand, Menton
☎ 04.92.41.86.86

Despite being listed as one of the top 25 restaurants in the world and having just received its second Michelin star, the Mirazur remains classy in an understated way. Here there is no menu as such; you just select the number of courses you would like. The waiters will ask if there’s anything you don’t eat, then Argentinean chef Mauro Colagreco and his team will set about creating dishes accordingly. The creative food centres around whatever is in season in the restaurant’s gardens, one of which can be seen just below the restaurant, and fresh fish and meat. Each dish is described in detail as it’s placed in front of you and the memories of this exceptional cuisine will linger long after you leave.

Prices range from €29 for two courses at lunch to €120 for the Carte Blanche.

Open Wed–Sun (mid–Feb to early Nov). Special opening hours mid-Jul to end Aug: Tues–Sun dinner, lunch Sat and Sun only.

www.maurocolagreco.com
When I want to get away from the crowds in the summertime, I need only walk down one of the busiest streets in the Old Town and duck into a café that few tourists would ever notice.

**Au Petit Lascaris** (5 rue Droite) has only two small tables outdoors, but the recently revamped vintage décor, brief menu of Niçois snacks and nostalgic soundtrack of French chansons make it one of my favourite places for a quick meal.

Part of the charm of Nice and the surrounding towns is that they are full of such places; best known to locals who are reluctant to share the information with strangers. They might not have the obvious appeal of restaurants with sunny terraces in lively areas such as the Cours Saleya market, but the owners make up for it by valuing every customer and putting real care into the food. As a result, they are full all year round and some even close for part of the summer, knowing that it won’t hurt their business.

Next to Au Petit Lascaris, **Palmyre** has lately gained a reputation as one of the best-value restaurants in Nice. Established in 1926 by Palmyre Moni and sold not long ago to young friends of the family, it has lost nothing of the original spirit with its €15 three-course menu and 1950s-inspired décor. At this price you might expect cuisine that is unrefined at best: instead you’ll be treated to French classics such as crayfish terrine, coq-au-vin or spoon-tender beef stew, and perhaps *île flottante* for dessert, all clearly made with fresh ingredients. Not surprisingly, reservations are hard to come by in the twenty-five seat dining room (no terrace), so it’s best to plan a few days in advance for dinner.

Though it’s hard to tire of the sunny café tables on the Cours Saleya, my home away from home is **Café Marché** (2 rue Barillerie) one street back from the food market with a handful of tables outside. This narrow street catches the sun only in the morning, but I love the high beamed ceiling and parquet floor, well-tended plants and funky furniture: provided by owner Emilie’s antique dealer husband. The short, market-fresh menu (lunch only) changes every day, with a burger theme on Fridays and a popular brunch on Sundays, and you can always count on a smile from Chris who runs the dining room.

Outside the Old Town, the back streets around the Port have become the perfect hunting ground for restaurants best known to locals; you might not have the view of the yachts and fishing boats, but the food makes up for it. Popular with a fashionable young crowd is **Rosalina** (16 rue Lascaris) run by the owners of the Italian epicerie/restaurant Le Local nearby. This airy cocktail bar and restaurant serves tempting dishes such as a whole burrata (creamy-centred mozzarella) with fresh tomatoes or a classic *vitello tonnato*: thin slices of roast veal with tuna sauce.

Nearby, **Vinivore** (32 avenue de la République) is the bistro annex of a wine bar of the same name in avenue de la République, north of place Garibaldi. Québécois owner Bonaventure overflows with enthusiasm for his organic and natural wines, and in the kitchen Chun turns out French dishes with an occasional Asian twist, such as duck breast with five spice powder. Chun comes from a family of...
restaurateurs: his sister and father run Les Secrets de Lili (8 rue de Suisse) the best Chinese restaurant in Nice.

On the other side of town, exciting new restaurants have been popping up in the residential streets behind the Negresco hotel. La Table de Trois (10 rue Dalpozzo) is one of those addresses that food-lovers and chefs share with each other, though it’s unlikely to remain a secret for long. Run by the affable Carlo, formerly of the still-thriving wine bar La Cave de l’Origine (3 rue Dalpozzo) nearby, this bistro is both dressy enough for a romantic meal and casual enough that you can stop by and enjoy a deluxe steak-frites at one of the pavement tables. The incredible pain perdu (French toast) with ginger ice cream has become a fixture on the dessert menu. For lovers of Japanese food, the sushi bar Yuzu (35 rue du Maréchal Joffre) and Ma Yucca (26 rue de la Buffa), which has a fusion slant, are two outstanding restaurants in the area.

Outside Nice, I rarely take risks on restaurants in touristy areas; instead, I have a few favourites that I visit again and again, knowing that they will never disappoint me or visiting friends. In La Turbie, a pretty town perched above Monaco, the Café de la Fontaine (4 avenue Général de Gaulle) has a loyal clientele of locals as well as lucky tourists drawn by its setting on the town square. It gets very noisy when the dining room is full, but for the price the food is unbeatable (perhaps seafood ravioli, steak-frites and a perfect strawberry tart). It’s no wonder as the chef also runs Hostellerie Jérôme, a Michelin-starred restaurant nearby. When my friends who live in Monaco want to get away from the glitz and glamour they head to Chez Pascal (13 boulevard du Général Leclerc) in nearby Beausoleil, a real spit and sawdust bistro with basic but good food.

Whenever I find myself in Antibes, I get lost in the tangle of streets known as the Commune Libre du Safranier (just west of the market) and eventually find La Taverne du Safranier (1 place Safranier) hidden away in a pretty square. Inevitably I order the pasta with seafood, which comes in gargantuan portion with saffron-cream sauce that I lap up with bread. Another reliable restaurant in Antibes is Le Clafoutis (18 rue Thuret) which despite its location on a popular pedestrian street attracts the locals with its set menu prepared entirely with fresh ingredients.

Completely off the tourist track, L’Auberge de la Penne (1 rue Pontis, La Penne) is one of the best restaurants in the arrière-pays, the hills behind Nice. Run by Benoît and his English wife Maria, this country inn with simple rooms near the mountain town of Puget-Théniers serves surprisingly sophisticated cuisine prepared by the perfectionist chef (his truffle menu in February is worth a special trip). Benoît changes his menu daily, often using produce from his organic farm; it’s best to call ahead to ensure that the restaurant is open.

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<td>Café de la Fontaine</td>
<td>4 av. Général de Gaulle, La Turbie</td>
<td>04.93.28.52.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chez Pascal</td>
<td>13 bld Leclerc, Beausoleil</td>
<td>04.93.78.43.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Taverne du Safranier</td>
<td>1 place Safranier, Antibes E7</td>
<td>04.93.34.80.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Clafoutis</td>
<td>18 rue Thuret, Antibes E5</td>
<td>04.93.34.66.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Auberge de la Penne</td>
<td>1 rue Pontis, La Penne</td>
<td>04.93.05.09.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From mid-December until the end of March, tourists can join the local community and take to the nearby slopes for the weekend or even just a day. An adult ski pass costs no more than €30. In summer too, the mountains can be well worth a visit. Take a hike through tranquil meadows and forests where you can breathe in the air full of the scent of alpine flowers, admire the awe-inspiring scenery and observe birds and animals in their natural habitat. The excellent bus service throughout the Alpes-Maritimes makes the mountains easily accessible. If you want to mix up your winter city break or you’ve had enough of lying on the beach, a day’s outing or an overnight stay in the mountains can be just the ticket. Especially when that ticket costs €1 each way!

Isola 2000
www.isola2000.com

**Bus:** Daily Santa Azur buses www.santa-azur.com

**Journey time:** 2 hours each way.

At 90 km from the coast, Isola is the closest ski resort to Nice, and a favourite for snowboarding. The 120 km of slopes are divided into 42 runs: 3 black, 11 red, 21 blue and 7 green.

In the summer, as well as taking in a mountain walk, you can pick up tickets from the tourist office to try out activities such as riding, tennis, archery, and swimming, all located within walking distance of the main village.
Auron
www.auron.com

**Bus:** Daily Santa-Azur buses www.santa-azur.com
**Journey time:** 2 hours each way.

Close to Isola, Auron is part of the Mercantour National Park and boasts over 50 km of cross-country pistes. The snow park includes a half-pipe, advanced tricks zone and dedicated snowboard club. The 135 km of slopes features 8 back runs, 16 red, 16 blue and 2 green. What’s more, if you’ve ever fancied dog-sledging or snow-shoeing this is the place to try it.

When the snow has thawed, visitors can enjoy many walking and hiking trails around mountain lakes and pretty villages such as Saint-Etienne-de-Tinée.

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Valberg
www.valberg.com

**Bus:** Daily buses from Nice centre and Nice Airport.
**Journey time:** 2 hours each way.

A great ski resort for beginners offering 90 km of slopes over 52 pistes. The snow park comes with a half-pipe, big air jump, ramps and an outdoor speaker system. Ice-climbing and paragliding are also available.

In summer, all manner of outdoor activities are on offer including climbing, canyoning, rafting, potholing, abseiling and even bungee jumping.

---

Limone Piedmonte
www.limonepiemonte.it

**Train:** Daily trains from Nice.
**Journey time:** about 2 hours 30 minutes.

It may be over the border, but this Italian resort is just as easy to access from Nice as the French ski stations. Here, the traditional mountain village is as much a pull as the slopes themselves, making this a great destination for skiers and non-skiers alike.

There are 80 km of slopes (6 black, 23 red and 8 blue), an excellent beginner’s piste, a kinderpark and a Big Air Bag.

In summer hiking, climbing, golf, mountain biking and rafting are all possible, or simply get supplies from one of the local shops and have a picnic by one of the mountain lakes.
I used to think that the French Riviera wasn’t the best holiday destination for children. I couldn’t have been more wrong. Now that I have two of my own, I have gathered invaluable tips from other parents on all the great places available to entertain kids, and I’m delighted to be able to share them with visitors to the area.

Fun on the French Riviera with kids

A lot of the activities aren’t particularly well promoted, but there’s certainly plenty to do. If you want to dive into a whole book about keeping children amused on the French Riviera, then I would recommend purchasing a copy of Footprints’s guidebook ‘South of France with Kids’. Our own websites also offer more detailed information on a whole range of child friendly activities.

The French Riviera hotspot for kids is undoubtedly around Antibes, Biot and Villeneuve-Loubet. If you are staying in Nice, it’s easy to either hire a car for the day or use a transfer service like www.friendinfrance.com. Alternatively you can also take a train or bus to get there.

From the region’s sandy beaches to rural nature reserves, here’s a roundup of my favourite places to play and relax in the sun. Don’t forget that in France kids are welcome absolutely everywhere: from posh restaurants to humble cafés.

Swing from the treetops

Little cheeky monkeys will love Le Pitchoun Forest (www.azur-labyrinthe.com, €15 per child) which offers four small climbing courses.

