

Côte d'Azur

2012-2013



PRESS KIT
THE FRENCH RIVIERA
FOR FAMILIES





WHAT IS THE MOST ENJOYABLE DECISION OF THE YEAR? **WITHOUT DOUBT, CHOOSING A HOLIDAY DESTINATION!**

The chosen holiday must be carefully thought out, likely to appeal to the whole family, keep within a budget and have amusing and enriching suggestions for each day.

In general, every holiday should be a special time when the family can spend time together sharing activities or enjoying moments of relaxation. Every member of the family needs activities they enjoy and time devoted to them! In short: a real headache! To help the "family coordinator" responsible for the organisation, here is a list of questions to ask before taking a decision.

To start you off:

Seaside or mountains?

Museums or beaches?

Friendly paying accommodation or a holiday with the family?

Rest or sporting activities?

Exploring a town or walks in the countryside?

Sunbathing or exploring?

Food and wine tasting or shopping?

This press kit will help your readers choose their holidays throughout the year with two essential features in mind: sunshine and contentment!

Here are some ideas from the French Riviera:

- Winter events: popular and festive!
- From December to April: skiing in the resorts!
- Winter and summer alike: beach and sea!
- All year: convivial outings in the fresh air all over the department: on foot and by bike
- Museums, cooking lessons, crafts, archaeology, astronomy and unexpected finds...

Choose what suits you best!

CONTENTS

p 4 CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR FAMILIES

p 6 WINTER EVENTS ON THE FRENCH RIVIERA

Nice Carnival (Carnaval de Nice)
Lemon Festival (Fête du Citron) - Menton
Mimosa Festival (Fête du Mimosa) - Mandelieu-La Napoule
Less well-known Carnivals
International Games Festival of Cannes
(Festival International des Jeux de Cannes)
Violet Festival (Fête de la Violette) - Tourrettes-sur-Loup
Naval Battle of Flowers (Combat Naval Fleuri) - Villefranche-sur-Mer

p 12 SNOW FOR EVERYONE!

Some figures
Facilities for children

p 16 THE BEACH

Family Friendly beaches

p 20 THE SEA

Activities on the water
Observation at sea
Monaco Oceanographic Museum
Marineland at Antibes
Walks by the sea - Coastal paths and the Îles de Lérins

p 24 OUTDOORS

Walks in the fresh air
Activities in the countryside - A real mixture!
Amusing walks and treasure hunts
Get on a bike!

p 30 ARCHAEOLOGY AND PREHISTORY

p 34 ASTRONOMY: KNOW HOW TO LOOK AT THE STARS!

p 36 ENCOUNTERS: UNEXPECTED ANIMALS ON THE FRENCH RIVIERA

p 38 GOOD FOOD

Places for pastries!
Cooking lessons for children
Family picnics

p 42 MUSEUMS FOR FAMILIES

p 46 GIRLY! PERFUME AND BEAUTY

p 48 CRAFTS FOR CHILDREN

p 50 AMUSING ACCOMMODATION

p 52 AMUSING WAYS OF GETTING ABOUT

p 54 PRACTICAL INFORMATION



CALENDAR
OF EVENTS
FOR FAMILIES

January

Monaco

MONTE-CARLO INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS FESTIVAL
(FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DU CIRQUE)

February

Nice

NICE CARNIVAL (CARNAVAL DE NICE)

Menton

LEMON FESTIVAL (FÊTE DU CITRON)

Mandelieu

MIMOSA FESTIVAL (FÊTE DU MIMOSA)

Cannes

INTERNATIONAL GAMES FESTIVAL
(FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DES JEUX)

Valberg

"BULLES DE NEIGE" COMIC STRIP FESTIVAL

Tende

"KID RAID DU MERCANTOUR" (CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING)

Villefranche-sur-Mer

NAVAL FLOWER BATTLE (COMBAT NAVAL FLEURI)

March

Tourrettes-sur-Loup

VIOLET FESTIVAL (FÊTE DE LA VIOLETTE)

Vallauris

CELEBRATION OF NAPOLEON'S LANDING AT GOLFE-JUAN

April

Nice

"PRINTEMPS DES MÔMES" - CHILDREN'S ARTS FESTIVAL

Tourrette-Levens

MEDIAEVAL FESTIVAL

Whole department

EASTER EGG HUNT

May

Grasse

ROSE FESTIVAL (FÊTE DE LA ROSE)

June

Grasse

"LES MÉDIÉVALES" - MEDIAEVAL FESTIVAL

Antibes

DECIBELS FESTIVAL

July

Whole department

STORYTELLING FESTIVAL (FESTIVAL DU CONTE ET DES MOTS)

Cannes / Antibes / Monaco

INTERNATIONAL FIREWORK FESTIVALS

Setting on fire the bays of the French Riviera: Cannes, Antibes and Monaco compete to create the greatest show of fireworks set to music.

Grasse

STORYTELLING FESTIVAL
(LE TEMPS DES CONTES DU PAYS DE GRASSE)

La Gaude

"GAULGAUDA" FESTIVAL

Tourrette-Levens

PREHISTORY DAY

Èze

MEDIAEVAL FESTIVAL (FÊTE MÉDIÉVALE)

Levens

HORSE SHOW (FÊTE DU CHEVAL)

Villeneuve-Loubet

GARDEN OF TALES AND LEGENDS (JARDIN DES CONTES ET LÉGENDES)

Cannes

ELECTRONIC MUSIC ON THE BEACH (PLAGES ÉLECTRONIQUES)

Nice

PROM'PARTY

Cagnes-sur-Mer

FESTIVE ESPLANADE (PROMENADE EN FÊTES)

August

Cannes / Antibes / Monaco

INTERNATIONAL FIREWORK FESTIVALS

Valbonne

ARLETTE GRUSS CIRCUS

Cagnes-sur-Mer

"BOULES CARRÉES" WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Grasse

JASMINE FESTIVAL

September

Nice

ARLETTE GRUSS CIRCUS

Mougins

GASTRONOMY FESTIVAL

October

Mouans-Sartoux

BOOK FESTIVAL (FESTIVAL DU LIVRE)

Cannes

"PTIT CANNES À YOU" CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

Cagnes-sur-Mer

CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL (FESTIVAL DU LIVRE JEUNESSE)

Villefranche-sur-Mer

COMIC STRIP FESTIVAL (FESTIVAL DE LA BANDE DESSINÉE)

November

Saint-Laurent-du-Var

SPEECH AND BOOK FESTIVAL

(FESTIVAL DE LA PAROLE ET DU LIVRE)

Valbonne Sophia

"CHILDISH" FESTIVAL (ENFANTILLAGES)

Cannes

INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL (BIENNIAL)

December

Whole department

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS:

The entire French Riviera celebrates Christmas and New Year

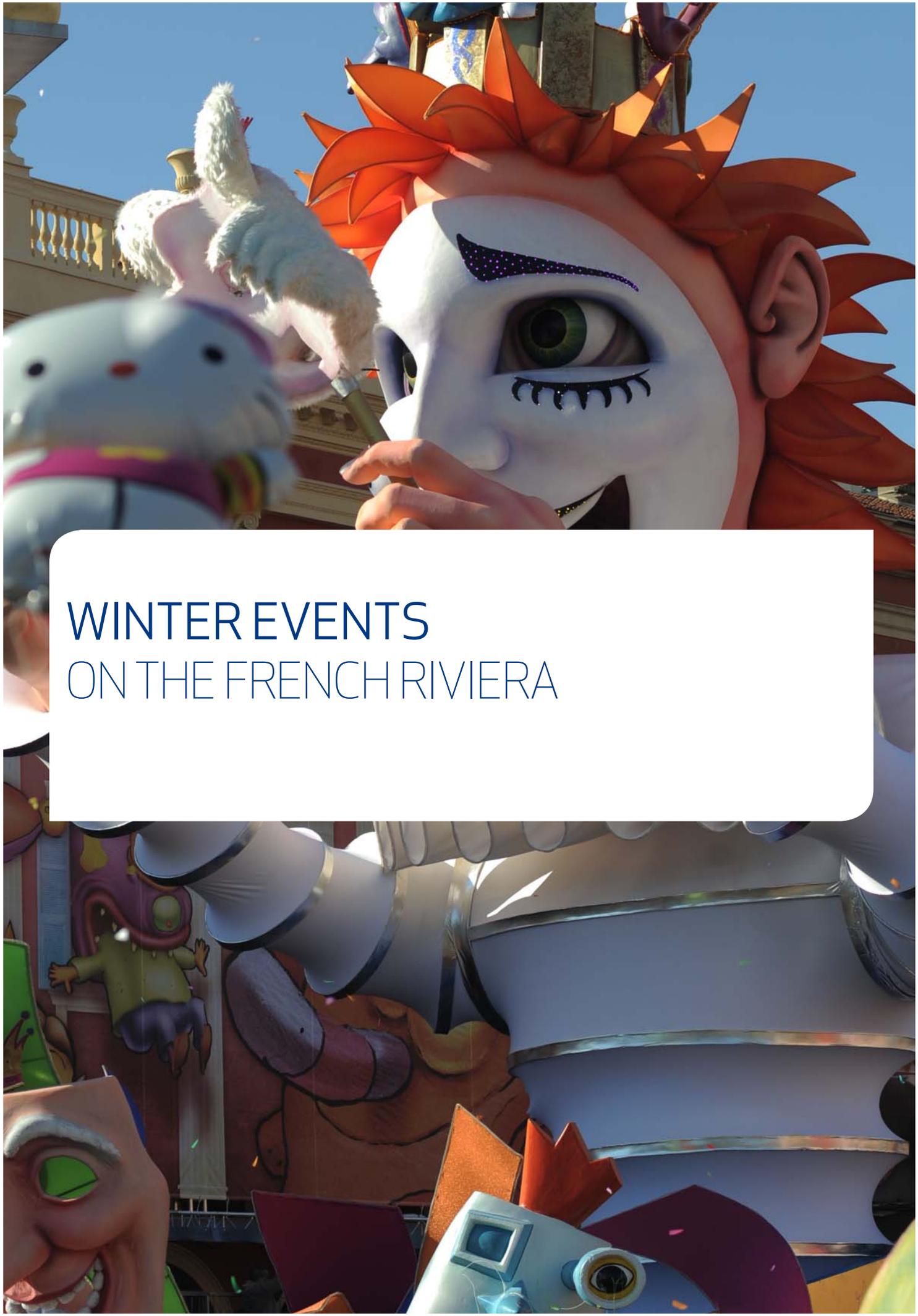
Towns put up illuminations and organize numerous activities and entertainments (pine forests, ice-skating, pony rides, craft and face-painting workshops...). There are splendid Christmas villages for children, especially in Nice and Cannes. Menton has themed festivities. There are also cooking lessons on preparing chocolate and other festive desserts.

Lucéram

CIRCUIT OF NATIVITY SCENES

Roya-Bévéra

"VALLÉE DES SANTONS" FEATURING ORNAMENTAL CHRISTMAS FIGURINES



WINTER EVENTS
ON THE FRENCH RIVIERA

For over half a century, the French Riviera has been the favourite February meeting place for families and everyone else who enjoys the popular, happy events that enliven the Riviera coast: the Nice Carnival, the Lemon Festival in Menton, Mimosa Festival in Mandelieu... People get together around processions of floats, flower battles, carnival parades...

To round off the festive programme, visiting farms and gardens, hiking in the protected Estérel Massif, sampling local festive produce and meeting craftsmen/women, can further enrich the days.

A whole range of activities for spending time as a family or among friends, with a yellow and blue backdrop, among the flowers and scents of the seaside...

Mimosa - Yellow - Flowers - Festivities - Masks -

Procession - Miss - **Citrus** - Delicacies -

His Majesty the King - Parade - **Sun** - Sea -

"Promenade des Anglais" - **Children** - Streamers

Dates in 2013

NICE CARNIVAL

▶ 15 February to 6 March: *King of the Five Continents*

LEMON FESTIVAL - MENTON

▶ 16 February to 6 March: *Around the World in Eighty Days*

MIMOSA FESTIVAL - MANDELIEU

▶ 15 to 24 February: *Mimosa Celebrates Stories*

As well:

Rediscover little known carnivals...

International Games Festival - Cannes - 1 to 3 March

NICE CARNIVAL

▶ www.nicecarnaval.com

The most famous carnival in France takes place in February each year in the capital of the French Riviera. Over a million spectators come to this event to fête the King of the Carnival and take part in flower battles.

While dating back to the Middle Ages, the Nice Carnival is firmly anchored in the 21st Century. It is modern, spectacular and uses a range of technological and environmental methods to ensure that the popular event remains unbeatable!

▶ SOME FIGURES

Carnival parade:

- 20 floats: leading the parade, the King and Queen of the Carnival followed by their court, made up of 17 floats
- 20 tons of confetti

Big heads:

- Nearly 150 creations around the floats, including 50 traditional "Big Heads" made of papier maché
- 2,500 to 3,000 stems of fresh flowers. 85% of them are locally produced
- 72 hours of floral arrangement in 2½ days

▶ CARNIVAL PARADES

On Friday evening, the King of the Carnival arrives at 'Place Masséna' to take possession of the keys of the town, marking the beginning of the reign of the ephemeral; from then on, all sorts of extravagance are allowed; originality and exuberance are the order of the day.

Each parade is a multi-coloured extravaganza with dazzling colours combined with street artists and musical groups from all over the world. In the evening, all the floats are illuminated and the parades light up the heart of Nice.

As tradition requires, His Majesty, King of the Carnival, parades with only his Queen on the final evening. He is then burnt on a pyre at sea or sometimes on the shore. The Château hill is lit up and, like an echo; fireworks set to music are let off in the "Baie des Anges".



▶ FLOWER BATTLES

Originally, the flower battles were created to amuse the first tourists from European high society and were subsequently continued to honour the work of local producers, important to Alphonse Karr, writer and botanist, attached to Nice.

Today, this event highlights the quality and wide variety of flowers on the French Riviera since 85 % of the flowers used are produced locally. Twenty floats completely covered in flowers, parade by the sea. On each float, costumed models throw between 80,000 and 100,000 flowers to enthusiastic spectators: gladioli, tokyos, gerberas, daisies, roses, carnations, mimosa ...

▶ DID YOU KNOW?

The Nice carnival is free for children from 0 to 5 years old, in fancy dress!

LEMON FESTIVAL@ MENTON

► www.feteducitron.com

In 1928, Menton was still the biggest lemon producer in Europe. A hotel owner had the idea of organizing a flower and citrus fruit exhibition in the "Hôtel Riviera" gardens. It was so successful that the following year the event moved out onto the streets with a parade of carts decorated with orange and lemon trees as well as charming local girls. Wanting to develop tourism, the local authority looked for a way of giving the event a local flavour and the Lemon Festival (La Fête du Citron@) was born in 1934.