For children 8 to 17 years old, the nearby Canyon Forest (www.canyonforest.com, €25 adult, €22 children 8–17 years old) combines four different adventure courses, including zip lines, rope bridges and giant swings: all spiderwebbing through the treetops of Villeneuve Loubet.
Amusement Park Mania

Espace Marineland (www.marineland.fr) is the intoxicating site with four amusement parks. Marineland itself is a well-respected marine life park, boasting pods of dolphins, killer whales and sharks. Kilometres of twisty-turny slides at Aquasplash make it the Riviera’s largest water park. Farm-themed La Ferme du Far West hosts pony rides and a small petting zoo, and, opposite, giant dinosaurs flank Adventure Golf’s three crazy golf courses. Tickets are pricey and entry fees vary according to each specific park. Combination tickets are also available.

Up for more? Next-door Antibes Land (www.azurpark.com) has loads of huge rollercoasters.

Life under the sea

Ever wondered what’s going on beneath the waves? Take a peek at underwater life aboard the aquarium-like Visiobulle, a glass-bottomed boat that circles the Cap d’Antibes. Boats depart daily (April through September) from Ponton Courbet in Juan-les-Pins. www.visiobulle.com, €13 adult, €6.50 children 2–11 years.

Nice’s Promenade des Anglais

This five-kilometre seafront promenade is sublime. It’s wide, flat and almost entirely pedestrian – although there’s a designated lane for cycling and rollerblading too. You can hire bikes (€10/half-day), skateboards (€6/half-day) and rollerblades (€7/half-day) at Roller Station (49 Quai des Etats-Unis, www.roller-station.fr).

If the sun is too hot for all that physical exertion, then you can pick your pick of any of Nice’s private (15) or public (innumerable) beaches. Castel Plage (www.castelplage.com, sun loungers €12/half-day) pulls celebs like Harry Potter star Emma Watson. Hi-Beach (www.hi-beach.net) offers shady, padded Family Houses (€29/half-day), perfect for soft play with tots, plus kids’ toys and blanket Wi-Fi. Hi-Beach is definitely the best beach I’ve ever found in terms of catering for children in the height of summertime.

All of Nice’s beaches are pebbly, but I’ve noticed that little feet easily navigate across them. My two year old loves building pebble towers and trying to beat his dad at skimming pebbles into the water. For older children, it’s entertainment enough to watch adults getting from the water to dry land. Tip: To have any hope of emerging in a Halle Berry or Daniel Craig pose buy little sea shoes which are cheap and very effective for tackling pebbles underfoot. These shoes can be bought for around €15 for adults and €7 for children.
Island castaway

For older children, escape the Riviera’s summertime crowds on the Ile Ste-Marguerite. This blissful – and car-free – island sits just off of Cannes’ shoreline. Crossed with eucalyptus-shaded paths and surrounded by clear turquoise waters, the island is also home to the Musée de la Mer. This museum displays sunken Roman treasure, but its highlight is definitely the scary cell that once imprisoned the Man in the Iron Mask. Pack a picnic lunch and hop aboard one of the daily ferries (return €12 adult, €7.50 children 5–10 years old, free for children 4 years and under, www.trans-cote-azur.com) that depart from Cannes year-round. A pricier daily service runs from Nice port too.

Get trekking

Take an easy stroll along the Sentier du Littoral. This stunning coastal footpath is clearly marked and runs almost continuously along the Riviera’s shoreline. The best bits loop around Cap d’Antibes, Cap Ferrat and the St-Tropez Peninsula. Seriously outdoorsy families can up the ante with Randoxygéne Walking Guides (printed guides available in most local tourist offices, in French only, www.randoxygene.org). These free guidebooks cover the whole of the Alpes-Maritimes region, mapping out hiking paths, cycle routes and more challenging Alpine climbs.

Fifteen minutes from Nice by car there’s KidCity, a 700m² colourful paradise for active little ones with everything from giant lego blocks, to slides, inflatables, ballpools, trampolines and even rope bridges. After the fun is over, adults can take weary children to the panoramic restaurant. It is open between 10am–4.30pm daily, but longer at weekends and Bank Holidays. Prices are a reasonable: €6 for the under 4s and €10 for children between 4 and 12 years old. www.kidscity.fr

The Oceanographic Museum (see page 48) in Monaco is a great way to spend a rainy afternoon. The aquarium is excellent and the whale skeleton simply fascinating.
Think of this list as merely a starting point! The French Riviera is home to plenty more fun family activities for kids of any age, including the following:

1. Between April and October, rent a jetski or try wakeboarding at Cap Ferrat Watersports. www.capferratwatersports.com

2. Visit the botanical gardens at Domaine du Rayol, or join one of their guided snorkelling tours (min. age 8). www.domainedurayol.org

3. Try canoeing, rafting or hiking through the jaw-dropping Gorges du Verdon, Europe’s own Grand Canyon. www.lesgorgesduverdon.fr

4. Burn rubber on the go-kart track at Fréjus’ professional-style Inter Racing Kart. www.interracingkart.com

5. Do your best to find your way out of the Labyrinthe des Sens: a crazy maze of vegetation just north of St-Tropez. www.labyrinthedessens.com

6. Older children can catch a film under the stars at the Monaco Open-air Cinema (Le Rocher de Monaco). Films begin around 9.30pm (Summer only).

7. An hour’s drive northwest of Nice, the Réserve des Monts d’Azur offers guided safaris through herds of wild bison and Mongolian horses. www.haut-thorenc.com

8. Visit Cap Ferrat’s Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild: nine different themed gardens and a musical fountain surround the all-pink mansion. www.villa-ephrussi.com

9. Spend the afternoon on Villefranche’s Plage Les Marinieres: the town’s main beach is a perfect arc of golden sand, lapped by shallow waters.

10. Visit Parc Phoenix (www.parc-phoenix.org) near the airport which is a very cheap and easy day out at €2 per adult and free for under 12s. Open spaces, a large children’s park, an impressive greenhouse and a small aquarium are all on offer. Don’t forget some bread to feed the ducks at the entrance.
Rambling on the Riviera

My walk will take you along the coastal path from the pretty port of Nice, taking in Cap Nice and Mont Boron and finishing at the picturesque village of Villefranche. The full walk is quite a trek and not for the faint hearted as it involves lots of steps along the way, but the views make it all worthwhile! A word of warning: I wouldn’t recommend this path on a stormy day as you could find yourself being devoured by the waves and carried halfway to Corsica!

Plan on one to two and a half hours for the full trek, depending on your pace, stoppages and so on. Personally I suggest you make a day of it and start off early from Nice. Pack a backpack with sunscreen and plenty of water, and bring a picnic or better still, treat yourself to lunch when you reach Villefranche.

This way you’ll have time to wander around the picturesque village, laze on the sandy beach or enjoy a glass of wine by the waterfront. When ready to return to Nice you can take advantage of the one euro fare and catch the bus.

So, prepare to be walked, wined, dined and bronzed!

I love my weekend walks; fresh air and beautiful scenery are good for the body and soul, but for me it’s a sacrilege not to combine this activity with good food and equally good wine.

So let’s get started! Walk along boulevard Franck Pilatte from Nice Port and carry on past La Reserve. You will notice a pink castle perched on the edge of the rocky landscape of Mont Boron. This is the Château des Anglais (Englishman’s castle). It is one of the most stunning architectural marvels in Nice – like a ravishing apparition.

Dating back to 1856, when Robert Smith, an English colonel who made a name for himself in the Indian army, purchased the land, it took three years to build. The eclectic architecture combines Gothic elements and oriental influences: as it took inspiration from the Red Fort of Delhi that Colonel Smith had previously restored. This pink fairytale castle is now used as private apartments.
Continue along the **boulevard Franck Pilatte** until you reach a path leading down towards the sea. From here starts the very pleasant walk around the first part of the Cap de Nice and Mont Boron: passing the small, but popular, **Coco Beach**. Take a moment to pause and turn around to enjoy the panoramic view of the Nice shoreline stretching from the Port to the airport and on to the Cap D’Antibes jutting out in the distance.

The stone path is narrow: curving its way around the sea and rock formations. It can get quite busy with people from all walks of life – expect to see everyone from fellow hikers to fishermen, to sunbathers and even models preparing for photo shoots – this is the Riviera after all!

There are plenty of little nooks and crannies to find your own special spot for picnicking or to take a rest along the way. If you begin to feel hypnotised by the sparkling Mediterranean, then feast your eyes on how the locals live: there are several beautiful villas along this path especially along Mont Boron. I have often heard of Mont Boron described as the Hollywood hills of Nice because of the exquisite, private villas dotted on this hillside. Even Sir Elton John has a large estate right at the top of the hill.

If you come to what seems to be the end of your path then you’ve gone a little too far and missed the steps. Look up and you will see the pillars of the **Palais Maeterlinck**: a ravishing four star hotel with views to die for. So back track on yourself and on your left you will see what seems to be the never-ending steps signposted by a map. This is known as **pointe des Sans Culottes**. These steps are steep and will separate the wimps from the warriors. I do recommend that you accept the challenge though, as the path from Mont Boron to Villefranche is truly spectacular: more green and rugged, and less busy.

With approximately 260 steps in all, take the first flight of steps to the top which will bring you out onto a street between private villas. Turn right and walk on. To the left, you will see the next challenge – a second flight of steps. Keep going, and think of that yummy dessert you are going to consume guilt free later!

When you reach the top, you will find yourself in a cul-de-sac. Keep right and continue straight ahead. Follow the street round until you find yourself on the main road in Mont Boron, and turn right. Glance down to the sea as you walk along, and you will find yourself overlooking the Palais Maeterlinck’s swimming pools and impressive grounds. Perch yourself up on the railing for a better view. You can then join the path which is signposted with a map, and follow the steps downwards to the sea path.
The path here is more natural and clay-like to begin with. In parts trees twist into an arch formation framing the walkway, and the green terrain is dotted with vibrant flowers. In the distance, you can enjoy views of the beautiful Cap Ferrat 'the peninsula of billionaires', which separates Villefranche from the pretty town of Beaulieu-sur-Mer. Overhead, you are likely to hear the whirl of helicopters en route to Monaco or perhaps Saint Tropez, and at sea level the gentle hum of the passing boats. There are lots of little bridges and steps to bring you back down to earth though, and keep you focused on the path.

Then you turn the corner and there she is: Villefranche shyly showing herself a little more with each step; the elegant sailboats gently bobbing in the water. Walk onwards through small beaches, where sunbathers laze enjoying the sun, then past Darse port, where the workers sit busily mending boats. Next, wander through the impressive Citadel, a fortress built around 1554 to prevent any attacks from the sea.

By this point I’m generally ravenous and crave a nice cold glass of wine. So I find myself walking with fresh determination to the waterfront. There are lots of restaurants to choose from, but I often decide to treat myself and take a seat at the restaurant La Mere Germaine, right by the waterfront, on Quai Corbet. This restaurant is full of history and tradition, and I once had the pleasure of eating their famous bouillabaisse with one of the family who owns this restaurant. She shared with me the beautiful story behind the name of the restaurant ‘La Mere Germaine’. During the war, in the late 1930s, her grandmother warmly welcomed the American soldiers who docked in this small port. She helped and cared for them like sons; the soliders grew very fond of her and affectionately gave her the name ‘Mom Germaine’ – which stuck!