A year later, the first citrus fruit and flower exhibition took place in the Biovès Gardens. It has been so successful that it has grown each year with guided tours, evening parades and the Gardens of Light!



There is nothing in the world quite like the Lemon Festival. Its parades and huge structures are composed entirely of oranges and lemons. Giant creations are set up in the Biovès Gardens, each one representing a different aspect of the theme for the year.

The Lemon Festival is an opportunity to learn about citrus fruit. The garden at the Palais Carnolès is home to the largest collection of citrus fruit trees in Europe: Grapefruit, Citron, Kumquat, Mandarin, Clementine, and Bitter Orange... Rare varieties have been introduced, from the Chinese Mandarin to the Citron of "Sotchi". During the Lemon Festival, the Tourist Office organizes guided tours of the garden.

► SOME FIGURES

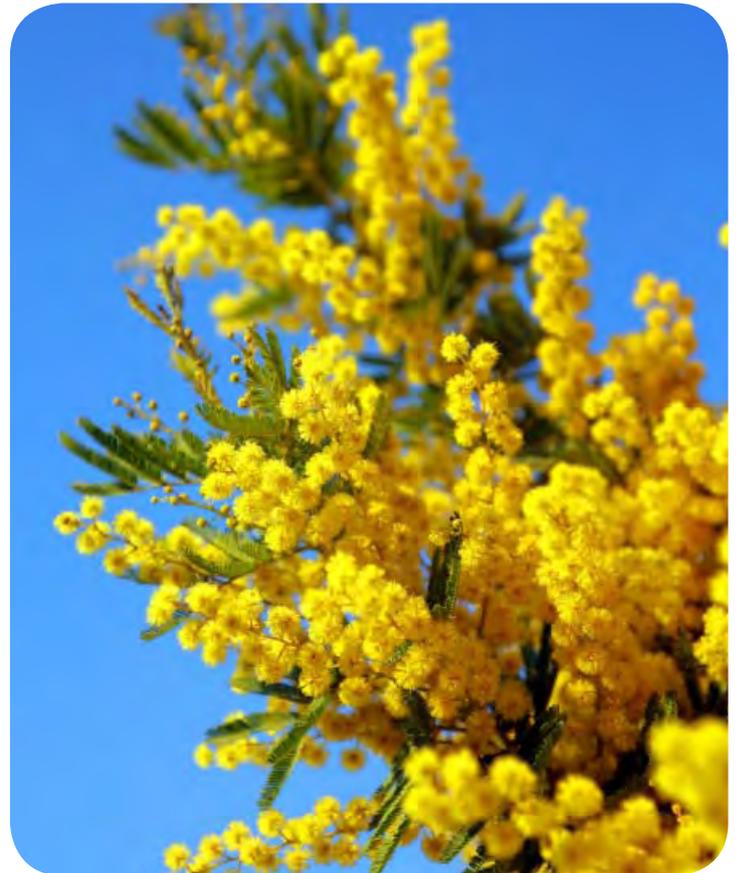
- 300,000 spectators
- 300 technicians
- 500,000 elastic bands
- 145 tons of citrus fruit

Each float weighs between 3 and 4 tons.

MIMOSA FESTIVAL MANDELIEU-LA NAPOULE

► www.lafetedumimosa.com

On Sundays, flower battles delight both children and adults, who go home at the end of the floral parades with arms full of mimosa. On Saturday evenings, the festivities revolve around magical shows performed by troupes of artists on illuminated floats.



During the festival, the Tourist Office organizes coach trips to introduce visitors to all aspects of mimosa, from flowering to its cultivation by specialist growers in the Tanneron Massif and the production of mimosa-based perfume in Grasse.

With or without a guide, hiking enthusiasts can explore routes rich in contrasting colours and paths bathed in the sweetness of the winter sun heralding the spring.

► SOME FIGURES

- 60,000 visitors
- 12 tons of Mimosa

LESS WELL-KNOWN CARNIVALS

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

OTHER CARNIVALS - Claudine Francini

From Epiphany to the start of Lent, the masks are out in the street. This is Carnival! Feasting, charivaris, public caricatures, disguises, inversion of roles...

In our region, some villages perpetuate ancestral traditions blending conviviality and mystery.

No one knows who they are. Wearing Harlequin costumes, two figures known as biffous - one old, the other young - noisily scour the village streets in search of food. Two abbots show them which houses to visit. Suddenly, young men surround them and try to steal their sack. This leads to a ritual struggle where the biffous try to fend them off by vigorously wielding their massetto, a noise-making weapon made of wooden slats.

This Carnival scene from Saint-Martin-Vésubie illustrates the persistence of centuries-old rituals in the hinterland of the Riviera, first mentioned in the 13th century. Subsequently, inspired by the model of the Carnaval de Nice, parades of floats, "big heads" and confetti fights added to the fun in the village streets. The festivities come to an end when with the cremation of a dummy - an allegory of Carnival - representing all the previous year's misfortunes.

NIGHT PROCESSION

On the evening of Ash Wednesday in Puget-Théniers, in the Var Valley, a long cohort of white figures carrying lanterns enacts a bogus procession. Interrupted in the late 18th century during the French Revolution, this event re-emerged in the early 20th century. The figures represent the village tanners who decided to parody the White Penitents to the strains of Frère Jacques, the famous round, since the clergy had banned the parade on Mardi Gras. A false bishop accompanies them to the village fountain into which some of the participants jump despite the bitter cold. A thousand people flock to this event every year.

A RITUAL TO REGENERATE NATURE

On the eastern bank of the Var River, in Provence, the tradition of the Bouffetaires persists. Their spiral dance is accompanied by pipes and drums. Young men, all dressed in white with bells on their ankles, are armed with bellows they use "to insufflate new force to awaken Nature," and ventilate the behinds of the people in front of them and under girls' skirts. In front of the shops, they sing, dance and are rewarded with delicacies, pastries or local wine. The event closes with a bonfire in which Caramentran, the dummy personifying Carnival, is burned, in the presence of his judge and executioners, the Queen of Sheba, Harlequins and Punchinellos.

INTERNATIONAL GAMES FESTIVAL OF CANNES

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

CANNES: A HAVEN FOR GAMES AND NOVELTIES!

François Rosso

For 25 years, the city of cinema has swapped its red carpet in the month of May for the green baize covering a multitude of tables in February!

But this is not just a matter of colours: chess, checkers, cubes, cards, figurines, pawns, coins, wheels, bâtonnets, balls, letters, numbers and, of course, keyboards and screens... are provided to all those seeking their place in this haven for games!

The FIJ -International Game Festival of Cannes - has become a reference, an area of freedom, a venue where game designers must be present, not so much to market their latest inventions, but rather to test them with the public - 150,000 visitors last year! L'As d'Or rewards the most inventive game of the year.

Alongside the usual traditional games, visitors can try these prototypes or rediscover old, even ancient, games, as well as traditional games from Africa and Asia.

The FIJ in Cannes attracts people from all over France and the entire world to learn new rules and try their hand at hundreds of new parlour games, practise new techniques, gape at the new concepts that will be tomorrow's successes, like Abalone, Dixit and Magic: The Gathering, all shown first on La Croisette.

Aficionados of video games will find the way to their frenzied planet in the rooms and corridors of the Palais des Festivals!

Alongside areas for the presentation of games, many tournaments are organised in several disciplines - cards, video games, scrabble, chess, draughts... - as well as demonstrations with experts, like the chess champions Viktor Korchnoi and Anatoly Vaissar.

In February in Cannes, games are there for the taking without moderation and free of charge in a wonderful ambiance of conviviality and sharing!

► www.festivaldesjeux-cannes.com



VIOLET FESTIVAL - TOURRETTES-SUR-LOUP

> www.tourettesurloup.com

This large, local event that takes over the streets in the village of Tourettes-sur-Loup in March, is an opportunity for visitors to see the "Musée de la Violette" and also violet farms open to the public.

The Violet Festival was started in March 1952 by Victor Linton, an artist who was deeply attached to Tourettes-sur-Loup. He had the idea of setting up a traditional festival to celebrate local specialities by bringing together horticulturists, producers, artists, craftsmen/women and residents of the village. As a result, this event has attracted a national and international clientele that has put the "Cité des Violettes" on the map!

Provençal market, musical entertainment, visits to violet farms and parades of floats decorated with flowers.



To see as well: the "Bastide aux Violettes". It presents the various uses of violets and explains the history of the village.

In the vicinity: The "Confiserie Florian". Free visit to this sweet-making workshop.

NAVAL FLOWER BATTLE - FLOWER BATTLE ON THE WATER VILLEFRANCHE-SUR-MER

> www.villefranchesurmer.com

Founded in 1295 by Charles II d'Anjou, Villefranche-sur-Mer has managed to retain its beauty and charm over the centuries. The warm Mediterranean colours of the facades, steep, narrow streets straight out of history, the citadel and rare works by Cocteau, Volti and Goetz are just some of the treasures to discover in this village located by one of the most beautiful harbours in the world. It is also the favourite anchoring spot of the most renowned cruise liners.

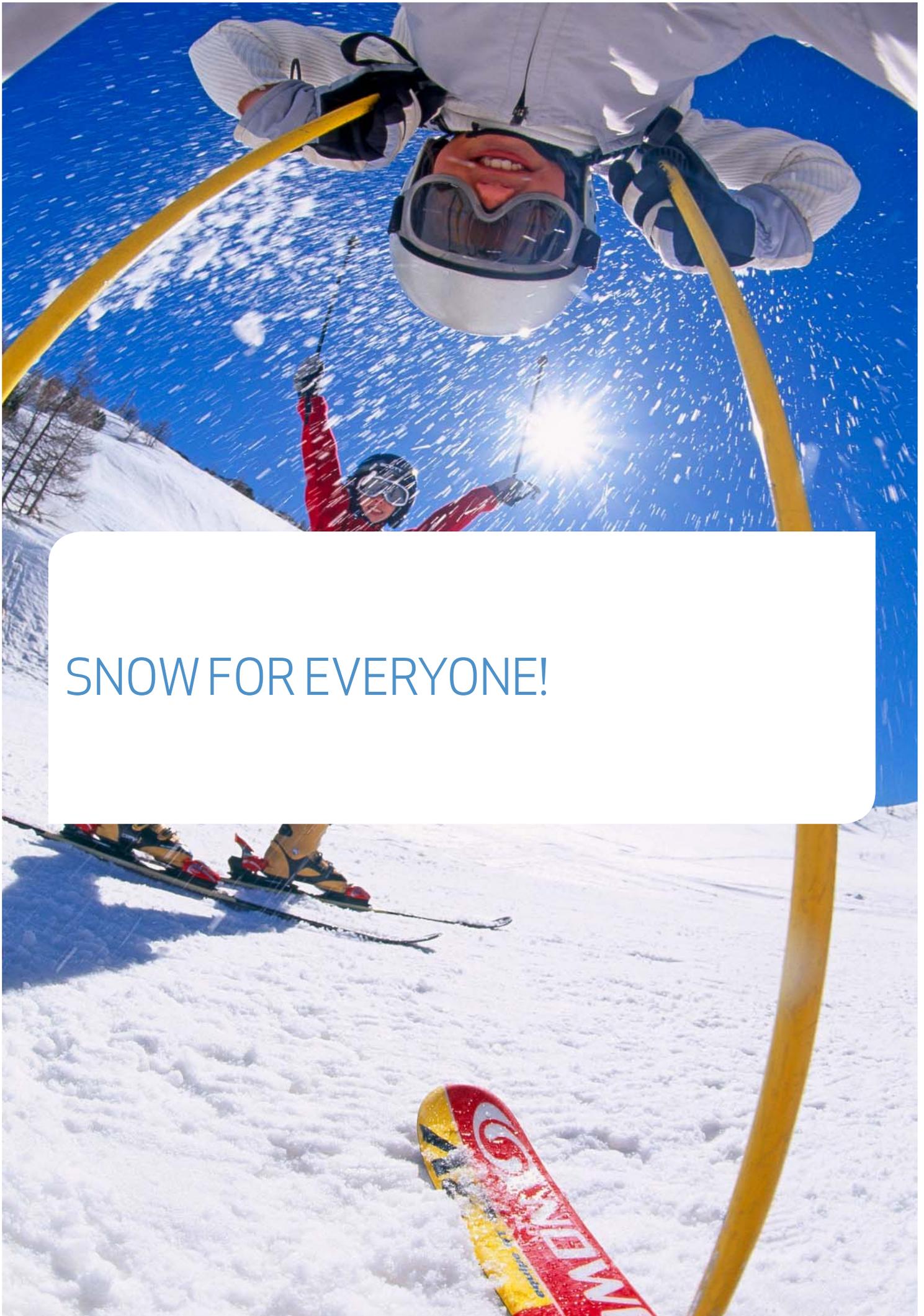
Villefranche-sur-Mer is today the most important cruise port in France.

In February, a fleet of "pointus", boats typical of the South of France, decorated with flowers from the region arranged in different designs, parades in the port of La Santé de Villefranche-sur-Mer in front of a huge crowd gathered on the quays.

After parading past the public, the costumed sailors come alongside the quays and throw their flowers at the spectators. The azure blue of the port becomes multi-coloured. There are also many entertainments on the quays, such as parades and serenades. Free entry. Takes place during the Nice Carnival.







SNOW FOR EVERYONE!

Ski resorts in the Alpes-Maritimes: perfect for kids!

Famous for its multitude of beaches and sunshine, the French Riviera is also well-provided with hills and mountains. In fact, this is a destination where there is still a lot to discover about the snow.

80 % of the region is mountainous and the department has 15 resorts. 3 are internationally recognized (Valberg accredited "Famille Plus", Auron and Isola 2000) and there are 12 "little resorts" for families, spread over the mountainous area. Their assets of snow and sun are guaranteed at only 1½ hours from the coast!

SOME FIGURES

- 15 ski resorts, each different
- 3 resorts classified Ski France
- 700 kilometres of runs
- 96 ski lifts
- Downhill skiing: 232 of runs over 481 km
- Cross-country skiing: 35 runs over 199 km

GUARANTEED SNOW:

80 % of the whole of the skiable area at Isola 2000, 40 % at Auron, 85 % of the skiable area at Valberg.

As well as the facilities and activities set up especially for families and young children in the resorts, there are many other activities to enjoy in the Alpes-Maritimes. Among the most entertaining to try as a family.

Walks on snow-shoes, a traditional activity that is a means of exploring the countryside at one's own speed, with a guide or by oneself. It is an opportunity to observe nature and perhaps surprise the animals that inhabit the mountains in winter...

Ski-Joering, outings with sledge dogs. An entertaining way of exploring with encounters, photos and memorable souvenirs in unspoilt countryside.

Guaranteed giggles: "**Air-luge Board**" (at Auron)...

For thrills: **Ice falls** (professional guide recommended), the ice falls at Boréon, **Parapente, Snow Kite**...



FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN

► ...3 MONTHS TO 6 YEARS OLD



VALBERG

This little village resort, situated 1½ hours from Nice, has the label "Famille Plus". The ESF (French Ski School) is especially keen on using relaxed methods for teaching children and the resort's runs allow families to ski together on the gentle slopes that are typical of Valberg (14 blue runs and 11 green).

Facilities for looking after children from 3 months' old are available for visitors and the large number of activities and services provided for families has attracted a faithful clientele.

Family accommodation is located at the foot of the slopes.

- "**Les P'tits Poucets**" day nursery

The nursery, located in a building complying with HQE (High Environmental Quality) standards, in the centre of the "Parc des Oursons", accepts children from 3 months to 6 years old, 7/7, in July and August.

Qualified staff, games and rest rooms suitable for different age groups.

- **Activities and special entertainments:**

- "Le Monde des Enfants" provides craft and sports activities run by the resort's instructors.

- "Parcours Ouisiti", a course in the larch trees for children from 3 to 6 years old.

- Various activities: trampoline, inflatables, gym lessons, judo initiation, golf school.

- The Departmental multi-media library, where children can borrow books and games free of charge during their stay.

ISOLA 2000 – The trendy resort!

Only 1 hour 20 minutes from Nice, but the scenery is more spectacular. Artificial snow production ensures the slopes are snow covered from December to April. With 21 blue runs and 7 green, snowboard enthusiasts will particularly like this resort. A Snowpark and biopark have recently been set up!

- "**Les Pitchouns**" day nursery, 15 months to 4 years old.

- "**Le Club des Piou-Piou**" (3 to 6 years old) takes children for ski initiation in specially designed facilities.

Well-being day in Isola Village - L' AQUAVALLÉE (20 minutes by car from the resort)

Ideally located at the gateway to the Mercantour villages and resorts, the Aquavallée complex provides fun, well-being, sport, relaxation... After skiing, there is nothing better than chilling out... Aquavallée offers a range of sporting and relaxing activities.



AURON - Village resort

Auron, located 1 hour 20 minutes from Nice, has the biggest skiable area in the Alpes-Maritimes Department.

As well as 16 blue runs and 2 green, there are numerous activities in the heart of the village, giving the resort a rich après-ski life: ice-skating rink, games...

- "Les Oursons" day nursery, 3 months to 4 years old.
- "Le Club des Piou-Piou" (3 to 4 years old) and the "Mini-Club" (4 to 7 years old) look after children in specially designed facilities: a chalet with games for quiet moments, a free mini ski tow for introducing children to skiing and preparation for the "ourson" and "flocon" medals.

LA COLMIANE - "Children at the forefront of the resort!"

The strength of this little resort situated between Saint-Martin-Vésubie and Valberg is its conviviality. It is ideal for half a day's family skiing and its geographical situation ensures the runs enjoy maximum sunshine.

The style of the accommodation lends itself to spending several peaceful days as a family. As well as skiing, there are visits in the vicinity to make the experience even better: the "Parc des Loups" in Saint-Martin-Vésubie, visiting local farms...

- "Les Petits Loups" (from 3 years old)
Options: 1 lesson or 6 lessons to learn to ski with the ski school. The garden is equipped with a rope tow, a conveyor - belt ski lift and a merry-go-round.

GRÉOLIÈRES-LES-NEIGES - 45 minutes from Grasse!

This resort is notable for being the ski spot in the west of the department. Only 45 minutes from Grasse, one can enjoy a "white" day - skiing, tobogganing or hiking. Nearby, there are the "Monts d'Azur Biological Reserve" at Haut Thorenc, with its bison and Grasse with its perfume... A varied programme!

- "Le Club des Piou-Piou" accepts children from 3-4 years old in a specially designed and enclosed area for an introduction to skiing with the "Ourson" ski test and a Bambi rope tow for the youngest.

► ... FOR OLDER CHILDREN... FREESTYLE!

ISOLA 2000

The **Back to Back Club**, the club with the most awards in France, offers children all snowboard structures scaled down for them and "improvers" courses during the holidays.

> www.back-to-back.fr



AURON

Auron snowpark 1600 - A.S.P.K. 1600

Snowboarders of all levels can choose from 2 zones: Initiation or Intermediate and Advanced.

Initiation Zone: a play area for families and very young children, arranged around reduced-size features and handrails suitable for beginners. The zone is for people wanting to try snowboarding or take lessons and courses with the ESF (French Ski School) as well as ski and snowboard clubs.

The Zone for Intermediate and Advanced level snowboarders is designed for more experienced riders. It is laid out as a progressive course with greater and greater thrills. Features and several MP concept handrails are strategically placed on the right of the park to ensure fluidity and a high-quality show.

VALBERG

The **snowpark** is set up for skiers and surfers (slalom, boarder cross) on the "Croix du Sapet". Big air, ramps, half-pipe... This snowpark, with its musical atmosphere, is for riders of all levels. In 2011, creation of a new snowpark at Aiguilles.

LA COLMIANE

The **snowpark**, on a 2-hectare site, has become one of the most sought-after sporting spots in the Alpes-Maritimes. It has two permanent half-pipes, a big air, a big hip and handrails.

This site has the advantage of artificial snow coverage.

ROUBION

Snow kite, on the Pommier site. Snowkite uses either a snowboard or skis pulled by a kite. It is a way of getting about the mountains in unspoilt open spots - on the plateau, in passes, valleys and fields. It also allows the rider to go up and down the slopes with very little wind.

For more information:

> www.unit6.fr



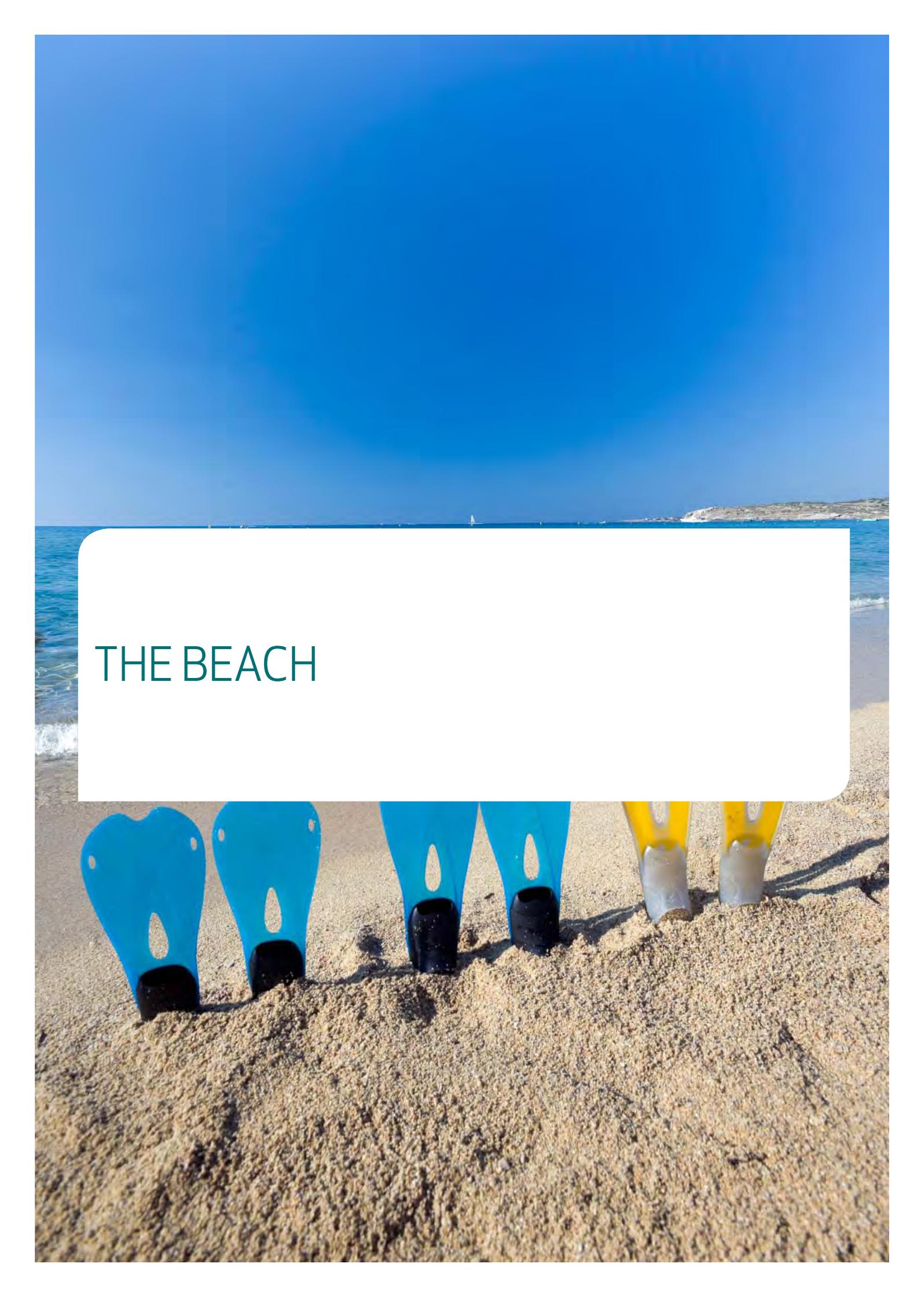
ONE OF OUR FAVOURITES! THE "HIVERNALES"

Set up by the Alpes-Maritimes Conseil Général, the "HIVERNALES" provide free introductions to freestyle and give demonstrations. Skicross, slope-style, snowboardcross, big air, mogul skiing... to try on features especially constructed on the snow front. To get the adrenaline going, the organizers present a ski and snow big air show twice a day, with the best riders on the French Riviera. At the end of the weekend, each participant goes home with his "freestyler diploma" and, for the youngest, a medal and a present.

> Mountain Press Kit: Snow and Skiing on the French Riviera
<http://pro.cotedazur-tourisme.com/>







THE BEACH

When on holiday in the sun by the Mediterranean on the French Riviera, each day is an opportunity to discover a different beach with a different atmosphere. Crossing the department from east to west, here is a glimpse of the atmosphere and variety of beaches along the coast...

Starting with **Menton** - the beaches are charming and close to the gardens and hotels of the Edwardian era, when the atmosphere was calm and gentle. Café terraces line these beaches between the newly-built "Musée Jean Cocteau Séverin Wunderman", which opens onto a mosaic covered square opposite the "Halle" of the traditional market, and the swimming pool.

Lovers of peace and quiet will search out the hidden beaches of the **Riviera located on the Caps**. Those of Roquebrune Cap Martin lie under the cliffs from the "Cabanon de Corbusier" and walk with the same name. Further along, there are the beaches of Cap d'Ail, Eze-Plage, Beaulieu-sur-Mer and Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, which border these elegant French Riviera villages.

The little beaches in the **Villefranche-sur-Mer** cove are best known for kayak outings to discover the maritime flora and fauna but also for admiring the "Chapelle des Pêcheurs" decorated by Cocteau, situated at the foot of the Citadel and the historical port of Darse.

The most typical **Nice beaches** are located on the "Rauba Capeu" and the famous "Promenade des Anglais". These pebble beaches are essential meeting spots for Nice residents. Some of them are the stage for electro evenings in summer.

Cagnes-sur-Mer has created a splendid esplanade that is almost a continuation of the "Promenade des Anglais" and five new beaches were opened last year. They provide modern and artistic "trendy" areas and restaurants offering inventive cooking near the little fishing port of Cros de Cagnes.

Villeneuve-Loubet has beaches particularly suitable for families. This family holiday village has a range of accommodation and leisure facilities to suit all members of the family and young enthusiasts of extreme sports...

The beaches on **Cap d'Antibes** border the magnificent houses that are the pride of this outstanding area. Then, "La Pinède" at Juan-les-Pins, a seaside resort that swings day and night in summer and where shopping is possible at any time. In addition, Juan-les-Pins has played host to "Jazz à Juan" for over 50 years and has become the European jazz reference.

Cannes and its famous private beaches, opposite legendary hotels like the Carlton, Martinez or the Majestic, are the preserve of the smartest receptions at the Cannes Film Festival. The Iles de Lérins have remained a protected environment where one can walk summer and winter alike. On Sainte Marguerite, there are the Fort Royal and the prison famous for the "Man in the Iron Mask" and on l'île Saint Honorat, the monastery of the Cistercian monks and their work with the vines.

Further along, **Mandelieu-La Napoule** which offers a great many sea-based activities: swimming with whales or Jet Ski outings to see the creeks (calanques)...

Finally, at the steep red Estérel rocks, the creeks of **Théoule-sur-Mer** are the firm favourites of the locals as they are difficult to get to and are still unspoilt.



EXTRA INFO:

TripAdvisor has published the Travellers' Choice Beach Destinations 2012 rankings, which rate the most beautiful beaches in the world, based on millions of opinions from the community of TripAdvisor travellers.

The French Riviera (the Alpes-Maritimes) has 4 sites listed among the most beautiful beaches in France: Juan-les-Pins – Antibes – Cannes and Nice.

This ranking pays tribute to the care taken by tourist professionals to improve the welcome given to visitors and the environmental preservation of the sites. It also acknowledges the quality of the activities and festivities provided on these French Riviera beaches, a showcase situated on the forty kilometres between Théoule-sur-Mer and Menton, along the shores of the Mediterranean.

The variety of scenery on the French Riviera is so great that one can enjoy a different beach every day... It's simply a question of choosing one's corner of paradise.

► DID YOU KNOW?

The beach on the French Riviera is enjoyable all the year round! In fact, around thirty beaches and their restaurants are open from January to December on the French Riviera.

FAMILY FRIENDLY BEACHES!

Here are some beaches all along the coast especially well-equipped for families (non-exhaustive list).



► MENTON

Lemon capital, it is the last French seaside town before Italy. It is said to enjoy a micro-climate that has made it the Town of Gardens! Its old town is marked by its Italian past, and the brand new "Musée Jean Cocteau", designed by the architect Rudy Ricchiotti, has earned it a place among the major cities on the French Riviera.

The **DOLCE VITA**, at the heart of the "Baie de Garavan", opposite Menton old town. During the school holidays, children can be looked after from 9.30 am to 6.30 pm while their parents enjoy the beach.

In addition, children's centres have been set up (including an air-conditioned rest room) with educational games. The centres are supervised and it is possible for children to have lunch and tea.

> www.plageladolcevita.com

► SAINT-JEAN-CAP-FERRAT

Refuge for high-profile personalities and billionaires from all over the world, the Cap and its villas are legendary. Probably one of the most elegant spots on the French Riviera.

The "Cro dei Pin" beach (the port beach) has a children's playground.



► NICE

Capital of the French Riviera, Nice provides both urban and seaside tourism. The "Promenade des Anglais" has become a trendy family walking spot, its blue chairs the excuse to have a break and take some souvenir photos. The improvements carried out in the last few years in the town centre, in particular the Tramway, allow tourists the pleasure of rediscovering other areas.