For me, this is a heavenly place to end such a walk; sit back, drink in the view and take your time deciding which fish dish you are going to devour. Salut et Bon Appétit!

by Veronica Sexton
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K. Jaques

Back in 1933, when St Tropez was a small fishing village, Armenian refugee Jacques Keklikian decided to settle and open a small shoemaker’s workshop on rue Allard.

Jaques began making hand-stitched shoes for the locals, and in particular the local fishermen, who found the shoes to be particularly hard wearing as the leather was oiled to repel sea water. After a trip to Rome, Jacques’ son George was inspired by the ‘gladiator’ style shoe, and from this, the signature tropezienne shoe was born, which has remained at the top of their best-seller list ever since.

The 1950’s and 60’s saw St Tropez soar as a popular and glamorous holiday destination. It was during this era that Brigitte Bardot was spotted wearing a pair of Jaques’ shoes which, unsurprisingly, took their popularity to new heights. At the turn of the millennium, when Kate Moss stepped out in some, sales were boosted once again. Since then there has been a growing international interest in the well-heeled brand, and many famous personalities such as Angelina Jolie, Naomi Campbell, Liz Hurley and Jack Nicholson have been seen in bespoke designs from the once humble shoemaker.

Today, K. Jaques is still a family run business which has three sales outlets in St Tropez as well as one in the Marais quarter in Paris. Thanks to many international fashion magazines raving about the chic sandals, exports now represent 50% of the firm’s turnover, and the sandals can be found all over the world. All the sandals are hand crafted; the soles have a stamp specifying they were designed and manufactured in Saint Tropez, a guarantee of quality in this day and age of mass production.

With a portfolio of over a hundred styles, ranging from flats to jeweled heels, K.Jaques shoes are an everyday essential for fashionistas strutting the promenades and beaches of the Cote d’Azur.

K. JACQUES
25 rue Allard & 16 rue Seillon, Saint-Tropez
www.kjacques.fr
Façonnable

Founded in the 1950s by Jean Goldberg, Façonnable remains one of the most celebrated menswear brands worldwide. This is thanks to its refined collections of classic French tailoring and resort wear.

The company started humbly as a small custom tailor shop that Jean Goldberg opened in 1950 on rue Paradis in Nice. By 1958, the small shop was making custom tuxedos for Hollywood stars who were on the Cote d’Azur for the annual Cannes Film Festival. It was at this time that his son, Albert Goldberg, began learning the skills that would later lead to him becoming a master tailor.

As fashion took off in the 1960s it was time for Jean to retire. Eager to invent his own vision of prêt-à-porter (ready to wear) menswear Albert took over. He began producing a small prêt-à-porter collection for men, and renamed the business ‘Façonnable’, a variation on the word ‘Façonner’, meaning ‘to create’. Ever since, colourful designs, sumptuous fabrics and timeless elegance have influenced each Façonnable collection.

In 1973 new boutiques were opened along the Cote d’Azur, in Monte Carlo, Cannes, Saint-Tropez, and Marseilles. Paris boutiques were next, followed by stores across Europe.

By 1988 Façonnable had arrived in the United States and in 1993 it opened its first US boutique on New York City’s Fifth avenue. The success of the brand in the US led the company to expand its product line to include clothing and accessories for women. By 1997, the company had further increased its presence in America by opening two new boutiques on the West Coast in Beverly Hills, and Costa Mesa.

At the start of the new millennium Albert sold Façonnable to Nordstrom. He continued to work as the department store artistic director for a year before he finally retired. In the summer of 2007 the M1 Group, a Lebanese, family-owned company, purchased Façonnable for no less than $210 million.

Today the brand has over 500 retail outlets world-wide and products include high quality men’s and women’s apparel and accessories. While Façonnable has come a long way from its family based beginnings, it continues to offer a master wardrobe for both men and women who prefer elegant, lasting style over fleeting trends.

FAÇONNABLE
Nice 7–9 & 10 rue Paradis
Cannes 100 rue d’Antibes
Monaco 23, boulevard de Moulins
www.faconnable.com
When we are not working, we all love to treat ourselves to life’s little pleasures that make us feel that little bit more cared for. Not surprisingly, our guests ask us for recommendations to make them feel a little special too. The following are our personal recommendations for our guests.

Caroline Rossy
☎ 06.74.33.38.88 www.carolinerossy.com
Massage, reflexology, facials, and beauty treatments all in the comfort of her beauty studio in her Old Town home. Matt, Gayle, Roni and Keely are all fans. Caroline is French and speaks English fluently.

Adrian Shaw
☎ 06.60.21.54.96 www.lifestyleriviera.com
Sports massage therapy and Japanese Shiatsu massage in the comfort of your apartment. Personal training and boot camp groups are offered too. Matt and Gayle are clients and many of our guests have given us good feedback about Adrian’s massages. Adrian is English. His partner Muriel offers yoga classes and speaks English fluently.

Colette Kent
☎ 06.60.17.95.23 www.colettefitness.com
What better way to enjoy yoga than on the beach! Group yoga classes for all levels on Saturday at 10am at Hi Beach or non-summer months in the Hi Beach Hotel. Colette has opening a new fitness studio at 9 rue Fodere, Nice Port with special drop in classes for tourists. For more information please check her website. Keely and Roni are big fans. Colette is Irish.

Identity Hair Design
☎ 04.93.81.95.33 www.identityhairdesign.fr
Superb hairdressers at 17 rue Alphonse Karr. Kate is English and Arno is French but with good English. Gayle, Roni and Nancy are all regulars here.

L’Atelier de l’Ongle
☎ 04.93.62.42.06 www.latelierdelongle.net
This nail salon is very popular with Marie and Kelly and some of our guests. Vlady speaks some English and does manicures and pedicures. There is a relaxing pedicure foot spa upstairs at their 4 boulevard Jean-Jaurès location.

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Expats doing it for themselves

When Nice Pebbles were presented with the Stelios Award for Entrepreneur of the Year on the Riviera at the end of May 2012, we were simply chuffed to bits. The award event, hosted by the Stelios Philanthropic Foundation and 106.5 Riviera Radio, was initiated to attract local small companies, looking for a boost to grow and create new jobs in the region.

As well as the pat on the back from one of the biggest entrepreneurs of our generation, we got to discuss our business with Sir Stelios and we received an ‘Ultimate Business Boost’ prize of €10,000 in cash from his Foundation plus €20,000 worth of radio, internet, event and database marketing from the local English radio station: Riviera Radio 106.5.

We can’t deny we are proud of what we have created, but there are other Riviera expat businesses that also deserve a big pat on the back. So, in celebration of entrepreneurs on the Riviera, we asked some of the local businesses we work with to share their stories.

“We new companies are the life blood of a dynamic, entrepreneurial economy. At a time when jobs and business success are at a premium, I am delighted to see so many people coming forward with innovative and interesting projects for the creation of wealth and jobs.

“We must all make every effort to ensure that others are encouraged to follow in years to come. I am delighted to hand over this Award and welcome Matt and Gayle to our community of entrepreneurs who are making a difference and inspiring successful businesses in their communities.”

Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou, Founder of budget Airline Easyjet and CEO of EasyHoldings plc
Alex Diamond, of Diamond Diving, arrived in the South of France eight years ago. It was a big change from the South of England where he had spent the previous ten years working in marketing. Deciding to ditch the desk job is something Alex has never regretted.

“The French Riviera is a lovely part of the world; the scenery and weather can be wonderful and the food, wine and lifestyle are awesome.

“I started as a freelancer in partnership with other dive centres in the South of France, and then progressed through the French dive system to obtain my Brevet d’Etat (the legal requirement to work in France). Wishing to combine my love of diving, my enjoyment of teaching diving and the long standing ambition to be my own boss, I created Diamond Diving in 2006.

“There is a flipside to living here. It’s not always easy. The bureaucracy is a nightmare; running a small business needs careful studying as the tax and social security system can be prohibitive, and frequently the lack of a customer service culture drives me and many others I know to distraction. Yet, I am very lucky to be able to work doing something I love and that makes it more than worth it.”

For more details see our advert on page 38.

We work very closely with Mira who runs Friend in France and has been a resident in Nice for ten years. Originally from Cambridge, she came to Nice for the first time at the age of seventeen and although an extended holiday romance kept her here initially, the romance died, but the love of the French Riviera did not.

“I realised the depth and breadth of what the French Riviera had to offer only after many years living here, and my goal with Friend in France is to make it significantly easier for others to enjoy the more obvious experiences and also dip into off the beaten track journeys. Everyone wants to enjoy a moment of glamour and luxury when visiting the French Riviera, but there is also the artistic, adventurous and passionate underbelly culture that has attracted originality and individualism for centuries. From artists to sporting stars, Hollywood royalty and real Royalty; they don’t come just for the 300 days of sunshine a year. Like many areas surrounding the Mediterranean, there is a determination not to lose the things that matter regardless of where modern advances take us. A smile, a shared story, a shared experience, nothing is more powerful than positive human interaction and it is these simple things that make a day special.

“The best advice I would offer for anyone thinking of emigrating is to follow your heart, but finding your own place in a new area takes time so don’t expect it to be easy or for it to happen instantly. Give yourself at least a year before even thinking of changing your mind and make an effort to integrate into the society you are now living in. You won’t be disappointed.”
About Mon Ami Andy

Originally set up as a charity, Mon Ami Andy 1901 has evolved into an enterprise to provide secretarial, administrative and concierge services. They provide services – mainly to expats – from basics like opening a bank account and setting up EDF, to more complicated issues like helping people organise a visa, maintain a property and sort out finances.

They work with a trusted network of professionals such as accountants, estate agents, lawyers and key people in government agencies. Together with them they provide a mutual, all-in-one service based on individual requirements: often at a much reduced rate than you would expect.

Their website is always worth referring to as they provide advice, publish lots of free information and notify visitors of their seminars and events. Their aim is to make expats completely autonomous in France.

Mon Ami Andy
6 bis rue Lascaris, 06300, Nice
☎ 04.83.50.84.78
www.monamiandy.com

About Friend In France

As well as airport transfers, Friend in France provides authentic experiences from people with passion and knowledge about this unique part of the world who want to share this with you, so whether you want to dip into the glamour, adventure, artistry, night-life or history there is an option for you.

Mira Guchan-Mclean
mira@friend-in-france.com
☎ 06.99.16.22.33
www.friend-in-france.com

Jen and Andy are a much liked and well respected expat couple who have helped many of our team with their administrative hurdles in France. While the rest of us grapple with and gripe about the French bureaucracy, Jen and Andy relish it. They have impressive backgrounds in business yet they say their expertise comes from living and working in France and dealing with French issues as expats. Jen is Canadian and Andy a Londoner and they met and fell in love in romantic Paris. But Nice beckoned…

“We both moved to Nice five years ago because we missed the beach and the Paris Plage in August didn’t quite cut it. We also have a three year old Henry, otherwise known as the ‘business manager,’ and we were quite sure that Nice was the perfect place to raise him. Near the sea and the mountains; what more could you ask for?

“Soon friends were asking for our advice, then others through word of mouth and then we even started to build a client base of French people who themselves have a hard time with the administration. We had stumbled on a niche, a market we are proud to be involved with.

“Our advice to anyone wanting to set up their own business here would be JUST DO IT! But be clever about it. Whatever you do, research, read forums and ask for advice from people like Mon Ami Andy or those that live here, whom you trust.

“France loves paperwork; the French have a certain way of living and living abroad it is not like home. Get past those little hurdles and you will soon realise that exploring a new way of life is the most fulfilling thing you will ever do. It’s not as difficult as you think… ONWARD AND UPWARD!”
About Cycle Côte d’Azur

With passion and enthusiasm Claire and Emma lead regular group cycle rides from Nice. They have a client base of locals and visitors and cover all ranges of the fitness spectrum. Two of their most popular rides are ‘Explorer’, where you ride up at a gentle pace to a medieval village, with time to take photos and explore, then ‘Challenge’ for road cyclists who want to tackle some of the magnificent climbs here, like Col d’Eze or Col de la Madone. They also offer packages with accommodation, airport transfers and bike hire. Their longer tours can go as far as the stunning Gorges du Verdon and the mighty Mont Ventoux.

www.cyclecotedazur.com
Email: claire@cyclecotedazur.com

Claire Blackie is an English girl from Essex who arrived in Nice in September 2009. For the first few months she learnt French in the mornings and rode with local French cyclists in the afternoons. Immediately she felt right at home and decided she wanted to settle here. She met her business partner Emma Davies, an ex-professional & Olympic cyclist, in Nice in February 2010 and soon afterwards Cycle Côte d’Azur was born. It was never Claire’s intention to start her own company, but she’s so glad she did!

“I’m so pleased at how my life has turned out. It is amazing to live in a place that offers challenges in life and the rewards are always worth it. I’m constantly learning about the area, about the language and culture, about business, and I’m always meeting new people. We absolutely love riding here as the cycling is incredible, it’s a hidden treasure and we wanted to enable others to enjoy and experience what we found here, and so we’ve no regrets about setting up the company! We’d be the first to tell anyone thinking of upping sticks, or looking for a challenge, to go for it!”

Joseph Marsh set up Riviera Van Man two years ago. They will transport goods across the Riviera and also do runs between the UK and France. Before setting up Joe was working at a bar that was being sold, so the business was born out of necessity to find some way to pay the bills. Joe explains…

“It was originally an idea between myself and my father; I had been living on the Riviera for about three years managing a bar, until it was sold, so I needed to find another way to makes ends meet. My father had been an expat here for some time and we got talking about all the home comforts we missed and how expensive certain items were in France in comparison to the UK, so I decided to buy a van and set up transporting goods between France and the UK. We also started offering a ‘man with a van’ and removal service between apartment and villas, and yachts and homes.

“Running the business here is of course a dream, especially in removals, as the less rain the better! It obviously takes time setting up anything in France and Riviera Van Man was no exception but I believe my previous work experience in France certainly helped me with understanding how the system works and it’s worth the hard work. The auto entrepreneur (sole trader) system they set up in France is a great place to start and keeps everything nice and simple. If you have an idea but don’t want to take too much risk this is ideal. It is also important you have a basic understanding of the language or at least someone who can help you initially.”
Julia Edgely has been working as a homeopath here for the last 5 years. She specialises in homeopathic treatment for children and babies. Julia wanted to expand her practice and so set up The Antibes Practice with her colleague Christine Paul. Seeing a gap in the market for a more UK orientated clinic, they set about creating a multi-disciplinary centre of Complimentary and Alternative Medical practitioners under one roof.

“France lives up to its reputation for being a fan of paperwork. This can be frustrating at first, but once you can accept this, and don’t let it get in the way of your professional goals, it’s not too much of a problem. Expect administration to take three times longer than expected. Word of mouth here is excellent – better than anywhere else I have worked. So, if you are doing a good job, you will soon build a reputation and then some traditional advertising plus word of mouth can lead to fast business growth.

“Anyone thinking of staying here and running a business should be mindful that, if you fell in love with the holiday feel to the area, you may be disappointed outside of the season. Yet, the quieter times can sometimes be the best times to enjoy exploring and discovering all the great nichés out there. Once you know your own secret spots, the place soon feels like home.”

About The Antibes Practice

A network of CAM practitioners covering Massage, Homeopathy, Colon Hydrotherapy, Reflexology and more.

14 avenue du 24 Aôut, 06600 Antibes
☎ 06.27.09.68.57
www.antibespractice.com
Matthew and I started to visit Nice for a few weekends each year to escape our daily grind. I was a solicitor working in Manchester and Matthew worked as a micro-biologist for a pharmaceutical company in Liverpool. In 2004 we bought a little apartment in Nice and we needed to help pay the mortgage. We looked for a company like ours to manage the apartment for us and couldn’t find one. Seeing a gap in the market, we planned a move over here. We sold our UK home to give us the funds to survive for two years without earnings. We arrived at Nice Airport in 2006 with two suitcases carrying most of our worldly possessions; it’s amazing what you sell at car boot sales when you have to! Setting up camp, in an unloved one bedroom apartment in the Old Town, we got to work.

The plan was simple and hardly needed writing down: earn enough money to live a simple life by managing around twelve stylish boutique apartments in the centre of Nice. We planned to do all our own cleaning, linen and laundry, and create a small website. All we really knew is that we wanted to bring some objectivity into the market, build a brand and set some standards of how we felt guests should be treated when visiting.

The first year was very tough. As well as doing everything ourselves and putting in twelve hour days, every day, we had no office, no staff and not even Wi-Fi for the first months. We used to nurse drinks for hours at email cafes so we could answer emails well into the night and took root at a few laundrettes where Wi-Fi was offered while waiting. Somehow though, we look back on these tough times fondly – it was romantic, exciting and fun. To this day, one of the most memorable evenings for us was taking a bottle of champagne, some gourmet cakes – carefully boxed and ribbon wrapped – and a blanket down to Nice’s pebbly beach to celebrate our wedding anniversary. We couldn’t afford to eat out, but that evening we felt so lucky that we now lived on the French Riviera and could spend evenings listening to the waves lapping and watch a gorgeous sunset.

Things were tougher than they had to be for us because we refused to compromise. We had a vision for Pebbles and we stuck with it. We turned many properties away that did not fit. Many owners wouldn’t agree to some of our terms of business. We couldn’t blame them; we were new and didn’t have much to offer other than a concept, but we
wouldn’t negotiate. We still don’t. We often felt we had made a big mistake, but we loved being here so much it pulled us through.

We also learnt quickly that to trade legally in France, if we were managing property, we’d need a professional licence backed by insurance. We’d need to convince the prefecture that we were professional and worthy of the license and were told they were not easy to obtain. We got on with getting it and it was another special day when the papers arrived.

Luckily, twelve months into living here, the tide certainly turned as owners began to grasp the concept of Pebbles and saw the potential in joining us. Guests loved us from the beginning, word quickly spread and the travel community started to show an interest in what we were doing. We started to look for help with cleaning. Even then, we had no idea we would become managers of over 170 properties and over twenty five team members.

We’ve learnt so much along this journey. As the company grew bigger than we would ever have imagined, we learnt about the cost of salaried employees and how this would cost nearly 50% more than in the UK. We learnt that you can’t stop a growing company or you will stifle it. We also learnt that not speaking French very well was going to be a huge hindrance! It still is. If only there was time to learn that!

We often joke that if we knew before what we know now, we never would have boarded the plane. Yet, when we receive emails from guests who have stayed with us, we smile. When owners drop off chocolates for us, send kind emails about how well their apartment is being looked after, and when they do all they can to support us with useful ideas, we feel loved. When our team members tell us how much they enjoy working with us, we’re honoured. When we see positive web reviews, guidebook recommendations or newspaper articles written about us, we beam with satisfaction that our hard work is noticed.

It is our team and all our owners who make Pebbles what it is. We wouldn’t have won this award without them. We have already grown our team since we were presented with this award and we plan to grow further by next year. We have had a waiting list of owners for the last six months and we will take more onto our portfolio in line with our resources.

We can’t say for certain what directions we will take the company in over the next five years, except to say we will continue to grow. We hope our team will grow with us. Thank you to our guests, our owners, our team, and now the Stelios Philanthropic foundation and Riviera Radio 105.6 for giving us this chance to make Pebbles the company we strive for it to be.

Gayle & Matthew
Nice Pebbles
Services For Our Guests

Here at Pebbles we pride ourselves on the service we offer our guests. We greatly appreciate the positive reviews written by past guests on various forums, including TripAdvisor. We’re still chuffed to bits when we learn that many of our guests are previous patrons or found us by word of mouth. We’re here to make your holiday perfect, from your initial enquiry with us, until we sadly wave you off… till hopefully next time.

All our guests are VIPS. That’s Very Important Pebbles.

Here’s how we strive to offer our guests the service they deserve:

**Initial enquiries through to booking with us:**
- Detailed web pages on each apartment, including a page on what guests liked most, and also what they liked least
- Hundreds of impartial reviews on how previous guests found their rental property and our services
- Dedicated staff to answer your phone or email enquiries, six days a week
- Online booking system so you can book your holiday in minutes
- Packages to enhance your stay, including airport transfers and mid-stay cleans
- Insurance backed and licensed, so in these uncertain times you can be sure any monies you send to us are completely safe

**While you are here:**
- A shop in central Nice – open six days a week – to help with any issues that may arise, assistance for guests faxing and printing, and to store luggage free of charge
- Early check-in and free storage of luggage during opening hours
- Personal Meet and Greet on arrival, including a personal tour of the rental property and details on the property and area
- Personal recommendations of restaurants and activities from our knowledgeable team
- Personal copy of the Pebbles Guide and local maps and area information
- Complimentary beach towel hire
- Complimentary welcome basket and L’Occitane toiletries

**When you sadly leave us:**
- Late check-out and free storage of luggage during opening hours
- Collection of loyalty points for future stays with us
- Choice of packages including airport transfers
We are always asked what the difference is between Nice Pebbles and Riviera Pebbles.

The answer: not much really. Both have some very high-end and stylish apartments, houses and villas on offer to our guests. Nice Pebbles showcases the best of what we can offer in Central Nice for location, style and amenities.

Riviera Pebbles showcases the rest of our 170-plus portfolio over a wider area of Nice and then the rest of the French Riviera. We are adding to our rental portfolio all the time.

Please visit…
www.nicepebbles.com and www.rivierapebbles.com
for more details and information.

Here’s a flavour of what we have to offer…

Nightly rates from:
La Campana ...................... £60
Coco ............................. £60
Harmonie ........................ £60
L’Artiste ........................... £70
Perla ............................... £70
Le Foresta ....................... £70
Dolce Vita ........................ £80
Angelica ............................ £90
Castle Jolie ..................... £175
Succumb to a good night’s sleep...

Prepare culinary feasts
Vantage Point Balconies

Over 100 properties to dine al fresco or sip cocktails before dinner.