In Nice, 3 beaches have been awarded the label "Famille Plus": Hi Beach - Neptune Plage and Ruhl Plage:

- **HI BEACH** is divided into three beach areas, three ways of rediscovering the pleasures of the beach experience: Hi Energy, Hi Relax, Hi Play (area dedicated to leisure and relaxation as a family). Hi Beach has freely available meeting up spots, either inside or protected. As for the sea, everyone can find activities to enjoy thanks to the equipment provided for visitors: masks, flippers, snorkels, rings, balls... and, since the summer of 2012, the Hi Boat!

We liked the "funky" aspect of the décor; modern, family oriented and highly coloured. In addition, this beach has a children's playground: Hi Play.

> www.hi-beach.net

- **NEPTUNE PLAGE** offers a supervised playground, with cabin, slide, small lounge, pedalos and kayaks. It is possible to play billiards, pinball or baby foot. The restaurant serves children's menus and provides high chairs and a baby-changing table.

> www.neptuneplage.com

- **RUHL PLAGE**. A small sea-water swimming pool where parents can relax without a care while the little ones splash about! Colouring corner and pontoon.

> www.ruhl-plage.com

The **MIAMI BEACH** restaurant serves children's menus, provides high chairs and has a big playground with Pétanque ground, seesaws, pontoon... a paradise!

► SAINT-LAURENT-DU-VAR

This village has a very pleasant esplanade facing the Mediterranean. The restaurants that line it and the port make a good stroll.

The 2 beaches in this seaside resort have areas and activities for children:

- **COCODY BEACH** (Holiday Inn) - Private sandy beach - restaurant, two swimming pools, water sports.

Tel. 00 33 (0)4 93 14 80 20

- **BEACH CLUB** - Private sandy beach - restaurant, musical evenings.

Tel. 00 33 (0)4 92 12 95 53

► CAGNES-SUR-MER

Located between Nice and Antibes, Cagnes-sur-Mer has a very pretty esplanade that is almost a continuation of the 'Promenade des Anglais'. The Hauts de Cagnes, where Renoir settled, is still well-preserved and the Cros de Cagnes (by the sea) is the place to discover one of the last fishing ports on the French Riviera and a fish farm.

The 6 new beaches have different decors and atmospheres.

Among them, **STONE BEACH**, youthful and family oriented; **LE SPAGGIA**, typical Club de Vacances; **AEVA**, chic and Zen (with some family accommodation: "Résidence Aeva") and **ART BEACH**, Contemporary Art atmosphere...

For children:

SPORT LIBERTÉ (8 to 12 years old) - Promenade de la Plage - Sea shore.

Free activities supervised by sports teachers from the municipality: beach volleyball, table tennis, basketball, hockey, board games, football-tennis and swimming.

Tel. 00 33 (0)4 89 83 20 30

► VILLENEUVE-LOUBET

In developing its tourism, this village has chosen to make families its priority.

Throughout the year, there are many activities to choose from and in summer, Villeneuve-Loubet's motto becomes, "beach, sand, shade, activities and games - all the right ingredients for spending a happy time at the seaside."

LA PLAGES DES KIDS with:

- Family Leisure Area

This area, completely dedicated to families, has the advantage of being at a distance from the very busy beaches. Every day in July and August from 10 am to 6 pm, a range of activities suitable for children from 3 to 12 years old is organized by monitors.

- From creative workshops to the shade of a pergola

All summer, beach monitors organize a weekly programme of workshops that will delight both children and adults: masks, cap lamps, pottery, sculpture and pebble painting, bracelets, aquarium plate... and even a recycling workshop.

Workshop: €2 / child - activities led by a monitor, supervised by parents.

- Recreational and sporting activities at the end of the afternoon

After 4 pm - when the sun is not so strong - the monitors use the expanse of sand to organize games: bowling, pétanque, mini-golf, relay race, sack race, musical chairs, beret and tomato game, limbo and - more unusually - flip-flop throwing competitions...

Tel. 00 33 (0)4 92 02 66 16

> http://villeneuve-tourisme.com/loisirs/nautisme_plages/la_plage_des_kids.html



ONE OF OUR FAVOURITES!

WORLD PEBBLE CASTLE CHAMPIONSHIP

In the course of time, the sand has left the beaches at Villeneuve Loubet so it is natural to take advantage of the pebbles that remain to build castles! A World Pebble Castle Championship in teams was created. Each year, the day ends under a sky set on fire by fireworks let off from the sea followed by an evening of music.

> www.villeneueloubet.fr

► CANNES

Outings on roller blades on the Croisette, sandy beaches, shopping galore, the old town to explore... Cannes never fails to surprise because it always has something new to offer tourists.

On the Croisette, the staff at **VÉGALUNA PLAGE** is welcoming to adults and children alike.

A Baby Club takes care of children and amuses them from 1 pm to 5 pm (€7/hour) during the school summer holidays.

A lifeguard supervises the beach during the summer season. Children's games are organized all year.

Nearby, there are attractions for children: merry-go-rounds games, and playground.

Tel. 00 33 0(4) 93 43 67 05

> www.vegaluna.com

DID YOU KNOW?

On the beaches in Cannes, there is special signposting on the sand using objects easily identifiable even by the youngest child (boat, house...). Parents can use these markers to help their children remember their spot.

Free library.

A mobile beach library is available for holidaymakers to borrow books for their holiday free of charge.

► ANTIBES JUAN-LES-PINS



ONE OF OUR FAVOURITES - CHIC!

The ultra chic **HÔTEL BELLES RIVES** has a number of activities for children through clubs set up for the various age groups:

- Baby Club: a programme for children between 2 and 3 years old, with music, gym, dance, art, English and games
- Kids Club: a programme for children between 3 and 12 years old, offering a wide variety of recreational and educational activities led by experienced, qualified teachers (Karate, Capoeira, Dance, Gym, Music, Yoga, Theatre and English Club).

In addition, from the beginning of the summer season, the "BELLES RIVES SKI NAUTIQUE CLUB" is open to adults and children from 7 am on the hotel pontoon: outings or acrobatic skiing, pedalos, ski bus, rings and knee-board. At the end of the summer, the Marc Grilli Challenge brings together future champions and their parents for a water-skiing competition, an opportunity to spend a memorable moment as a family...

> <http://www.bellesrives.com/fr/plage-sports-nautiques-12.html>



THE SEA



The Mediterranean is a wonderful playground for water sports! Excursions, extreme sports, fishing, diving... being on the sea is the favourite holiday occupation of tourists from all over the world!

ACTIVITIES ON THE WATER!

There is an amazing choice of water-based activities and you can choose the ones that take your fancy:

A sea trip, to become captain for a day, with or without a crew. This is a popular choice to please the whole family.

Activities on the water: sailing, wind-surfing, kite-surf; rowing, kayak; sea fishing; water-skiing, motorboat racing... and also: flyfish, banana, canapé, donuts, parasailing (Antibes, Nice, Cannes, etc.), ski-tubing (Cap d'Ail, Cannes, Mandelieu, Nice, etc.), water skiing (Nice, Mandelieu, Villeneuve-Loubet, etc.), jet ski (Nice, Cannes, Antibes, Cap d'Ail, etc.), Stand-up paddle (Villeneuve-Loubet, Cannes, Théoule-sur-Mer)...

Diving: numerous diving centres along the coast enable divers to explore the depths of the Mediterranean.



► "POINTS PLAGE"



Centres accredited by the "Fédération Française de Voile" (French Sailing Federation) undertake to provide simple, rapid access to water sports through the network "Point Plage FFVoile".

The "Point Plage FFVoile" service for hire and private lessons features:

- A range of craft (wind surfers, catamarans, sailing dinghies and kayaks and, in some centres, land yachts, large yachts, overnights, Surfs...)
- Modern equipment, varied and ready to go
- Help, advice and preparation of the equipment
- Supervised stretches of water
- Flexible times, advance booking possible
- High-quality equipment
- Training by permanent and seasonal qualified instructors.

To meet the wishes of touring clients, the network offers "LE PASS'SENSATIONS", a package with many benefits. It can be used to pay for goods and services in over 50% of network centres. For the Alpes-Maritimes:

> <http://www.pointplage.fr/default.asp?key=reseau&codep=06>

► DID YOU KNOW?

Water skiing was invented at Juan-les-Pins

A look back to a beautiful August day in 1932 and the beginnings of a new sport. If "L'illustration" is to be believed, it was then that a Norwegian snow skiing champion, Emil Petersen, had the idea of being towed on the water by a motor boat replacing the aquaplane with two 20 cm-wide skis, tipped with...metal! The first French water-skiing federation was founded in 1935 by Mme Frank Jay-Gould, also president of the Juan-les-Pins club, set up on 8 January of the same year.

In 1939, Maggy Savard and Joe Lebihan, from Antibes, gave exhibitions at the World Fair in New York. Subsequently, Léo Roman introduced the greatest personalities of the era to the sport on the smooth waters of Juan, where the first world championships took place in 1949. From 1950 to 1960, the competitions were often dominated by skiers from the Juan club, run by Mlle Homo, Florence Gould's secretary. The club can be proud of having trained sports personalities like Christian Malinet, Maxime Vazeille, Jean-Jacques Potier and Philippe Logut, world trick skiing champion in Milan in 1959.

Today, there are still 9 water-skiing clubs in Antibes Juan-les-Pins. They carry on the great tradition of the "other" world of skiing with panache, under the Mediterranean sun.

NEW IN 2012 - UNUSUAL

"LE RINGO", first water-borne restaurant in Villefranche-sur-Mer.

A type of large tube, this boat can take up to 10 guests.

> <http://www.easyboatbooking.com>

OBSERVATION AT SEA

The Mediterranean Sea: it refreshes and amuses us but, in return, we must respect it. On the French Riviera, many activities at sea allow everyone to observe the Mediterranean and the secret life of its shy inhabitants from a new angle.

A major campaign to raise awareness through activities...

Among the most sought-after activities, the observation of cetaceans. It seems that nearly 50,000 cetaceans live off the Mediterranean coast: dolphins, pilot whales, sperm whales, the finback and small whales.

Encountering these creatures in their natural surroundings is a magical moment and a great privilege.

► SAINT-JEAN-CAP-FERRAT - "SOS Grand Bleu"

The association organizes sailing days to see dolphins and whales off Nice and also the cruise, "3 Capes by sailing boat" on board the "Santo Sospir", a splendid 16th Century Turkish caïque. An unusual way of discovering the lateen sail while learning about the marine environment with our friends the dolphins.

Tel. 00 33 (0)4 93 76 17 61

> www.sosgrandbleu.asso.fr

► VILLEFRANCHE-SUR-MER - looking for dolphins and whales

Various companies organize sea trips to see marine mammals from Villefranche-sur-Mer. After around one hour's sailing, it is thrilling to see these giants of the sea. There are a great many dolphins in the Mediterranean and they are sure to welcome their visitors by giving a pretty, aquatic ballet!

> www.dauphin-mediterranee.com - www.amv-sirenes.com

FOCUS ON THE SEA - MONACO OCEANOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

MONACO OCEANOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

Claudine Francini

A lighthouse, a vessel, a sanctuary on the Mediterranean. The Oceanographic Museum conjures up a host of images. Inside, its five floors of astounding displays that raise or answer questions about life in our oceans. The Museum is a key player or defender of biodiversity. In its shadowy interior visitors can enjoy a series of pools that follow on from one another like tableaux vivants. A small crowd of children and adults gasp in amazement before the otherworldly, beautiful spectacle of this reconstituted aquatic habitat. A lady is in raptures: *"I could spend hours watching them! It must be marvellous to be able to dive among them"*. A toddler, jammed in his pushchair, claps his hands and feet as the exotic, luminous, colourful fish glide pass. The older children prefer the "terrifying" spectacle at the Shark Lagoon where the sharks swim in a pool six metres deep.

The Aquarium is the best known attraction at the Monaco Oceanographic Museum. It is one of the oldest in the world - created in 1903. Its 90 pools house a collection comprising 400 species of fish, 200 species of invertebrates and one hundred species of coral cultivated on a coral farm. The Museum's scientific team cultivates over 70 species of hard coral, limiting the samples it takes from natural environments. The Aquarium acts as a barometer in terms of Mediterranean aquatic fauna and flora with the ongoing concern to alert the general public to the plight of rare, endangered or protected species. Visitors have the chance to see striped boarfish or garfish that normally live at depths of over 200 metres, swimming here in total freedom.

Science & art - Inaugurated on March 29 1910, the venue is still very much synonymous with the image of Prince Albert I of Monaco, its designer and founder. A renowned oceanographer, he led 28 expeditions between 1885 and 1915 which took him from the Azores to Spitzberg. The results obtained represent major advances in the area of biology, medicine or marine meteorology. They also laid the foundations for the major fields of research of modern oceanography, such as the importance of balance between living beings and their environment. Jacques-Yves Cousteau, the great figurehead of modern oceanography, was the Museum's director between 1957 and 1988. A gigantic stone ship - 100 metres long, 85 metres high - it took eleven years to build. Clinging to the flank of Monaco's Rock, its facade and its interior are an ode to the sea and its riches. The jellyfish arch at the entrance and the marble ramp of its monumental staircase leading up to the first floor are spectacular illustrations of this. Visitors are greeted by the skeleton of a Minke whale - Balaenoptera physalus. Beached on the Ligurian coast in 1896, it is a veritable object of wonder in terms of its proportions - 20 metres long. The room opposite houses part of the actual laboratory on board the Hironde II, the last of the Prince's four boats. In addition to a natural history collection comprising several dozen thousand items the Museum also serves as an artistic venue. Visitors can enjoy objets d'art, drawings, paintings and photographs.

> www.oceano.mc

FOCUS ON THE SEA - FRENCH RIVIERA MARINE PARK

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

MARINELAND - François Rosso

Dances with sharks! Jaws or teddy bears?

Whatever your preferences, at Marineland, you can satisfy your thirst for excitement or channel your need for tender loving care with the teddy bear of your childhood!

As frisky as ever at age forty, since it was founded in 1970 in a touch of madness by Count Roland de la Poype, the first Sea Park in Europe - 25 hectares, 4,500 residents belonging to 36 species, 9 tanks including the killer-whale tank, 64 metres long and 12 metres deep! - is both entertaining and active in the defence of biodiversity.

Thrills? With the meeting in total immersion with sharks in a huge aquarium... safe in the shelter of a cage with sturdy bars.

Tender loving care? Watching Flock and Raspoutine, two polar bears, immaculately white, living in a "larger-than-life" environment with water at 14°C and a bed of ice in refrigerated grottoes. Watching them, you cannot help but think of another polar bear whose image is shown all over the world: famished, trapped on an ice floe drifting in a sea that is growing too warm, somewhere in the Arctic...

To contribute to the species' survival, Marineland's veterinarians and keepers hope to witness the birth of a baby, which would be a major event!

This kind of event is quite common at Marineland, since the sandbar sharks reproduce here - extremely rare in captivity - like the killer whales, dolphins and penguins...

And this nursery list is far from exhaustive... especially when it comes to tortoises and birds, from flamingos to birds of prey that can be seen in the tropical atmosphere of the exotic garden.

That's what Marineland is all about: a place dedicated to animals, research, biodiversity and family activities - a space for raising awareness to the beauty and fragility of the world of the sea, as well as its power. And, at the same time, it is a more classical park with exceptional events and breathtaking shows with friendly dolphins, elegant sea lions and killer whales, monsters of the sea in black-and-white tailcoats.

Next to the Park, three more attractions enable Marineland to diversify the offering: the Wild West Farm including a giant interactive 3D screen to relive the most beautiful scenes from Western films; Aquasplash with an extra 5,000m² of attractions; a mini-golf.

> www.marineland.fr



WALKS BY THE SEA - COASTAL PATH AND THE ÎLES DE LÉRINS

Along the coast, maintained but natural paths enable walkers to see the magnificent flowers and scenery found on the Mediterranean. There is a wide choice of walks, from the headlands to the protected shoreline.

WORTH NOTING: Each year, the "Conseil Général des Alpes-Maritimes" publishes "RandOxygène" guides to the coastal paths.

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

ÎLES DE LÉRINS IN CANNES

Claudine Francini

Islands are rich in legends and unspoilt landscapes. Lero and Lerina, Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Honorat, are no exception to the rule. A few leagues from Cannes, adventure awaits.

The boat sails on, leaving the continent and the drone of the city behind. The ambiance on board is merry, we pose for yet another photo. We even try to spot cetaceans out at sea. Destination Ste Marguerite, one of the two Iles de Lérins located south east of the famous Croisette. The scent of epic adventure hangs over the visit. The 17th century Fort Royal houses the cell of the Man in the Iron Mask, whose identity remains unknown to this day: bastard brother or hidden son of the Sun King, maybe even Molière. Be sure to visit the Musée de la Mer (Sea Museum) in the oldest part of the building. Above all, when you leave the fort be sure to meander along the path which takes you on a delightful walk through its Aleppo pine forest and down drives bordered with eucalyptus. Before you get to the Pointe du Batéguier and its bird reserve to the West, the path splits in two towards minuscule sheltered beaches.

Monk's island

Now we head off to St Honorat. A more contemplative ambiance prevails. No doubt the presence of a community of monks since 410 has something to do with it. The Cistercian monks, who arrived in 1869, administrate over one quarter of the island's area, divided between an abbey, its outbuildings and a farming area. Producers of wines, liqueurs, olive oil and lavender, the monks open their doors to public, including for long stays. Day visitors can visit the Southern tip to admire the dungeon at the fortified monastery (9th century) which served as a shelter against the pirates. They should also be sure to take a look at the remains of a string of mediaeval chapels dotted around the island...





OUTDOORS



When you arrive in the Alpes-Maritimes, you open the door to a department graced with an outstanding natural heritage and splendid, majestic setting with colours that change in harmony with the seasons. This unique contrast between the sea and the mountains gives rise to a great many picturesque sites, extraordinary scenery and forests that stretch as far as the eye can see.

WALKS IN THE FRESH AIR

► WIDE OPEN SPACES

"LE PARC NATIONAL DU MERCANTOUR"

From olive trees to mountain pastures, from larch forests to snow-capped peaks, the Mercantour is home to a wealth and variety of flora, fauna and scenery that is rarely found anywhere else in the world. The Mercantour Massif is the only mountainous French national park where one finds all types of vegetation. With summits over 3000 m above sea level, many glacial lakes and six strongly defined valleys, "Le Parc National du Mercantour" constitutes a unique example of unspoilt nature, one hour from the sea!

58 mammal species, including 7 wild ungulates, have been recorded, as well as wolves, 153 bird species, 25 reptile species and over 10,000 insect species. Flora: 2,000 plant species, including 200 rare plants and 30 native ones. The greatest variety in France.

Film news: At the moment, "Le Parc National du Mercantour" is the setting for the shooting of "Minuscule, la Vallée des fourmis perdues" a feature film in 3D by Thomas Szabo and Hélène Giraud (Futurikon Films). Release expected in 2013.

NEW IN 2012 - "LE PARC NATUREL DES PREALPES D'AZUR"

The 48th natural regional park in France has been created in the pre-Alps of the department (Préalpes d'Azur), in the foothills of the mountains in the west of the Alpes-Maritimes, between the French Riviera coast and the high-mountains.

The biodiversity of the park is remarkable. There are over 2000 plant species alone, two thirds of French flora. The variety of scenery is equally remarkable and one finds karstic plateau, gorges, clues (narrow gorges), terraced landscapes and hilltop villages dominating the valleys. Finally, the cultural heritage is equally rich and reveals the history of man's relationship with nature.

► SOME FIGURES:

- 31,270 inhabitants
- 88,940 hectares
- 48th PNR in France
- 6th PNR in the PACA region
- Over 2000 plant species
- 1952 cavities
- 137 km of underground tunnels
- The French Riviera water towers
- 45 striking villages
- One of the biggest pastoral areas in the Alpes-Maritimes

The villages in the "PNR des Pré Alpes d'Azur":

Aiglun, Andon, Ascros, Bézaudun-les-Alpes, Bonson, Bouyon, Briançonnet, Cabris, Caille, Carros, Caussols, Cipières, Collongues, Coursegoules, Cuébris, Escragnolles, Gars, Gattières, Gillette, Gourdon, Grasse, Gréolières, Le Broc, La Penne, Le Bar-sur-Loup, Les Ferres, Les Mujouls, Pierrefeu, Revest-les-Roches, Roquestéron, Roquestéron-Grasse, Saint-Antonin, Saint-Auban, Saint-Cézaire-sur-Siagne, Saint-Jeannet, Saint-Vallier-de-Thiery, Sallagriffon, Séranon, Sigale, Spéracèdes, Toudon, Tourette-du-Château, Tourrettes-sur-Loup, Valderoure, Vence.

DEPARTMENTAL PARKS

The large numbers of natural parks in the Alpes-Maritimes provide unspoilt areas where visitors can enjoy natural surroundings and have access to numerous activities. In the department, there are three large departmental parks:

➡ "Parc Départemental de Vaugrenier"

Situated 17 km from Nice and 5 km from Antibes, this natural departmental park stretches over 100 hectares in the Villeneuve-Loubet district.

The lake situated in the Vaugrenier Park is one of the rare sites in the Alpes-Maritimes department. The wild life in the lake area and in the whole park is abundant.

➡ "Parc Départemental de La Grande Corniche"

The 660 hectares of the Grande Corniche Park, spread over the La Trinité, Villefranche-sur-Mer, Èze and La Turbie districts, stretches from Mont Leuse to Mont Bataille.

450 plant species have been recorded. Some are protected in the national plan, including the carob tree, Bertoloni's bee-orchid, lavatera maritime and the Nice snowdrop.

The terrain of the park is made up of limestone plateaux extending to cliffs or "baous". The main feature is a landscape where water has carved out the rock and created shapes typical of this erosion: caves and chasms, dolines (basins of dozens of metres coming from the dissolving rocks and often linked to a chasm), limestone pavements (outcrops of fissured rock, sculpted and fluted by the water). This park is one of the last areas with vegetation typical of the coastal ecosystems of the Alpes-Maritimes.

➡ Parc Départemental Estienne d'Orves

This 14.5 ha park, located on an 18th Century Mediterranean hill, is owned by Nice. It covers Saint Philippe hill in the centre of the town.

The park has a path for discovering the local heritage that starts at the entrance to the former dwelling of the "Comtes d'Estienne d'Orves" (an influential family who encouraged and actively participated in the development of Nice).

> www.cg06.fr

(Découvrir les AM - Découverte des milieux naturels - Les Parcs naturels départementaux)

► GARDENS

An opportunity for everyone to wander through the most beautiful wooded and planted paths on the French Riviera; trees, shrubs, flowers and scents for all tastes. Some gardens have guided tours, conservatories of scented plants allow picking and others provide games for children...

> [See - Press Kit - French Riviera Gardens](#)

► "LA ROUTE DES OLIVIERS"

Before sampling some olive paste or olive oil, families can see an old or modern olive mill and learn how these products are made.

"La Route des Oliviers des Alpes-Maritimes" is a trip around the AOP (PDO - Protected Designation of Origin). There are 6 different routes, marked on a map along with good restaurants where one can find these products again.

> www.olivedenice-aop.com

GRASSE - RECREATIONAL VISIT TO THE OLIVE PRODUCING "DOMAINE DE LA ROYRIE"

The "Domaine de La Royrie" offers families with children an educational and entertaining visit. Visits take place throughout the year, with prior booking, and last one 1½ hours.

Led by Monique Brault, teaching specialist in children's activities, they are structured around "scenes" that bring to life local history, explain Mediterranean flora, relate the daily life of peasants in the 19th Century, introduce tree pruning, allow participation in the harvest, follow the oil production process, learn about olive development, etc.

> Booking and information: Tel. 00 33 (0)6 09 86 63 27 and 00 33 (0)6 70 04 95 62

ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE - A REAL MIXTURE!

► CLIMBING

Climbing is no longer only for adults. Thanks to the "Club du Baou" at St Jeannet, children can try climbing from 6 years old.

> www.grimper.org/Le-Baou-de-Saint-Jeannet

► "VIA FERRATA"

There are 7 Via Ferrata in the Alpes-Maritimes.

For children of 8 years old and over, professional guides advise trying the Lantosque Via Ferrata. Located at the bottom of the canyon, it allows a good approach in terms of excitement and the difficulty is controlled, so most children of 8 and over can follow the course. For older children, the other sites are accessible.

Information from Tourist Offices or guides before departure.

► FOREST ADVENTURE

There are 8 Forest Adventure courses in the Alpes-Maritimes, primarily at La Colmiane, Valberg, Isola 2000, Peira-Cava and Villeneuve-Loubet.



► "LES GROTTES DE SAINT-CÉZAIRE" (Grasse area)

The Saint-Cézaire Cave was born 6 million years ago. An incomparable kingdom of the imaginary and wonderful, this cave was discovered by a farmer's lucky blow with a pickaxe in 1890. It combines an outstanding wealth of concretions with fantastic shapes of surprising beauty.

The entire route is perfectly planned and secure; access to the galleries is inside the cave building. Then, led from room to room, the visitor discovers the spectacular underground landscape of a grandiose world, highlighted by well-chosen, discreet lighting. In these depths, the amazing rose and purple colouring of the columns contributes to the magic of the site. Outstanding natural beauty combines with the imagination: a bird with majestic plumage, stars, coral, jellyfish, a surprising death's head, not forgetting an amazing limestone skeleton. Turbulent water and the passing years have added the finishing touch. The harmonies of a magic keyboard in the red rock are deeply moving for visitors.

> www.lesgrottesdesaintcezaire.com

► UNDERGROUND TRAIL (Grasse area)

Exclusively on the French Riviera, an underground Via Ferrata. Located in the "Parc de la Moulière" at Caille (Grasse area), it is unusual in combining potholing and the excitement of a traditional Via Ferrata. It is accessible to everyone, and the activity lasts 2 to 3 hours. Open all year.

► FOR ADULTS, THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTISE A GREAT NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES:

> See the Press Kit: "French Riviera Outdoors"

WALKS - AMUSING WALKS AND TREASURE HUNTS

♥ ONE OF OUR FAVOURITES - RANDOLAND: ENTERTAINING CIRCUITS FOR THE KIDS!



It is not always easy to go on walks and hikes (on foot or by mountain bike) with children... To make these activities enjoyable and interesting, Randoland has made activity sheets based on some of the circuits.

Intended for children between 5 and 10 years old, these sheets take the form of treasure hunts.

Children solve the riddles by observing and looking for clues in the natural and historical environment... They can rely on the help of Inspector Rando to find the solutions. For each circuit, there are three levels.

Each child will find an activity sheet appropriate to his age:

- 4 to 6 years old;
- 7 to 9 years old;
- 9 to 12 years old.

The sheets can be downloaded free of charge on this site:

www.cotedazur-tourisme.com

They are also available on www.randoland.fr and in Tourist Offices and information kiosks.

► TREASURE HUNTS

Geocaching! The idea: a treasure hunt in the guise of a hike guided by a GPS!

Places to do geocaching in the department:

- La Colle-sur-Loup
- Roubion
- "Parc national du Mercantour"
- Valberg: "le Sentier Planétaire"

WALKS – TREASURE HUNTS AT MANDELIEU-LA NAPOULE

Two treasure hunts have been set up at Mandelieu La-Napoule for everyone to enjoy, one on the banks of La Siagne, the other near the "Château de La Napoule". They aim to arouse children's curiosity and powers of reflexion and enable them to learn while enjoying themselves. Children will receive a present when they have solved the riddle at the Mandelieu Tourist Office (806, avenue de Cannes).

HUNTING ENIGMAS AT THE "VILLA KÉRYLOS" – BEAULIEU-SUR-MER

At one of the most beautiful villas on the French Riviera, the Greek villa, Kérylos, at Beaulieu-sur-Mer, children between 7 and 12 years old who come with their family can take full advantage of this magnificent spot while playing "enigma hunting". A ceramics workshop for all ages is open to the public every weekend and every day in the school holidays.

TREASURE HUNTS – DISCOVERING NICE

"Léopard de Fulginet's Follies of a Day" and "Giuliano Da Sangallo's Follies of a Day" are two routes full of surprises for discovering the thousand and one splendours of Nice's heritage. Designed and prepared by the Heritage Centre, these games are free.

"Léopard de Fulginet's Follies of a Day" takes young adventurers through the Old Town in search of a treasure.

"Giuliano Da Sangallo's Follies of a Day" allows participants to discover an unusual, mysterious Cimiez.

These open-air, cultural activities are intended for families who are looking for an amusing way of discovering or rediscovering Nice while enjoying themselves. The historical context is real and the stories are inspired by people who really existed.

Heritage Information Centre - Tel. 00 33 (0)4 92 00 41 90

> www.nice.fr/Culture/Centre-du-patrimoine

VALLAURIS – PICASSO RALLY

Designed and prepared by the Vallauris Golfe-Juan "Maison du Tourisme" this game is intended for one or more children (preferably between 6 and 12 years old) from one or more families.

The child should collect the travel diary from the reception desk at the Vallauris "Maison du Tourisme" (Square du 8 mai 1945).

At the end of the rally, the child should take the diary back to the reception desk and have it checked by a member of staff. If most of the answers are correct, the participant will receive a present as a reward for his or her efforts and the interest shown in the village. The child can keep the diary as a souvenir of the visit to Vallauris.