Nightly rates from:

- **Rialto** .................. £75
- **7eme Ciel** ................ £95
- **La Fontaine** ................ £95
- **Portofino** ................ £110
Couple’s Romantic Retreats

Over 50 perfect apartments for private escapes.

Nightly rates from:

- Collet ........................... £60
- Le Foresta ........................ £70
- Francois .......................... £75
- Massena .......................... £75
Dazzling Sea Views

Over 30 properties to take in Mediterranean views, day or night.

Nightly rates from:
Bellevue ......................... £70
Miramar .......................... £95
Baie des Anges ................. £160
Les Pecheurs .................... £195
Swimming Pools
Over 10 properties where you can dip in and out of fun and relaxation as the mood takes you.

Nightly rates from:
Juan Flore & Secret Garden  £110
Villa Mimosa  £200

Sandy Beaches
Over 10 properties a stone's throw away from barefoot strolls and building sandcastles.

Nightly rates from:
Picasso  £80
Villa Val Fleuri  £350
Peaceful Terraces

Over 80 properties where you can relax and enjoy all year round sunshine.

Nightly rates from:

Aurora .......................... £70
Le Metropole .................. £70
Via Guiglia ...................... £90
Cathedrale ........................ £110
Old Town Charm

Over 40 properties in the heart of the action and Nicois atmosphere.

Nightly rates from:

- Citrine ........................ £60
- Harmonie ..................... £60
- Sinclair ........................ £90
- La Belle Excuse .............. £110
Family Apartments with Style

Over 20 properties with three or more bedrooms to enjoy precious time with family and friends.

Nightly rates from:

- **Cognac** ............... £90
- **Majestic** ................ £125
- **Opera Ville** ............. £125
- **Castle Jolie** ............. £175
Private Villas with pools & grounds

Over 10 villas for relaxing in your own domain. Live the high life, if only for a week or so… Dipping in and out of action and relaxation as the mood takes you.

Nightly rates from:

- Villa Solaise .................. £215
- Villa Occitane ................ £225
- Villa Lou Boutchin ........... £245
- Villa Val Fleuri ............... £350
- Villa Manderinette .......... £575
Luxe Pebbles rentals are an exclusive collection of high-end private villas and luxury apartments with renowned locations and stunning views; the ideal venues for enjoying every aspect of the French Riviera.

All Pebbles rentals are hand-picked by our staff to meet the expectations of our discerning guests.

Nightly rates from:

La Sittelle .................. £550
Nothing compares to the peace and tranquility of a Luxe rental that is all yours for a week, a month, or longer.

Our properties offer comfortable and spacious living areas designed with plenty of do-what-you-want space. Grab a glass of rosé and dig into those Booker Prize finalists you’ve been putting off!

Nightly rates from:

Ponchettes Plage ............... £250
Pebbles doesn’t just have charming apartments and homes to rent – you can buy with us too. Whether for investment, pleasure or a bit of both, perhaps you’re ready to take the plunge and buy your own piece of the French Riviera.

Viewing properties is not only the most important stage in the property buying process, but also the fun bit! With Nice Pebbles we’ll tour around as many apartments and villas as you wish. It’s as easy as telling us your wish list and then we’ll draw up a property shortlist. We will chat through the shortlist prior to the viewings and then hit the town.

If you have looked into buying property in Nice before you might have noticed that many of the agency windows show the same properties. This is because, like the USA, and some other countries, France largely operates through a multi-listings system, which means agencies tend to share properties. We have close ties with certain estate agencies, and we are a member of SIA: the multi-listings agency, which means we have access to most of the properties in Nice for sale at any given time.

For buyers this system is great news. There’s no need to send your details out to lots of agencies or trawl through agency windows. We can do all the hard work for you - it is just like having a personal shopper!

The Nice Pebbles Sales team are real industry experts who take pride in their comprehensive knowledge of buying and selling property in Nice. Take a look at the website where you will find a wealth of useful information to help with your hunt to find the ideal property.

In our continued effort to make your property search easier, Nice Pebbles Sales has recently launched a new, more user-friendly website. You can now search by price, area and date, type in your exact requirements in our advanced search options, or just simply have a nosey to see what’s on offer!

Additionally, in response to the ever-increasing number of Russian clients contacting us, our new Russian site is up and running, and the French version is in process as we speak. Voila!

+33.(0)4.89.05.06.60
Scan the code with your mobile phone to connect to our website

NICEPEBBLESSALES.COM
Like buying property anywhere in the world, purchasing property in Nice follows a straightforward chain of events. Here are the usual ten steps a buyer takes when buying their own place in the sun. And we are here to hold your hand every step of the way.

1. **Gain knowledge about the local property market.** What can you buy for your budget? Which areas do you prefer? Is a balcony a must? How about a lift? You can browse our site – packed full of information on different areas – with property pages that are updated almost every day.

2. **Draw up a list of your exact wants and needs.** This is where personal contact with us really helps. We’re here to answer your questions and queries by phone, email or, even better, by meeting you in person if you are in Nice.

3. **Considering financing your purchase with a mortgage?** We will discuss solutions with you and pass you onto the people who can help. Learning what you can borrow now will make your property search much clearer when you start working through that shopping list of potential properties.

4. **Come and see us!** Once we have drawn up that all important shortlist, it’s time to shop around. We’re confident we can show you the best of what is available on the market at any time. If you do see something it looks like we may have missed, tell us. We’ll tell you why it wasn’t on your shortlist, and if you are still keen, we’ll arrange a viewing. We routinely show around six short-listed properties to our clients in a day’s viewing. We can also answer any further questions about renovation and rental returns, as well as sharing the experiences of our clients who have purchased similar properties in Nice.

5. **Seen the right property?** Then it’s time to make a non-binding offer to the seller. We will discuss the offer to make and then make the offer on your behalf. It’s illegal to sell a property for over the asking price in France so negotiating for a better deal is often on the cards.

6. **Price agreed!** Then it’s time to sign the **Compromis de Vente**. This is the initial sales document that is prepared by the **Notaire** and that lists your name, address, the property that you intend to purchase and details of the transaction. It is signed by both the buyer and seller. The **Compromis de Vente** gives the buyer (but not the seller) a seven-day grace period to reflect upon the purchase. If you change your mind during this time you may walk away from the deal having lost nothing.

7. **Appoint a Notaire.** Or notary, to act as your solicitor throughout the purchase process. We can arrange this for you and we have a list of efficient English-speaking **Notaires** who we recommend to our clients. These government-sanctioned property lawyers handle any debt searches, building checks and conveyance issues on your property. Their fees are fixed by the French government at around 7.2% of the property price, a sum only payable upon purchase. You don’t pay the same sum again when you come to sell the place! And at Nice Pebbles, all of our estate agency fees are paid by the seller. We don’t charge you a single penny, cent or centime for our services.

8. **Send the deposit.** If you’re just as delighted with your purchase once your seven-day reflection period is over, it’s time to deposit a sum, normally 5–10% of the purchase price, into the Notaire’s escrow account. If the seller backs out of the purchase, they will have to refund your deposit, plus an additional sum equal to the value of the deposit. In addition, if you fail to obtain your mortgage then the **clause suspensive** (suspensive clause) on your **Compromis de Vente** comes into play: your deposit will be returned to you if you cannot finance your purchase with a French lender in the allotted time.

9. **Not financing your purchase with a mortgage?** Then skip to point 10. If you are, then it’s time to send back your mortgage approval documents to the **Notaire**.

10. **Deeds of sale.** The **Notaire** will now draw up the deeds of sale and arrange a date for you to sign for your new property. You may do this from a distance by giving the **Notaire** Power of Attorney to sign on your behalf, but it is far more fun to do it in person! You will be given the keys on signing day. We can then assist with renting your new property, finding a local builder or simply wish you all the best with your new place in Nice!
Given that most of the buildings in Nice were built over 100 years ago, and many long before that, there are real opportunities to renovate and restore gorgeous original features to their former glory.

Historically, the French and Italians bought up several properties on the Riviera as holiday homes; they used the space more as a place to sleep between time spent at the beach and out at restaurants than as somewhere to actually live. This means that many apartments currently for sale are in need of some real tender loving care. Once nurtured, a shabby little apartment can become quite the pied-à-terre. Perfect as a home away from home to visit this incredible part of the world, and just what Pebbles guests are looking for too.

The French property market is obsessed with size by square metres and this is largely how any property space is valued. You can’t change the square metres, but you can certainly make sure that you maximise the value of every square centimetre. This can be done by completely renovating the space or just furnishing it to a higher standard. We’ve seen lots of fairly ordinary apartments transformed into fantastic homes, with impressive rental returns to boot.

On the pages that follow, some of our clients tell their stories of how they acquired and tended to their apartments, and are now pleased as punch with their little home from homes. Our rental guests have enjoyed these wonderfully turned out places too.

### Key Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Price Range/m²</th>
<th>Rental Return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Town</td>
<td>4,000-7,000/m²</td>
<td>4-6% NET rental return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promenade</td>
<td>6,000-10,000/m²</td>
<td>3% NET rental return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musiciens</td>
<td>4,000-6,000/m²</td>
<td>3-4% NET rental return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carré d’Or</td>
<td>5,000-8,000/m²</td>
<td>3-5% NET rental return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notre Dame</td>
<td>3,000-4,000/m²</td>
<td>3% NET rental return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etoile area</td>
<td>4,500-6,500/m²</td>
<td>5% NET rental return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mont Boron</td>
<td>5,000-8,000/m²</td>
<td>3% NET rental return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port</td>
<td>4000/m²</td>
<td>3-4% NET rental return</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures are for guide purposes only and will ultimately depend on the individual property.
Location is everything. Consider where a new visitor to the Riviera would like to stay; for example in Nice, popular areas are the Old Town, the Carré d'Or and certain areas of the Port.

Don’t be put off by shabby or unattractive common areas in the building. Common parts are often not looked after and even if they are new now, they will fade over time. Today’s scruffy common parts are tomorrow’s refreshed ones, and vice versa. Essentially, don’t let this cloud your judgement of a potentially great apartment.

Lifts can be important, but are not essential. We still have apartments on the top floor without lifts that are very popular. That said, the apartment at the top needs to be worth the climb.

Property with outside space, needing renovations, should be put on your shortlist as this is very popular with our guests. Even a small balcony, with two chairs where you can sit out and enjoy a drink, is a real plus.

Be aware of natural light. Walls, if any, can be taken out for more open-plan living, maximising the space available. If a property is to be renovated and has two bedrooms you’ll need living room space for two sofas and a dining area to seat four.

Sea views are understandably popular and can attract a rental premium, but, for this to be balanced against the extra price of the apartment, it should also be in close proximity to shops and restaurants.

Would you enjoy staying in the property? Remember it’s not just about attracting new guests to your property with great photos; if your guests have enjoyed the apartment and location they will very likely tell others and also return themselves.

Most guests want the kind of standards they have at home. It is not enough for an apartment to be clean and central; from experience guests are happy to pay extra for something modern that has been decorated with taste and style.

Spend the maximum you have on styling your apartment; it will pay dividends in the long run.