Based on the life of Picasso at Vallauris, this rally lasts around 60 minutes. The last question in the game is about Picasso's monumental work, La Guerre et La Paix. In 1952, Picasso painted a fresco in the Château's Romanesque chapel on the vaulted panels. After Guernica in 1937 and Massacre en Corée in 1951, La Guerre et La Paix is Picasso's last demonstration of his political commitment: a demonstration for peace...

Free - Valid all year (including school holidays and all areas, but subject to the opening days and times of the "Maison du Tourisme" and the Chateau Museum).

▶ ADVENTURE PARKS FOR CHILDREN VILLENEUVE-LOUBET

Pitchoun Forest is open to children between 3 and 10 years old. It is an excellent activity with a good mix of fun and learning: on the one hand, leisure and sport, on the other, education through the exploration of the natural world and forest life.

> www.pitchounforest.com

Le Bois des Lutins - Climb into the highest branches of century-old trees to go through cabins and along slides and terraces looking for the little people of the wood. Three hours of original adventures for the whole family. A spectacular trail of nets looking down over a hectare and a half of games and surprises.

MOUGINS

The playground at *Eco Parc* is a 1000m² eco-friendly area open from Tuesday to Sunday.

From 1 to 14 years old, there is something to amuse everyone: springers, cabins, seesaws, slide...

> www.ecoparc-mougins.fr

NICE ET CANNES (INDOOR)

Kid's City (700m²) in Nice and *Fun City* (1 000 m²) in Cannes are large games areas for children up to 12 years old where they can climb, run, jump, roll and slide in and on various pieces of equipment. Perfect for rainy days!

> www.fun-city.fr

> www.kidcity.fr

GET ON A BIKE!

▶ THE COAST BY BIKE – EXCURSIONS ON THE SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

A secure section from Nice to Cagnes-sur-Mer.

Following the example of the biggest French towns, Nice Côte d'Azur Urban Conurbation has installed "Vélos Bleus" (hire bikes) in Nice, Saint-Laurent-du-Var and Cagnes-sur-Mer. Sports lovers can ride along by the sea - without interruption - from the Port in Nice to the "Fort Carré" in Antibes, enjoying one of the most beautiful bays in the world.

All along the esplanade, there are opportunities to have a break on Mediterranean beaches or terraces facing the sea and explore streets and alleys to see the local crafts and historical heritage.

Simple to use, this system of self-service bike hire allows visitors to see the area at their own pace for €1 per day or €5 per week.

All information on:

> www.velobleu.org

A free iPhone app also exists that allows you to locate the "Vélos Bleus" terminals.

▶ NEW IN 2012 – VILLENEUVE-LOUBET

The first bicycle touring game on the French Riviera

For 2012, the Villeneuve-Loubet Tourist Office has extended its programme by designing a bicycle touring game. This is an opportunity for families with children to discover the cultural, historical and natural heritage of the district while having fun. The game follows the shared cycle-pedestrian route "La Villeneuvoise" that links "Port Marina Baie des Anges" with the Provençal village going through the "Rives du Loup".

Villeneuve-Loubet really is the town for family games...

▶ INLAND – FAMILY CIRCUITS – NEW IN 2012

The Alpes-Maritimes department has set up 7 new bicycle touring circuits: 2 family – 3 discovery circuits and a more energetic route that allow visitors to explore a large part of this alternative low-speed French Riviera. The circuits are graded by difficulty.

EXCURSION AROUND GRASSE... IN THE WESTERN PLAINS AT CAILLE

6,5 km – 50 m height difference – Hybrid or mountain bike

Especially suited to younger children (from 8 years old), this circuit is good for a family bicycle ride in outstanding surroundings. The Caille plain is a delight and virtually flat. The ride follows minor made-up roads with little traffic alternating with forest tracks.

Discover Caille

A typical village with rural architecture, it is located at the foot of Baou Roux in the centre of the conical plain that leads to the village of Andon.

Don't miss

- *The Caille Marais canals* - Long ago, the lower part of the plain was a swamp. Floods and epidemics caused by persistent humidity were frequent. In 1907, a series of drainage canals was constructed to take away the water by the Caille sinkhole. Clearly visible, these canals were subsequently improved several times.
- *The Caille polje* - Typical of karstic relief, the polje (a plain suitable for cultivation in Serbo-Croat) is a large flat-floored depression, closed by steep, rocky slopes. Water is evacuated by a hole in the bottom, linked to the water table. The polje at Caille has often been described as one of the most beautiful in France.

To do

- *Hike in the Caille Plain* - This natural stadium around 5 kilometres long, with an impressive area of trees in the middle called "Le Serre", is a joy for walkers and mountain bikers during the hot summer days...
- *Caille adventure park* - This adventure course has 70 platforms (2½ hours of activities) with 1 children's trail (from 5 years old), 1 trail for adults and families and one extreme trail. Don't miss the 470 metre zip-line!
- *Underground trail* - Exclusive to the French Riviera, an underground Via Ferrata. Located in the "Parc de la Moulière" at Caille (Grasse area), it is unusual in combining potholing and the excitement of a traditional Via Ferrata. It is accessible to everyone, and the activity lasts 2 to 3 hours. Open all year.

FAMILY CIRCUIT... ALONG THE VAR

6.6 km - From 5 years old

Le Broc, along The Var – A little tourism...

Le Broc is a little village in the Nice area, perched between the sea and mountains, with a splendid arcaded square and pretty vaulted alleys. Perched over 500 metres above sea level, in the middle of olive terraces, it has an incomparable panoramic view of The Var plain. On foot... For the more energetic, a route leaving from the shores of the "Lac du Broc" enables walkers to reach the village in 1½ hours, coming down again by the little hamlet of Aiguette and arriving at the extreme north of the lake. (Map TOP 25 – IGN – 3642 ET).

Unbeatable activities for learning about nature organized by the Conseil Général!

Each summer, the Conseil Général, in collaboration with the associations, organizes fishing activities and bird watching to discover the nature of the Departmental Natural Park.

Information and programme on

> www.cg06.fr/fr/decouvrir-les-am/decouverte-des-milieux-naturels/les-parcs-naturels-departementaux/animations/animations/

EXCURSION CENTRED ON THE VAR

Near the coast, this route brings to light surprising and little-known aspects of The Var and its tributary, The Esteron, an amazing world where wild areas are mixed with traces of man's attempts to canalize and use the vagaries of the river.

The first part of the route goes around the "Lac du Broc" by a former service road. The second part, along The Var, takes the rider as far as the gates of Plan du Var on a cycle path on the river bank.

A panoramic ornithological observatory allows the visitor to observe some of the 260 bird species in The Var estuary (including over 40 migratory birds that find it a beneficial stopover). The outstanding water quality encourages the development of a varied and abundant fish population and the lake is popular for fishing.

► MOUNTAIN BIKE

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

THE FRENCH RIVIERA: MOUNTAIN BIKERS' PARADISE Claudine Francini

Outside the circle of initiates, the information isn't widely known – the French Riviera is the "Hot Spot" of world mountain biking, a sport practised in the middle of nowhere which the general public can fully enjoy thanks to the favourable relief and good facilities.

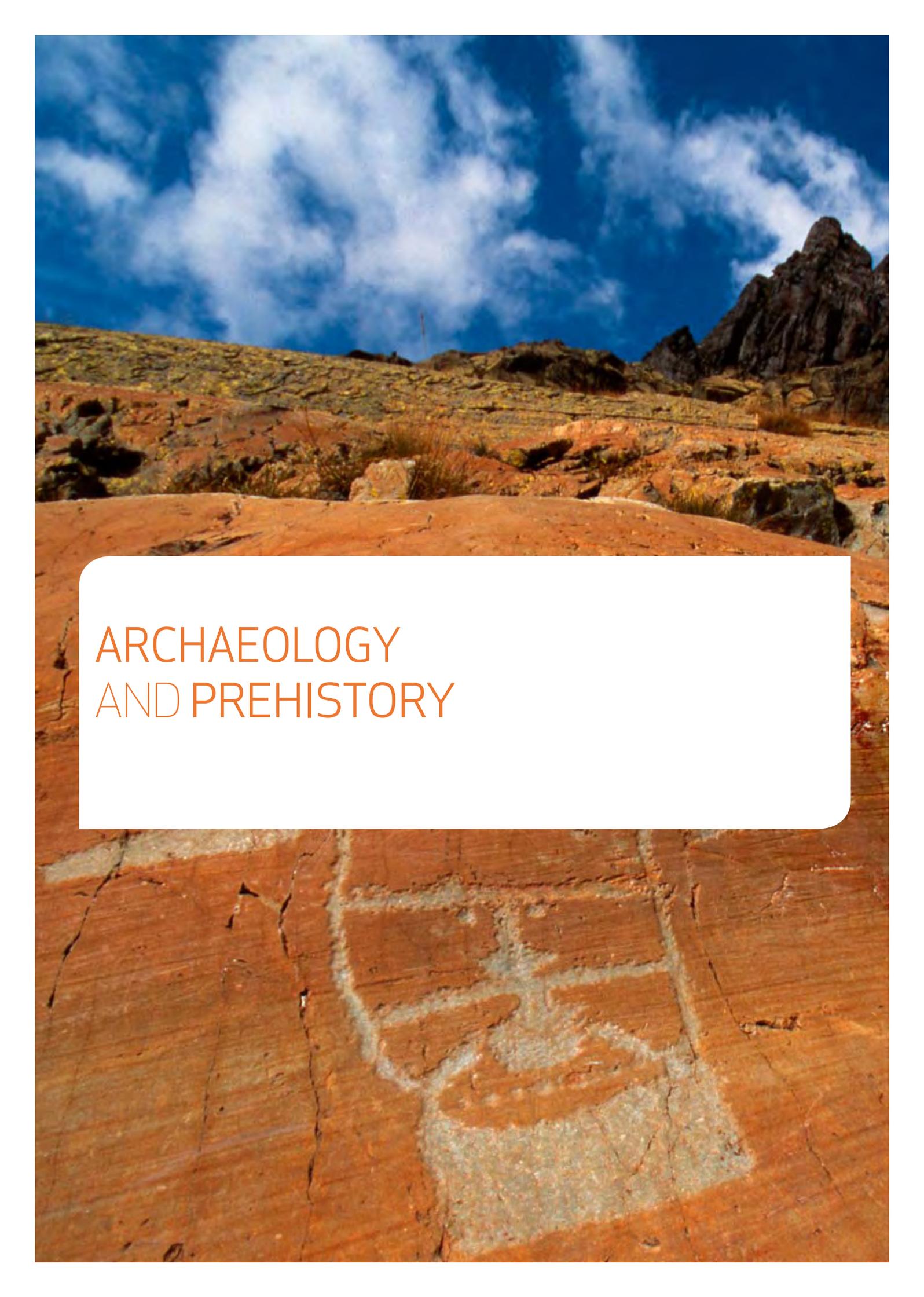
"If I were to give advice to someone wanting to take up mountain biking, I would, first of all, suggest living in the Alpes-Maritimes, as this area is to this sport what Hawaii is to surfing. It is the cradle of mountain biking and it's the best playing field in the world. Geologically, the surroundings are particularly favourable and the paths have been very carefully developed thanks to the actions of the Conseil Général (the county council)," says George Edwards, founder member of the international mountain biking movement.

The village of Peille, in the Paillon valley, has already produced several outstanding champions in the discipline such as Nicolas Vouilloz (ten times world champion) and Fabien Barel (three times world champion). This popular, supportive sport foreshadows 21st Century cycling by conveying values such as respect and the discovery of nature.

"The feeling of independence and self-sufficiency is similar to that sometimes felt by a sailor at sea." Even so, mountain biking requires specific technical and physical ability. "Not everybody has good balance on a bike, and, above a certain level, it is more difficult to acquire the technique than it is for skiing. Children need careful supervision and this happens in France. The country is in the forefront in this field."

In the mountainous areas of the Alpes-Maritimes, Roubion and Auron ski resorts have made special efforts to develop and mark out the runs open to the general public. *"Mountain biking is an excellent complementary activity for high mountain resorts. As in Canada or the Tyrol, it can make a significant economic contribution to French mountain areas"*.





ARCHAEOLOGY AND PREHISTORY

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera
Claudine Francini

In Nice, three sites allow visitors to follow the traces of Homo erectus, Neanderthal Man and Homo Sapiens between 400,000 and 22,000 years ago. A major discovery in August 2011 at "La Grotte du Lazaret" leads us to expect major advances in the Palaeolithic knowledge of the region.

Terra Amata: the link between past and present

400,000 years ago, Homo erectus established a hunting hut near a sheltered little creek from where he set out to hunt deer and elephants. The climate here was hotter than it is now and oaks, olive trees and Aleppo pines were abundant. During an excavation of the site on the corner of the present Boulevard Carnot and Impasse Terra Amata, palaeontologists discovered a rudimentary dwelling, identified thanks to traces of picket holes and large stones thought to have been used to consolidate a hut made of branches. They also made a mould of a right foot, the only human trace found at Terra Amata. Henry de Lumley and his team made these discoveries while they were prospecting a building site in 1966. The rescue dig brought to light 21 levels of settlement and more than 28,000 objects.

"One of the oldest centres of humanity deserved a museum. In September 1976, the Museum of Human Palaeontology of Terra Amata was inaugurated on the ground floor of the building, at the very spot that the discovery was made", explained Bertrand Roussel, prehistorian in charge of the collections of this municipal museum in Nice.

Apart from the permanent exhibition which recreates the daily life and environment of nomadic hunters, *"the museum aims to be an exhibition centre where prehistory is viewed from unusual angles. The idea is to encourage regular visits from a different type of visitor, those from the world of modern art or literature"*. In 2010, for example, the photos, collages and wash drawings of the visual artist Henri Maccheroni were exhibited at Terra Amata, accompanied by texts by the writer Michel Butor.

Tel. 00 33 (0)4 93 55 59 93

> www.musee-terra-amata.org

"La Grotte du Lazaret": a major discovery

Not far from there, a stone's throw from the shore, the site of the Lazaret Palaeolithic cave is a perfect Mediterranean paradise. Between 200,000 and 130,000 years ago, the climate was harsh so the place served as a hunting shelter for pre-Neanderthal man and has been regularly excavated since the 19th Century. Since 1961, Professor Henry de Lumley's teams have been on the site and have unearthed 40,000 articles including 23 human bones. On 13 August 2011, a team of archaeology students discovered a 24th human bone, 170,000 years old. *At first sight, nobody thought it could be a human skull, especially there in the middle of Cervidae remains. When we saw the frontal sockets, we couldn't believe our eyes!"* said Samir Khatib in charge of the dig at "La Grotte du Lazaret". This frontal shows *"that Homo erectus was still on the French Riviera and in Europe at this period. The depression above the nose and the discontinuous brow ridge above the sockets are significant. Neanderthal man had a continuous brow ridge"*, explained professor de Lumley. The first men arrived in Europe from Africa 1.4 million years ago; towards 600,000 years ago, Homo erectus distinguished himself, classified as pre-Neanderthal. As for the Neanderthals, their presence has been attested between 250,000 and 30,000 years ago. For Mr. De Lumley, this man or woman from Nice - aged under 25, as is borne out by the state of his or her frontal - *"will allow us to understand the progression from Neanderthal man on the shores of the Mediterranean"*.

"La Grotte du Lazaret" can be visited with a prior booking, minimum 5 people. During excavation periods, July and August, booking is not necessary.

Tel. 00 33 (0)4 92 00 17 37

> <http://lazaret.unice.fr>

Tourrette-Levens: Homo sapiens hunting shelter

The next part of the human adventure is found in the rocky shelters in a village located north of Nice. Traces of occupation by Neanderthal man and Homo Sapiens have been discovered in the caves of "La Grotte du Merle" and "La Baume Périgaud", in the Tourrette-Levens district. *"In 'La Grotte du Merle' we have found tools carved out of fragments of stone using a technique characteristic of Neanderthal man. The replacement of Neanderthal man by Homo sapiens from Africa can be explained by a pandemic, a war or even by their progressive isolation",* explained Patricia Valensi, palaeontologist and curator of the "Musée de la Préhistoire de Tourrette-Levens". In "La Baume Périgaud", scientists have identified three levels of occupation by Homo Sapiens, which span the period from 34,000 to 22,000 years ago. *"Each period had its own techniques for making assegai. Some of these assegai are identical to those found in the Grimaldi caves on the Italian frontier. One can therefore suppose that the inhabitants of these caves used to come and hunt in the mountainous areas and set up hunting shelters there"*.

Set up in 2010 by the "Société d'Etudes Paléontologiques", the Museum in Tourrette-Levens has seven exhibition rooms. They highlight some of the objects discovered during the excavations undertaken in the 1930's, 1980's and between 2003 and 3009. Finally, a reproduction of the Chauvet cave in Ardèche (31,000 years ago) plunges the visitor into the heart of the art of rock painting of our close ancestors.

Tel. 00 33 (0)4 97 20 54 60

> www.tourrette-levens.org

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

MENTON, IN OUR ANCESTORS' TIME

François Rosso

When the sea wasn't there... men, some of them wearing headdresses of shells, hunted deer, elephants and rhinoceros.

With your back to the warm rocks that catch the reflection of a white sun on the silver-blue of the Mediterranean, shut your eyes and imagine the sea... 5 kilometres from today's shoreline; in other words, 110 metres lower than the sea level today.

Then imagine a fertile plain with thick, rich grass, dotted with Scots Pine and Juniper trees, where deer and rhinoceros roamed, as well as small horses with bushy manes and, here and there, elephants.

Everyone, men and animals, had thick hair. It was cold.

We are talking about 20 and/or 50,000 years before our time and the caves recessed in the cliffs that we visit, on the boundary between France and Italy, have already sheltered our ancestors. The fine, distinguished outline of a horse carved precisely and delicately on one of the walls testifies to a long-term settlement and a good level of technical skill.

Several kilometres from Nice, "Terra Amata", the "Grotte du Lazaret" and the Vallée des Merveilles, the Menton-Vintimille area of the Mercantour - at Balzi Rossi, just after the former coastal frontier post - offers a moving, if little-known, testimony to life in prehistoric times, from a million years before our time to the end of the Roman Empire in the 4th Century.

The wealth of material from the digs demonstrates the vitality of the area, which sheltered not just a few isolated groups but acted as a "village", even if the clans did not necessarily mix.

In the "Musée de Préhistoire Régionale de Menton" and the "Museo Preistorico dei Balzi Rossi" in Vintimilla, there are, of course, the objects and bones brought to light on the same site - the oldest in France - but also skeletons embracing in death, including a rare triple tomb at Balzi Rossi.

We learn that the "Homme de Menton" - his recognized, scientific name - and his descendants were much taller than "French" Cro-Magnon man. This 1.80 m giant - exceptionally tall at that time - certainly came from a race that originated in the East, through today's Ukraine. This hypothesis is supported by the great number of objects, mostly jewellery in worked ivory, found nearby.

Besides, it has been established that the "Ukrainians" became masters in working the ivory of mammoths' tusks.

How can we remain untouched by this skull covered with shells – visitors can see copies in both museums – discovered in the 1870's by the palaeontologist, Emile Rivière, and his friend from Menton, Stanislas Bonfils? Was it the remains of a headdress? Were the shells knotted into the hair? Was it a mark of his social position? Did he wear them for a special occasion or just to be smart?

In this case, the mystery rests intact. However, we already know so much about our ancestors that they deserve to keep their secret garden!

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

SAINT-MARTIN-VÉSUBIE

THE WOLF AND US: A STORY GOING BACK 35,000 YEARS

François Rosso

At Alpha centre, in the Mercantour wolf park, there is a different way of looking at "canis lupus".

In the popular imagination, wolves are always represented as being black, often with chops drawn back in a snarl revealing two fine rows of fangs... Fear is tenacious, nourished by stories where wolves swallow grandmothers, eat Monsieur Sequin's goat and chase the little pigs!

At the Alpha centre, in the Mercantour wolf park, the mood is one of reconciliation: the wolves are not black but a lovely tawny colour; they thread their way through the pines in silence, their yellow eyes blinking in the sun, and then go on playing.

To see wolves in a different light, you have to get close to them and, at the Alpha Centre, there are 21 specimens to see, divided into three very different packs. They move around in closed parks in a quasi-wild state. Wardens, though, feed them meat – one can take part at feeding time – and care for them when necessary. There are strong Prague wolves, the lighter and more timid Abruzzes wolves and Copenhagen wolves with a light-coloured belly, sometimes with the latest boisterous cubs.

As well as visiting "canis lupus", it is important to watch the "scénovision" shows that narrate our shared history. For 35,000 years - while the first canines made their appearance 35 million years ago! - men and wolves have been condemned to tolerate each another. Far from being dull films, these are animations with a lavish décor. Always moving, they are passionate, instructive shows that appeal to all the senses.

In addition to these activities, the park managers have collaborated with researchers and archaeologists from the Lazaret Departmental Laboratory in Nice to design an area explaining the evolution of the wolf, its dentition and habits, backed up with several good copies of skulls, and the display of the skeleton of the emblematic Buck, one of the park's pioneers.

Intended as an educational activity for children, this area also has workshops for archaeological "digs" and boards for practising wall painting with realistic colours and fingers!

Finally, with prior booking, visitors can become "keepers for a day", take part in feeding routines, or, at night, meet to hear the wolves singing, the Alpha packs and those of the Mercantour, on the other side of the fence, calling to one another. The emotion is intense as the music resonates in the depths of the body letting in the magic. We will never again raise our voices on the side of men against the wolf.

Information: Tel. 00 33 (0)4 93 02 33 69

> www.alpha-loup.com

Saint-Martin-Vésubie Tourist Office

Tel. 00 33 (0)4 93 03 21 28

> www.saintmartinvesubie.fr

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

THE VALLEE DES MERVEILLES - ENGRAVINGS SPEAK

Claudine Francini

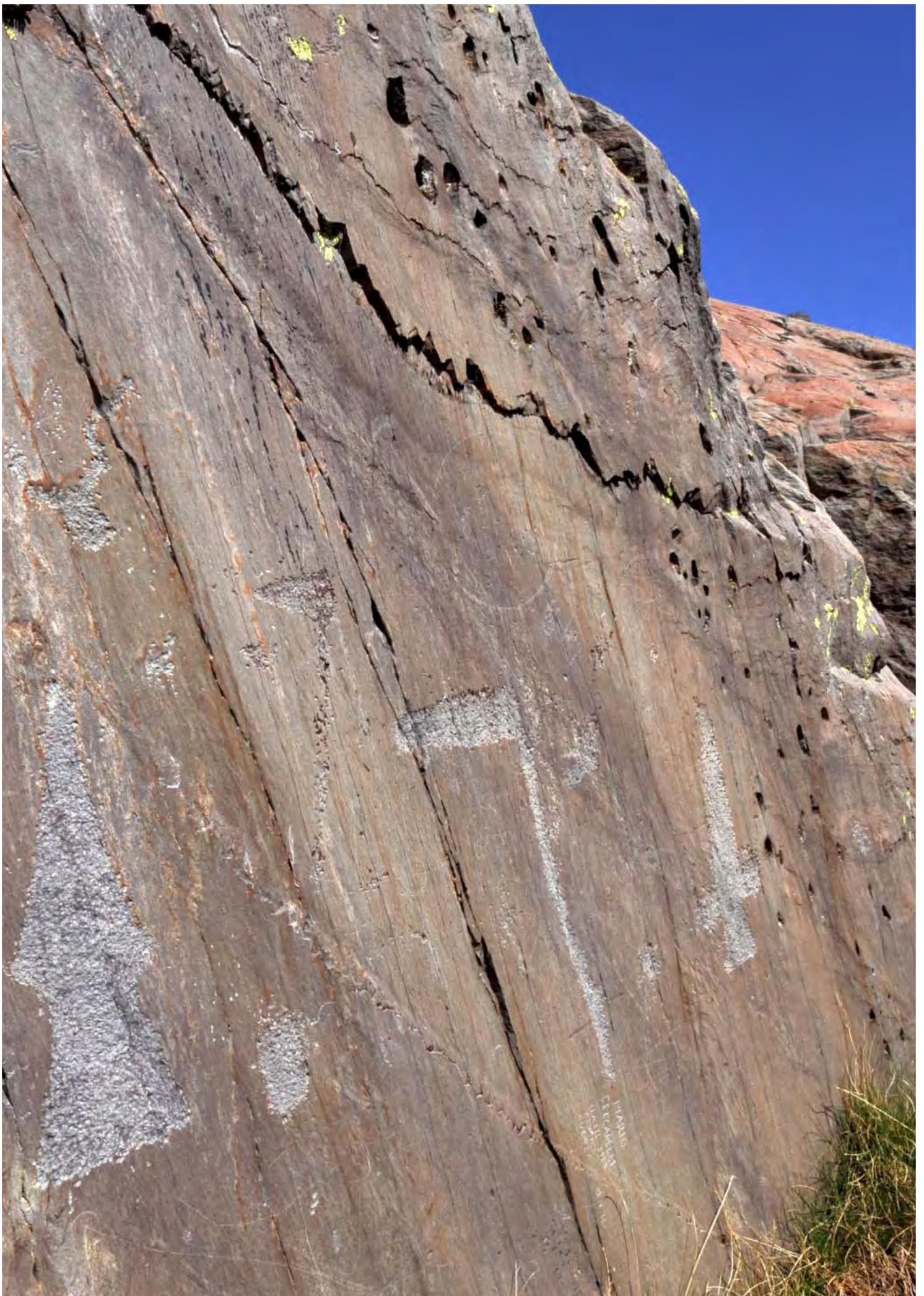
The entry to the Vallée des Merveilles is magical. Between the Cime du Diable and Mont Bego, the path meanders through alpine meadows up to the welcoming terrace of the refuge: a well-earned stop in a setting of such dramatic beauty as to favour the emergence of legends. In 3,000 BC, did the people who lived in this valley sense its mystery and holiness and feel the need to understand it? The answer is, perhaps, to be found in the glacial valleys around Mont Bego (2872m) which have 3,600 engravings carved in the rock. Are they a tribute to taumorphic gods, to earth gods, to storm gods upon whom Copper Age and Bronze Age men called to fertilize their land and animals. These farmers, shepherds, itinerant artists from Piedmont, the Mercantour valleys and even from Provence, found the water and pastures they needed for their flocks in the dry season in the Vallée des Merveilles.

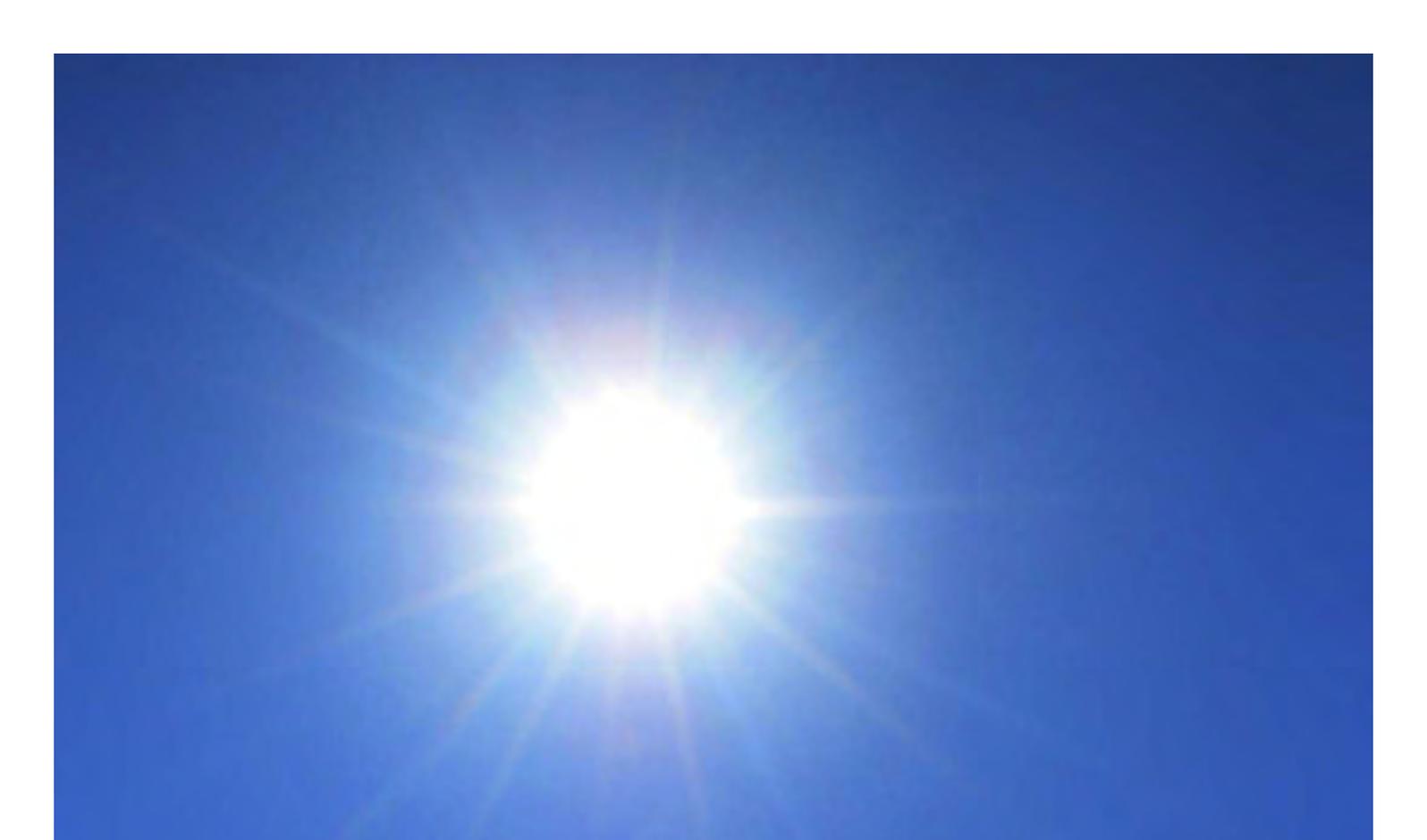
A completely different language - From 1967 on, Professor Henry de Lumley, director of the Institut de Paléontologie Humaine in Paris, has undertaken the work of making an inventory and classifying the engravings in four distinct categories: "corniforms" (representations of cattle), arms and tools, geometric figures and anthropomorphs.