Amenities are very important. Washing machines, dishwashers, tumble dryers, Wi-Fi and cable TV are very important and add a premium to your rental space.
We had the pleasure of meeting Brian and Rachel when they organised a break in Nice with their friends and stayed in two of our apartments. They fell in love with Nice and decided that they wanted their own piece of the Riviera. As luck would have it, a few months later, one of the rental apartments on our portfolio came up for sale. This apartment was in the ideal location and just newly renovated. Brian happily shares their experience with you...

Rachel studied in Nice for a year in the late 90s. Her fond memories of the Nice sun, cuisine, location and lifestyle were often a topic of family discussion as we planned for our summer holidays each year. After a bit of saving, we celebrated an important milestone in our lives by visiting Nice in June 2011. This was Rachel's first visit since college and my first. After only a few days staying in Nice, it was clear to us that Nice was a city that captivated both of our hearts.

While organizing our holiday from the U.S., we quickly learned about Nice Pebbles through an internet search on rental apartments in the area. We booked stays in both the Cathedrale and François apartments. We couldn't have been happier with the apartments as well as the service from the Nice Pebbles team. During our stay, we began to dive into the Pebbles Guide as it was a handy reference for those interested in owning their own piece of the Cote d'Azur.

From the testimonials from current owners, to the information on the buying process in France, the Pebbles Guide was a great thought starter as Rachel and I begin to talk about the possibility of purchasing an apartment of our very own.

Upon arriving back home in the U.S., we immediately organized a return ‘apartment hunting’ visit for February 2012. In the months leading up to our second visit, we had numerous phone and email conversations with Matt Roberts regarding the particulars of the perfect investment for us: cost, location, size, weighing up apartments to renovate against not renovating etc. Matt was also extremely knowledgeable about the buying/mortgage process in France and really took the time to educate us. Furthermore, he put us in contact with partners he trusted to assist us in securing an apartment in Nice: mortgage broker, banker, Notaire, etc.

As luck would have it, Rachel identified an apartment on the Pebbles Sales website that met all of the criteria we were looking for. Given that it was several months until our ‘apartment hunting’ visit in February, we contacted Matt to ask for his advice; he said the apartment for sale had recently been renovated and was also a portfolio property under the management of Nice Pebbles as well! A perfect scenario! Almost too perfect we thought. We addressed some of our concerns with Matt about buying a property ‘sight
unseen’ and once again he made the effort and time to put our concerns at ease – even filming three videos in HD showing the street level, common areas, and finally the beautiful apartment itself. In January 2012, our offer to purchase ‘Harmonie’ was accepted.

When we first set eyes on Harmonie in February we knew, from the moment we walked in the door, that we had truly found the perfect apartment for us. At first, we noticed how spacious Harmonie is for a one bedroom in the Old Town. It also had a true ‘at home’ feel immediately. The kitchen is well equipped and already contains many entertaining ‘extras’ that would make it easy to host a small group for a cocktail party.

An added bonus was that the bedroom (located in the back of the flat) was extremely quiet and the bed itself was more comfortable than our bed at home! The bathroom was plenty big enough for two, very clean, and had a relaxing ‘rain’ shower head with plenty of hot water and great water pressure. It was quite obvious to us that much time and thought went into the design of this apartment.* All of the details were carefully planned, right down to the placement of recessed lighting: including dimmers on most lights to create great mood lighting at night.

In addition to the lovely apartment, we were surprised to learn that the space is literally steps away from Oliviera (our favorite restaurant in Nice). The location in the Old Town is ideal for us: a super short walk to the supermarket, Place Saint François, Place Rossetti, Place Massena and Cours Saleya, as well as less than a five minute walk to the sea and Promenade des Anglais. The apartment is truly in a location that allows one to experience the heart of Nice easily. We look forward to spending more and more time at Harmonie now and in the years to come.

We couldn’t have been happier with our purchase. We owe so much to the team at Nice Pebbles for their assistance during the purchase phase and for the comfort of knowing the apartment is always being looked after.

Square metres: 55
Purchase price early 2011: €170,000
Renovation Costs: €50,000
Furniture and finishing touches: €10,000
Purchase price Dec 2011: €275,000
Estimated annual rental return: €15,000

Le Foresta

Alex and Paul* originally discovered Nice almost a decade ago and, like many Pebbles owners, after a few visits they decided to buy an apartment here. At first they looked at flats in different central areas of the city such as the Old Town, Place Massena and the Carrè d’Or, but then they decided to settle for the ‘antiquaire’ quarter of the Port. Alex shares their story…

It had everything we wanted: it was next to the Old Town but quieter, two steps from the Promenade, and retained the cachet of typical old buildings. Furthermore, the area had a real ‘Niçois’ feeling with loads of authentic shops frequented by locals.

Our first investment was a small fifth floor one bedroom apartment in a walk up Niçois building, with a charming view of the Mont Boron. We were happy with it, but, as frequent visitors, we soon realized we needed something bigger. So a couple of years ago we resumed the hunt… We didn’t know about Nice Pebbles then, so we couldn’t rely on their advice, and instead we spent months monitoring the internet in search of the ideal flat.

We knew what we wanted: something in a period building with high ceilings and a nice view, on a lower floor. Plus, we were looking for an apartment to renovate: one that could be fitted to our specific requirements and subsequently increase its value.

After quite a few deluding visits, (it’s not always easy to deal with agents if they are not directly involved in your search…) we spotted an ad that had just been published that seemed too good to be true: a first floor apartment in a grade listed building with 14 foot ceilings, and four giant windows with a stunning view of the Castle Hill. What’s more, the sea was only 50 metres away! The price was incredibly low: €150,000, because the apartment had been neglected for decades and was in need of a gut renovation.

We knew it was an unmissable opportunity and begged the agent to allow us to be the first to visit it. The very next morning we were in Nice, anxious to discover if we had finally found our ‘rough diamond’!

The flat was a real wreck with a quirky layout. Divided into small rooms, with the bathroom window opening onto the entrance foyer and the kitchen window onto the main bedroom, it had no heating and all the pipes had to be replaced. The whole space was dark and dirty, and major work had to be done, but the potential was definitely there. We visited the flat at 10am and by 10.30am we were already signing our agreement.

We designed the apartment ourselves, with the goal of obtaining a pad that was modelled on the French ‘Luxe, calme and volupté’ philosophy: somewhere to relax in and forget the hustle and bustle of city life.
We removed one bedroom and the entrance foyer to get more light and create a big drawing room with three windows and an unobstructed view of the Castle Hill trees. The height of the ceilings allowed us to build a mezzanine which hosts a relaxation area in the upper part while containing the kitchen and guest bathroom, complete with a shower, below. The main bathroom, big enough for a bathtub and with convenient double wash basins, is ensuite to the bedroom.

The building process was a long one as it involved installing heating as well as new wiring, pipes, windows, and a bleached oak floor. Decorating was an easier and more pleasant task. We wanted the flat to retain the feeling of living in an 18th century palace, while all the time benefiting from modern conveniences.

We toured the antique shops of the area and bought quite a few objects: including the 18th century fireplace that we used in the drawing room. This we equipped with a bio-ethanol fire, to be able to enjoy cosy winter evenings in the apartment as well as long sunny days at the beach.

Once we finished decorating it, we soon realised that we couldn’t use the flat as much as we wanted, so in order to recuperate some of the expenses and to get a little income we decided to rent it on a weekly basis. We selected, and had meetings with, a few agencies.

Nice Pebbles stood out both for the quality of their services and the professional approach of the team. Gayle and Roni came to the flat, explained the Pebbles philosophy to us and gave us several useful tips on how to have the apartment fitted perfectly for their customers.

We followed their advice and listed Le Foresta with them. Our partnership began in April 2011 and we are incredibly satisfied with the results. We enjoy a perfect relationship with Roni, who manages Le Foresta: she has always been there to help and advise. The rate of occupancy has been very high, and we are pleased that our Pebbles’ guests have been appreciative of our apartment so far. In fact, following Matt’s advice, we have even bought another apartment in the Old Town which will be ready in a month for all Pebbles’ customers to enjoy. Watch this space!

Square metres: 75
Purchase price: €150,000
Renovation costs: €45,000
Furniture and finishing touches: €25,000
Annual rental return: €15,000
Estimated value: €295,000

*Our owners wished to remain anonymous so their names have been changed.
Anita and Jeff Renton had toyed with the idea of purchasing a rental apartment somewhere in France for years. Each time they travelled to a new region of the country on a family vacation, they would peruse the local real estate listings and play the ‘What if?’ game. Here Anita tells their story…

Nice became our top choice after a gloriously sunny trip to the Cote d’Azur in Autumn 2010. Back home in wintry Massachusetts, we happened across a travel magazine article that recommended the city as one of the most promising places in France to own a rental property. After a brief online search confirmed the advice, we decided to take the plunge and made plans for a January 2011 visit dedicated to searching for a place of our own.

We gave ourselves four days in Nice to carry out our search and made arrangements with a local real estate agency to view one-bedroom apartments within walking distance of the major tourist sights. Over the course of the first three days, we must have visited a dozen or so apartments and, frankly, it proved to be a discouraging process. Most apartments struck us as cramped and dated, and we felt ill-equipped to take on a significant remodelling and redecorating project so far from home. The few apartments that we did like were outside our price range. By the afternoon of the third day, we were ready to give up the search and spend our final day sightseeing.

We were strolling along rue de l’Hotel des Postes looking for a café when we saw the distinctive N7 sign for the Nice Pebbles office. Recognizing the logo from our online research into the rental market, we thought we’d stop in and introduce ourselves, in case we ever needed a rental agent. It was a fortuitous decision: The Nice Pebbles team immediately took us under their wing and were soon telling us about a property in Vieux Nice that was about to be listed and, miraculously, seemed to meet all of our criteria: it was over 60 square metres, which is large for a one-bedroom in the Old Town, newly renovated by a master builder* known to Nice Pebbles, and in a prime location for the holiday rental market. We arranged to view the place the next morning – our last day in Nice.

On the day of our viewing we found that the neighbourhood the apartment was situated in was delightful; it was a maze of pedestrianized streets, colourful boutiques, and inviting restaurants, and as soon as we crossed the threshold to the apartment, we knew we had found something special. The builder had exposed lovely old stonework and timbered beams, but also opened up the layout and installed modern fixtures and furnishings throughout.
The result was a charming blend of old and new that felt wonderfully spacious and comfortable. What’s more the renovation was so recent that we could still smell the paint!

We couldn’t pass up the opportunity and made an offer later the same day, just hours before the place was posted to the listing service. Pebbles guided us through every step of the purchasing process, introducing us to English-speaking bankers, accountants, notaires, and insurance agents as needed, and over the summer, began partnering with us to rent out the apartment.

So far the apartment has rented very well, and we are beginning to see repeat guests. Best of all, our family has already made ample use of Citrine as a home base from which to explore Nice and the Cote d’Azur, and we look forward to many more visits!

*Renovated by MB Design & Renovation in 2011*
We are always keen to stress to clients that a good investment is all about the location and then the interior design. Liz Gibney Interiors have transformed a few of our owners’ apartments in the last two years. Matt and Gayle seized the opportunity to work with her when they moved out of their city centre apartment in Spring of 2012. We had seen how impressive Liz’s work was and how guests were quick to book the apartments she had furnished, as well as the inevitable high annual income the apartments achieved. The annual return was quite a lot higher than others on our books with similar, or even better, sizes and amenities.

With two energetic young boys we needed to move to a house with a garden. With no time to shop, carry, unpack, remove boxes and generally do the hard graft of making an apartment good enough for guests, we asked Liz to help. We knew she would do a far better job than we ever could and her fees would be worth it. Leaving a fair amount of our furniture behind, we thought Liz had a tough assignment.

We wanted to give Liz a free rein knowing its always best to just trust the expert. When we were told it was finished stepping through the front door was such a lovely surprise. We were immediately greeted by care, style and thoughtfulness at every turn. We hardly recognised the home we had lived in for the last two years. So much was the same, but the wow factor was there in abundance. Even older pieces had been stripped and painted to get the very best results.

Before it had been a family home, but now it is more comfortable and inviting than it ever was when we lived there. It has oodles of style, class and individuality to boot. Many of the original pieces remain but have changed colour or been moved to a different room. Its an eye opener that just changing the height of some pictures and adding a little here and a little there can make such a difference. I didn’t know how Liz would blend a white leather sofa, walnut coffee table and quite a lot of masculine furniture and artwork. Yet, a few additional select pieces just lift the apartment out of the ordinary, and now its much more feminine, but not fussy, and still as ‘child-proof’ as any home can be *.

The wonderful views over the treetops from the living room, kitchen and main bedroom largely escaped us when we lived here. Not now. In addition to the table and chairs outside, the windows are now framed with exquisite curtains that impart a sense of luxury. It is these small touches, such as artfully chosen crockery and decorative pieces, together with a superb eye for colour co-ordination that draw the whole thing together.

We did wonder what it would be like to take a professional relationship into a more personal sphere.
It’s one thing to recommend and another to use yourself. We can’t praise Liz and Jim enough. Nothing was too much trouble and everything was done with passion to make things perfect.

We’re absolutely delighted with the finished apartment, and we would wholeheartedly recommend Liz Gibney Design to completely re-furnish or just add a finishing sprinkle of magic to any of our Pebbles holiday homes. We know the initial outlay is well worth the investment.

Gayle Roberts, Owner of Pebbles

* We couldn’t bring ourselves to repaint the room our boys had loved so much. We asked Liz to leave it alone but she still managed to make it more universally appealing with a new bed and soft furnishings.

We hope that many more children, and adults alike, will enjoy counting stars, birds, bees and elephants just like our boys did. If not, we’re sorry, but its purely down to us. Liz’s magic can only stretch so far.
Renovations by MB Design

SARL MB Design et Renovation is an English speaking French registered building company based in Nice with a combined experience of more than 25 years in the design, building and construction industry. The company have completed numerous projects including apartments, villas, period homes and works on listed buildings, both here on the French Riviera and in England. It’s their job to make the process of refurbishing your property on the Cote d’Azur as stress free as possible.

Should you want to undertake any sort of building or renovation work, there are a few things you should check when looking for someone to carry out the work on your property. On the following page MB Design et Renovation answer some of the frequently asked questions they come across: all may seem blatantly obvious, but even some of the most ‘canny’ investors have made the mistake of not checking out their builder properly first.

The south of France is a fantastic place for a second home or an investment property and is quite rightly heavily regulated when it comes to building and renovation works. Follow the correct procedures in finding your builder, just as you would do in your own country, and keep your mind focused.

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All apartments featured are available to rent through www.nicepebbles.com
Q  How do we choose the right builder?
A  It is always tempting to choose a builder who is fluent in your language and often you are under pressure to find a builder quickly during your short time in Nice. Some may come recommended, which is positive, but always ask to see previous work or visit a current job in progress. All should be registered in France and they should always provide you with a quote (dévis) for the works involved and on that devis will be their ‘siret’ number. It’s then easy to check to see that what they say they can do, they are registered to do. You can easily check online, there are plenty of sites to do this on, for example www.societe.com. Type in their siret number and it’ll give you their name and what works they are registered to carry out.

Q  Will the builder be insured during the work?
A  A builder should be insured for the works that they are registered for. Always ask to see their insurance ‘Decennale’: this will cover any building problems that may happen and without it you could be liable and feel the full force of the French legal system. This very comprehensive insurance doesn’t come cheap for builders so be aware that if the devis (quote) is considerably lower than other builders quotes it may be because they are not covered with this insurance.

Q  Is it worth paying cash?
A  A big NO! Firstly, it is illegal and, should you have a site inspection, you could be liable and may also receive a visit from the local police. Secondly, there will be no record of the works that have been done, so there will be no insurance in place. There really isn’t much to gain from paying in cash other than the TVA saving. The TVA on most building projects on properties over 2 years old, which is the majority of most renovations, is rated at the lower TVA rate of 7% rather than the higher 19.6%, so really there is no incentive to expose yourself to any risk.
Agence Limonier is a British team covering the whole of France. With over 20 years experience, we offer an extensive range of services to meet the needs of expatriates in France, including: Motor insurance with European coverage, Home including prestige risks, Medical cover whether one benefits from a National cover or not, Travel insurance, Legal Protection, Corporate insurance as well as Yacht and crew insurance including P&I.

Our consultants provide a full English speaking service including accident Statement Forms in English. We have the most competitive prices on the market.

Our Banking department offers Bank Accounts, Investments, Personal Loans and an extensive range of French Mortgage products including interest only and repayment mortgages. Our fixed, variable or even capped rates are typically the lowest in the country.

**Insurance**
We offer a range of insurance plans from healthcare solutions to home and contents insurance. All policies tailored to your needs.

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Our international banking services are created to give you peace of mind, no matter where in the world you are banking.

**Mortgages**
If you are looking to buy a property in France we have a wide range of personalised mortgage plans to meet your needs.

Call our British team for a free quote +33.(0)4.97.11.71.17 or get a quote online here: www.agencelimonier.com
BPCA International Branch makes life easier for you on the French Riviera. Our team speaks English and provides a full range of banking services close to your home in Nice or Antibes, and along the coast with 110 branches from Bandol to Menton. You can open accounts in Euros or a foreign currency, use our multi-language ATMs located from St-Cyr-sur-Mer to Bandol to Menton, and print your bank statements in English.

Your iPhone Distribillet app enables you to find Banque Populaire ATMs anywhere in France (and also in the “DOM-TOMs”, French Overseas Departments and Territories), whether in front of a branch, in a shopping centre, or at a tourist site. The Distribillet app is compatible with iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad.

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The Banque Populaire Côte d’Azur is a regional mutual bank, integrated into the economic fabric of the community, emphasising proximity, relationships and solidarity. The Banques Populaires network is part of France’s second-largest banking group, the BPCE Group.
I have lived on the Cote D’Azur, in Villefranche-sur-Mer, Nice and now Valbonne, since November 2003, and have worked for The Spectrum IFA Group since June 2004. I am truly an expatriate: I live and run my business from here permanently, and my two wonderful children, who were both born on the French Riviera, will grow up as bilingual Europeans.

We are blessed, but I know how hard a move like this can be, and also what it is like to live somewhere as a foreigner. This understanding is what drives me to help my clients and partners as much as I can, so that they too can enjoy and embrace this ‘new world’.

Since 2004, I have seen dramatic changes in the global and local economic environments and in the EU and French tax systems. There is no doubt that France can be a complicated place to live with its love of bureaucracy and seemingly endless list of government social and tax agencies. On top of grappling with residential tax rules several of my clients must marry these with the fiscal and financial rules from their countries of origin, which is far from easy; that’s why I am here to help. As an Independent Adviser, it is my job to assist my clients in understanding how the various rules may apply to their individual situations, and how to get the best return in the most efficient manner.

Taking property purchase as an example: a non-resident buyer has quite a few issues to contend with, including the concept that the property will always be taxed by the French authorities first. Any income or capital gains must be declared to the French taxman, and then a second declaration is made to the home authority, who may or may not tax it again depending on whether there is a Double Taxation Agreement/Treaty (DTA/DTT) in place. On death, a non-resident will still have to abide by French inheritance law and tax systems for their French based assets. That said, there is discussion with the UK, for example, to allow UK citizens to elect for UK inheritance law (though this won’t change the tax position). Now consider the case of a non-resident property owner who decides to retire permanently to France, thereby becoming a French tax resident: the possible complications are endless! Basically, it really is true that taking advice at the outset on HOW to own the property is as important as which property to buy.
It may be sufficient to use a clause of ownership or maybe set up a company to own the asset. The use of trusts is now very much out: the French tax trusts on an annual basis if either the settlor or the beneficiary is a French resident OR if the trust owns any French assets (i.e. a French property). Understanding any possible liability, and how to potentially mitigate it legitimately, is more important than ever. Even an SCI has certain restrictions: for example an SCI is not supposed to offer a ‘service’ which under French corporate law includes renting furnished property on a seasonal basis.

Spectrum are NOT French regulated tax advisers; we have a very good understanding of the current situation but would always look to refer complicated cases to either an accountant (who tend to give answers to direct questions) or to a tax lawyer (who advises). The primary benefit of using me as part of your initial team is that we can work through all of your objectives and look at your current situation to draw up a plan. As a result, you should then spend as little time with the lawyer as possible, thereby dramatically reducing the costs as I charge nothing for my time. Asking the right questions is as important as getting the right answers.

Spectrum are, however, a pan-European regulated financial advisory brokerage; my colleagues and I help English speaking expatriates – including many Dutch and Scandinavians as well as other non-resident investors – to find a huge array of financial (and fiscal) solutions to match their objectives. These range from borrowing to buy property, right through to completing a full financial relocation to one of the six European countries that we are based and regulated in. For example, a French resident Brit no longer benefits from the tax free status of ISAs or PEPs, and must pay income tax on their 25% Pension Commencement Lump Sum. Careful planning before moving to France may solve these issues very easily.

Using a contract called Assurance Vie may be the best solution for this type of person as they offer significant income, capital gains and inheritance tax advantages. Likewise, a pension transfer using QROPS legislation may also be relevant to relocating Brits. Essentially, I will guide you through the decision making process, and, should it be needed, my background in Investment Management will allow me to offer personalised investment solutions too.

I am very lucky that many of my clients become good friends, and so I get to see them enjoying the fruits of our joint labours first hand. When I am not meeting clients, or shouting at French banks or at investment conferences, I love to go up to one of the local ski resorts and snowboard while the kids are in ski school. In the summer we do lots of day trips to vineyards in the Var, or the beach at Theoule-sur-Mer, as well as visiting friends in Villefranche and other nearby villages – the diversity of this beautiful region and the people in it is what keeps us here – and, from personal experience, you do get used to the bureaucracy eventually!

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The single most important element in successfully getting a mortgage in France is income. There is no ‘self certification’ in France. Strict Banque de France lending laws state that your total debt cannot exceed more than one third of your total income.

In some circumstances it is possible to have a slightly higher allowance. So if you earn €6000 per month then your mortgages (including the new one), credit cards, rent, and other debt repayments cannot exceed €2000 per month. The income may be net or gross, depending on the bank.

As an EU, but non-French resident, you can apply for a loan up to 85% of the value. You must then fund the 15% deposit plus the notary costs. Non-EU residents may only be able to borrow up to 70%. The loans can be for up to 30 years, depending on your age and the bank.

Notary fees work out to approximately 7.2% in government taxes (like stamp duty), plus 1% in notary fees and approximately 1% of the mortgage amount (if you are taking a mortgage) to assign the bank’s legal interest in the property. Estimate 8% of the purchase price when preparing to buy and this should cover everything.

All mortgage interest rates in France are linked to the three-month or 12-month Euribor index (Euro Interbank Offer Rate). See www.euribor.org

Types of Loans

VARIABLE INTEREST RATES
Linked to a Euribor Index plus the bank’s margin. Some banks offer variable rate mortgages that can safeguard against rises in the interest rates by capping the maximum rate or by extending the term of the loan rather than raising the monthly payment. Most products also give you the option to convert to a fixed interest rate at any time.

FIXED INTEREST RATES
The rate and repayments are fixed for the whole term, so you know exactly what you will be paying each month. Fixed rates are usually higher than variable rates and tend to have penalties for early redemption.

INTEREST ONLY MORTGAGES
Hugely popular in the UK and US, interest only deals are becoming more available in France. There are three main types:

- **Assurance Vie Linked (In Finé)**
  Instead of placing your deposit into the property you take a 100% Interest Only loan and invest the deposit (minimum of 20%) into a French investment scheme that runs alongside the mortgage. These schemes can have significant tax planning advantages and can offer flexibility if you are going to buy and sell a lot of properties as they can be kept as the deposit for the next purchase.

- **Dual Phase**
  Some banks offer a product that is Interest Only for five or ten years and then becomes a repayment loan for ten to 25 years. This is particularly useful if you believe you will pay off large sums in the first period.

- **Asset Backed**
  A few banks now offer an 80% interest only product that simply requires you to provide proof that you hold other net assets valued between 120% and 150% of the loan amount. This is a very good and popular product, especially to those who own other properties.

BUY TO LET MORTGAGES
Buy to let loans don’t exist in France. Future rent can be taken into account but banks will only take 80 percent of the possible rent as part of their calculation and you must still be able to afford the loan without it.

EQUITY RELEASE
More common since the boom in property prices, you can now release up to 70% of the value of the property. Usually a reason for the release is required, but the list of options is broad.

Refinance, bridging loans, renovation costs and loan consolidation solutions are also all available in France.

By Peter Brooke, financial adviser & mortgage broker with The Spectrum IFA Group, our ‘in-house’ finance expert.
Structuring Ownership of French buy-to-let

Choosing the property to buy and the right mortgage for your investment are not the only considerations when embarking on a second home investment. It is important to consider what you want from the property long term and to consider inheritance and tax implications on your investment.

Buyers of French property will often structure their purchases via a simple French company known as an SCI to bypass the ‘forced heirship’ rules. SCIs are civil companies which do not have to file accounts. They are tax transparent so long as they are used just for holding property. This means that the shareholders in the SCI are taxed as though they own the property direct.

The problem with SCIs comes if you are renting out your property furnished. Furnished lets are treated as a commercial activity under French law. This means an SCI would not be tax transparent and would be subject to corporation taxes rates rather than personal taxes. This is likely to be higher on the income received and would certainly be higher for capital gains tax purposes when selling. (Personal rates are 19% whereas corporation tax rates are 33.33%). Any sale would also not be able to benefit from any other personal taxation reliefs.

So, how can you avoid this trap if you are planning to rent the property furnished? It is possible to set up a commercial entity such as a SARL or SAS (equivalents of private limited companies) which could own the furniture in the property. The SCI can then rent the property unfurnished to the SARL. The activity of unfurnished lettings is not treated as a commercial activity and can therefore be carried on by the SCI whilst remaining tax transparent. The SARL or SAS would then let out the property on a furnished basis to end users. It is important that the rental paid to the SCI is not linked to the turnover of the SARL or SAS.

The SARL would generate income and would be subject to French corporation tax although this will be reduced by the sums paid to the SCI for the unfurnished letting. As a shareholder of the SCI you would be subject to French income tax on this income.

This structure is quite straightforward to put in place, but the benefits do depend on the estimated rental yield. Generally such a structure is unlikely to be cost efficient if the rental income is low.

In such cases it may be better to own the property in your own name.

There are further reliefs and exemptions available to individuals to reduce their tax liability including the Benefices Industriels et Commerciales (BIC), Micro-BIC or registering as a professional landlord.

It may also be possible to structure your purchase using one of the many types of corporate entities used in France for the purposes of trading, for example an SNC. The SNC is the nearest thing France has to a true partnership and it is fully tax transparent so the partners pay tax on their profit shares only.

The best option for you will depend on your personal circumstances so specific advice should be sought in all cases.

Sykes Anderson has a wealth of experience advising on structures for owning and letting French properties and, in particular those with cross border tax implications. We can assist you with putting in place a suitable structure to benefit your individual circumstances.
We can all feel a little lost when faced with tax rules and regulations, even in our own country. One small downside of dipping your toes into the French Property Market is that you have to get to grips with a little bit of the French tax system, a system which has a long standing reputation of being hard to navigate.

If you are thinking of a permanent move to France, or starting a business here, the French system becomes something you simply have to wade your way through.

A worthwhile step can be to hire a professional to take up the reins for you. We were pleased as punch to find Arnaud Ruff, an English speaking accountant whose firm specialises in helping clients who are looking to move to France, who live in France already, or who want to buy property in France as a holiday home or as a buy-to-let investment.

Hopefully our clients will find, like we did, that once you bring in the professionals the French system isn't quite as daunting or as costly as first feared.

Arnaud Ruff is happy to share some principles of French tax law with our readers that might help you understand the basics. However, there is never any substitute for individually tailored advice, which might save you thousands of pounds in the long run.

**WEALTH TAX**

Foreigners who buy property in France as a simple holiday home are not subject to French income tax if it’s privately used. They may be subject to wealth tax if the value of the property exceeds €1,300,000 (updated in the 2012 Finance bill) though the net worth of the property can be offset by any loans or mortgages taken out to finance the purchase. The tax rate starts at 0.25 % for between €1,300,000 and €3,000,000 of net wealth, and goes up to 0.50 % for over €3,000,000 of net wealth.

**CAPITAL GAINS TAX**

When it comes to capital gains tax, you can benefit from a reduction in the tax base from the 5th year of ownership, and be completely exempt from this tax after 30 years. The tax rate for capital gains tax varies and can be either 19% or 33.33% depending on the seller’s country of residence.

**LOW CAPITAL CIVIL COMPANY (SCI)**

You may buy property in France as an individual or through a low capital civil company (SCI in French). An SCI offers numerous fiscal and legal advantages and property held through an SCI equally benefits from the same capital gains tax exemptions as individuals do if the rental is unfurnished. Another major selling point of this kind of structure is that it allows for a straightforward inheritance process if properly done. A potential drawback is that if you decide to rent out your property furnished through an SCI, your income will be subject to corporation tax at a rate of either 15% or 33.33% and you will not benefit from the capital gains tax exemption available for individuals.

**RENTAL INCOME**

Non-residents and French residents alike who let their properties in France can choose to do so furnished or unfurnished. This will have an impact on the base calculation of tax, so this is something to keep in mind.

For unfurnished lettings, you may choose to be taxed on your real net income or on 70% of your total income if this is under €15,000 per year. If you prefer to be taxed on your real income, you may deduct interest payments on most outgoings including mortgage payments and maintenance and repair costs.

For furnished lettings, you may choose to be taxed on your real net income or on 50% of your total income if this is under €32,600 per year. If you prefer to be taxed on your real income, you may deduct interest payments on most outgoings including mortgage payments, maintenance and repair costs, accounting fees and an allowance for depreciation of assets in the property.
INCOME TAX RATES

Non-residents with rental income from property in France are taxed only on their French income at a minimum rate of 20% or higher, depending on the amount of annual income.

BECOMING A FRENCH TAX RESIDENT

Perhaps surprisingly, some foreigners pay less income tax in France than they would do in their home countries. This is often because income tax is mainly calculated on the number of people that make up a household and not only the total household income. Large families (three children or more) can often pay very little or no tax even if household earnings are high. There are also a number of tax credits related to expenses including hiring a maid (limited to €7500), investing in making your home energy efficient, and childcare.

Before large families start packing their bags though, there can also be pitfalls with the French system. To make the most of any advantages, becoming a French tax resident must be a clearly thought out process and should be planned well in advance.

If you do not want to become a French tax resident you should avoid spending more than 182 days in France.

TAX RETURNS

Tax returns are usually due in at the end of May for residents and at the end of June for EU residents. It is very important to respect the deadline as late payment charges are usually incurred for returns submitted after this date.

Note: the above information relates to basic French tax law. Each case must be carefully studied on its own. French tax law is subject to change or to alteration by the Government. (April 2012).

ABOUT ARNAUD

I specialise in helping English-speaking and international clients with their fiscal and legal matters in France. Years of experience in these fields and with this clientele have allowed me to build up a large database that I can tap into and adapt to the needs of each client. It’s a great feeling knowing that I’ve saved my clients from a lot of headaches!

On a more personal note, as you would expect from any self-respecting Frenchman, I appreciate the fine wines and cuisine my country has to offer. I like to think of myself as a wine lover so I would be quite willing to share my knowledge in this department with any potential clients! I also take advantage of the weather our region is blessed with by spending lots of times outdoors, be it skiing in the Alps just an hour away from Nice in the winter, hitting the tennis courts as soon as springtime comes around, or just enjoying our wonderful beaches in the summer.

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RUFF & ASSOCIES
Chartered Accountant
It is a privilege for me to be able to offer help to our English-speaking clients here on the French Riviera.

Many clients know of the HSBC at home, but they are not always sure about what we can offer them abroad. Our services range from setting up current accounts, savings accounts, long-term investments, loans and mortgages.

Our premier service means that every one of our clients is assigned a Relationship Manager to take care of them and is given the manager’s direct landline and mobile number along with email addresses so help is always easily at hand.

We know it’s daunting to try and deal with your finances in French so our website and Internet banking are all in English and there is also a 24 hour call centre in English to deal with out-of-office enquiries.

If clients already bank with the HSBC in their home country, then international transfers between HSBC Premier accounts are all free of charge and funds arrive in real time. There is no 3-5 day wait for transfers to arrive.

I live in Juan-les-Pins with my wife Vicky (who manages Pebbles’ apartments in Antibes and the surrounding areas). We tied the knot in late 2010, so we’re enjoying being a couple before we take the next step of family life. Before joining HSBC France, I spent 6 years in banking in the UK, but when the opportunity came to move to the French Riviera seven years ago, I just couldn’t let it pass me by! In my spare time I can be found playing various different sports including football, golf and skiing and have a recent found love for running half marathons.

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