"The Mont Bego site extends over 1,000 hectares and seven different areas. In the Fontanalba area, one sees engravings representing a yoke and a little figure doing agricultural work, dating from 3,300BC. In the Vallée des Merveilles area, more recent, 1,800BC, the little figure has disappeared and has become a symbol. From earliest times, the engravings were more and more schematic, becoming true ideograms. By combining the signs, the hopes addressed to the gods for the prosperity of the land also developed. It is now a question of discovering this language, of "reading" the great book of Mont Bego and making sense of it. We need to research associations and combinations going as far afield as the civilizations of Korea, China and Eurasia and delve into the ancient Sumerian texts". At over 75 years old and after 40 years of searching, the Mont Bego civilization still has Henry de Lumley running all over the place.

> www.mercantour.eu

Questions are still being asked at the Vallée des Merveilles. Henry de Lumley will be there once again this year to continue working out a grid aimed at decoding engraved sign language.





ASTRONOMY:
KNOW HOW TO LOOK
AT THE STARS

At a time when NASA has landed *Curiosity* on Mars, more and more people are fascinated by the study of the thousands of stars in the galaxy. Astronomy, one of the oldest sciences in the world, has always intrigued people and this interest does not seem likely to stop...

"OBSERVATOIRE DE NICE"

On the Mont-Gros plateau, the Observatory is a star in the universe of astronomy. Set up in 1881 by the patron, Raphaël Bischoffsheim, in 1881, its construction was the result of the combined talent of Charles Garnier for the architecture and Gustave Eiffel for the Dome. Its 18-metre long telescope was one of the rare instruments in the world used for virtual observation of the stars. In this way, two thousand new double stars have been discovered in Nice.



Located on one of the most beautiful sites on the French Riviera, it has an unrestricted view of Nice. However, the facilities of the "Observatoire de la Côte d'Azur" are spread over 450 hectares in Nice, Grasse and the Calern plateau (Caussols district).

The "Observatoire de Nice" has become a world centre for understanding the universe.

"ASTRORAMA" AT EZE

Today housed in the former "Feuillerins" battery in the "La Revère" Park, the "Astorama" serves as an observatory. It furthers observation of the sky and, therefore, the stars and organizes lectures, exhibitions, themed evenings and activities.

A complete educational programme to understand the universe better.
> www.astrorama.net

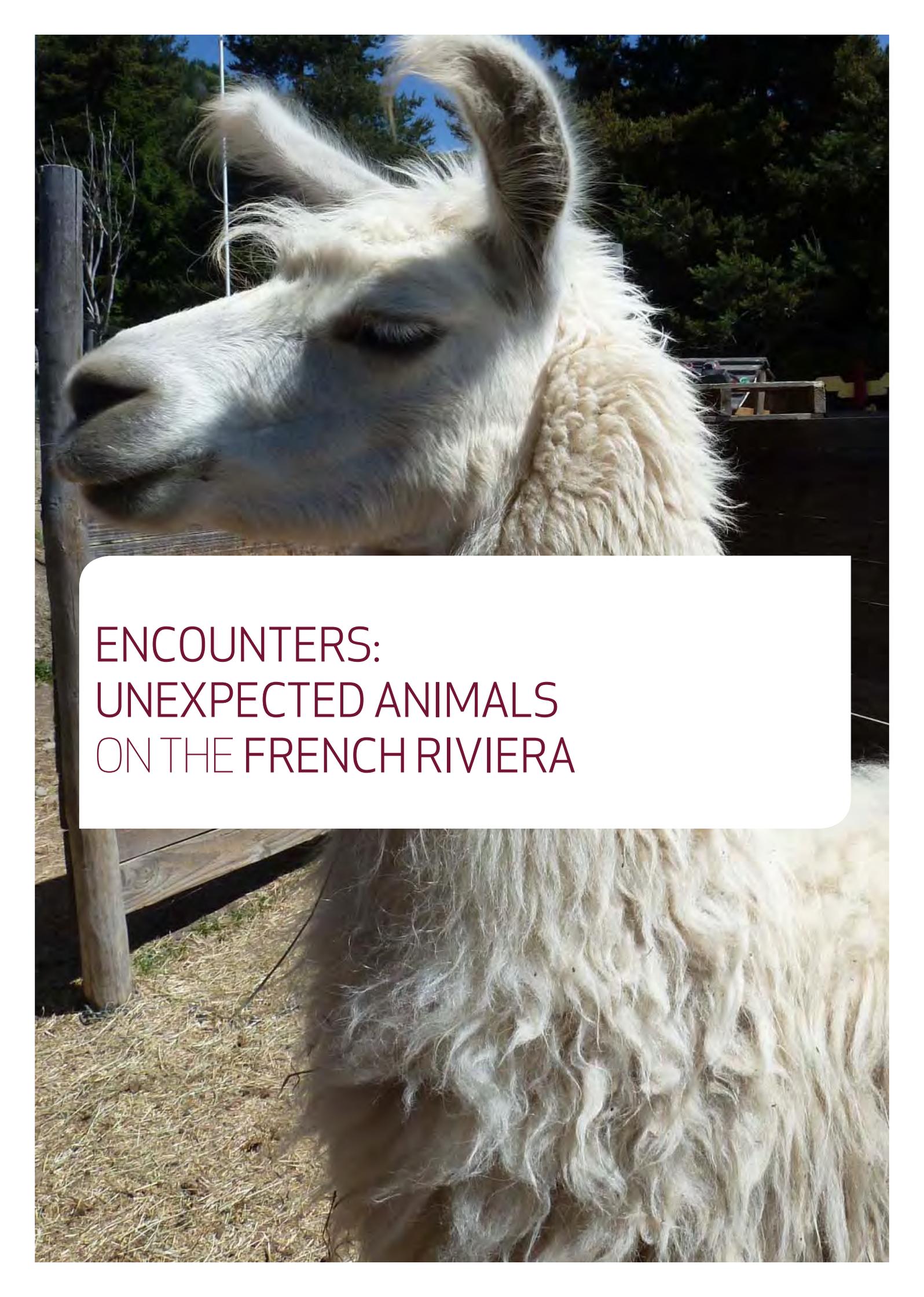
CANNES - VISIT "ALCATEL ALENIA SPACE"

The largest centre for researching, building and testing artificial satellites in Europe is open to the public every Saturday morning. Due to the nature of the activities on this site, visits must be booked in advance with the PARSEC association.
Tel. 00 33 (0)4 93 85 85 58.

VALBERG - THE "SENTIER PLANÉTAIRE"

The "Sentier Planétaire" in Valberg is based on the idea of representing the solar system in natural surroundings on a scale of 1:1,000,000. All along this winter and summer trail, imposing monolithic works resembling Land Art reproduce the solar system through representations of the different planets. They enliven the educational, recreational and contemplative stopping places that focus on the theme of astronomy.





ENCOUNTERS:
UNEXPECTED ANIMALS
ON THE FRENCH RIVIERA

Each region has its secrets and the hidden treasure of the French Riviera is its large number of different animal species and the variety of unexpected animals.

ST-MARTIN-VÉSUBIE - "ALPHA, LE PARC DES LOUPS DU MERCANTOUR"

'Alpha, le Parc des Loups du Mercantour' came about through a wish to narrate the various aspects of recent and past confrontation between men and wolves. For Alpha - the international name for the dominant couple in a pack of wolves - is not just another reserve for wolves in captivity.



It is an animal park in a grandiose setting and is unlike anything else in the world, thanks to the originality of its presentation.

First of all, the visitor watches three "Scénovisions®", each lasting nearly 20 minutes. Their magnificent sets are located in the former cowsheds, now renovated. These shows focus on several figures, shepherds, scientists and forest wardens, all people whose activities have led them into contact with wolves, though for very different reasons.

Guided by one of these specialists in animal behaviour, visitors next go to a closed initiation area and then into the second part of the park to meet the wolves.

> www.alpha-loup.com

BISON AND PRZEWALSKI'S HORSES "LA RÉSERVE BIOLOGIQUE DES MONTS D'AZUR" - THORENC

At Thorenc, a former holiday centre set in 700 hectares has been converted for use as a scientific project for the conservation of species and preservation of natural areas in the mountains near Grasse, 1500 metres above sea-level. "La réserve biologique des Monts d'Azur" is a natural area that protects a biological heritage remarkable for its diversity.

Its mission is to build up and preserve endangered animal and plant species and their habitats.



A complete range of services and activities is offered at the reserve: bed & breakfast and dinner at the farm, outings accompanied by a guide, either on foot or in a barouche drawn by magnificent carthorses. This adds an educational dimension to the activity.

The lucky ones may see bison at close range or in the distance.

Accommodation is possible in the Reserve.

> www.haut-thorenc.com



COL DE TURINI - "LES LAMAS DU MIRADOU"

Established on the Col de Turini for several years now (allow 1¼ hours from Nice), the farm has around ten llamas on 2 hectares, centred on a site named 'Le Miradou', over 15,000 m above sea-level on the edge of the "Parc du Mercantour".

> www.leslamasdumiradou.com

(Accommodation: "Les Logis de la Source")



GOOD FOOD!



The French Riviera is renowned for its outstanding gastronomy. With over 50 Michelin-starred restaurants in the Alpes-Maritimes Department alone, the great chefs remind us every day of the culinary identity of the French Riviera.

Nice can take pride in its traditional "nissarde" cuisine, Mougins holds the "Festival de la Gastronomie" each year and local producers and fishermen have their stands on the French Riviera markets and showcase their "Protected Designation of Origin" products. It is, therefore, natural to introduce children to the tastes and high-quality products of the region to make them aware of local food and transmit the traditions.

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

EASTER - THE EGG HUNT - Stéphanie Paicheler

3, 2, 1... The egg hunt is officially open. Easter bells will be generous this year! That's a promise: Easter on the French Riviera means happiness for youngsters (and grownups, too). Follow us in our delectable itinerary...

Of course, you still have time to hide eggs in your flat or garden, but there are other (much) more appealing options.

Take Parc Phoenix: seven hectares of mini-safaris at the gates to Nice. The egg hunt is a "must". Those under age 6 will look for cocoa treasures in bales of straw. Those from 6 to 12 will move on to "serious" business: an Indiana Jones-style adventure on a course strewn with animal and floral trials. Equally "green", but in a different style, Isola 2000 organises its egg hunt on the snow front. Why not combine it with sleigh rides?

Young Sherlock Holmes - "Eggs, enigmas and chocolate": such is the National Monuments' initiative. At one of these, La Turbie, 'Augustus' Trophy offers a treasure hunt on Sunday 24 April, a fun way for families to (re)discover this ancient Roman monument. Participants will have to rack their brains to find clues and solve historical and architectural enigmas. The reward? Chocolate eggs, of course! In Villeneuve-Loubet, a giant catapult will propel eggs in three directions: Pitchoun Forest, Bois des Lutins (elves' wood) and the Labyrinth. A deluge of cocoa!

Gourmandises for grownups - Adults, too, will have countless delectable opportunities. At St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild is orchestrating a tasty chocolate festival on April, where exhibitors will offer a wide range of cocoa-rich products.

Finally, for Easter, the chocolatiers of the French Riviera have once again shown all their creativity. To be enjoyed without moderation...

PLACES FOR PASTRIES!

Here is a selection of 'salons de thé' (tearooms) and specialist bakeries for indulging in the delicacies made by the most prestigious and creative pastry cooks!

CANNES

"INTUITION BY J"

Go through the shop and tearoom of a World Champion pastry maker.

> www.patisserie-intuitions.com

SAINT-PAUL DE VENCE

New: "LES MACARONS DE SAINT-PAUL"

Situated in the heart of Saint-Paul de Vence, these macarons are made traditionally. Over 25 flavours, to eat on the spot or take away.

> macaronsdesaintpaul@orange.fr

NICE

"PÂTISSERIE CAPPA"

In Place Garibaldi, the Master-Chocolate maker, Serge Serain, uses his talents to please all chocolate lovers and also to make macarons, traditional cakes, ice-cream, marrons glacé...and dessert wines!

7-9 Place Garibaldi - Tel. 00 33 (0)4 93 62 30 83

"LE PAVÉ MASSÉNA" IN NICE

Pascal Lac, one of the nine "top of the tops" chocolate makers in France, has hit the bull's eye. In Nice, everyone is grabbing his "slabs" (chocolate slab cake) - not for fighting but for having a real treat.

"Lac Chocolatier", 2 addresses:

Nice Barla - 18, rue Barla - Tel. 00 33 (0)4 93 55 37 74

Nice Gioffredo - 49, rue Gioffredo - Tel. 00 33 (0)4 93 82 57 78

NICE AND PONT-DU-LOUP

"LA CONFISERIE FLORIAN"

During free guided tours, visitors can see how the best fruit and prettiest flowers on the French Riviera are transformed into confectionary products. It is also an opportunity to sample delicious specialities: crystallized flowers, preserved flowers and fruit, homemade chocolates and acid drops...

At Easter, Christmas and during the Carnival, children will love the workshops for sweets and moulds, with over 600 shapes, hand-painted with coloured chocolate (no workshops at the weekend). Free tasting and a shop on the spot.

In Nice, "la Confiserie Florian" is located at the port, on the site of the well-known chocolate maker, created in 1921. At Pont du Loup (27 km from Nice), the garden's scented terraces of citrus fruits and plants used in confectionary are open to the public and in July and August, you can visit the little museum, "Le Musée de La Fleur Sucrée".

> www.confiserieflorian.com



COOKING LESSONS FOR CHILDREN

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

"CUISINE SUR COURS" - Anne Sallé

A home for young Chefs in Nice
In her 'kitchen flat', Aude Bertaux organises cooking classes year round for children (3 to 12) and teenagers.

Preparing food, slicing, chopping, kneading, whipping... children love it! That's why they love Aude Bertaux's kitchen. This young woman, a professional who has worked in many fine establishments in France and abroad, invites them to special workshops. Two Saturday afternoons a month, she organises a 30 to 40-minute class for children age 3 to 6, each with a parent. "The recipe is for four hands around a sweet or savoury dish for a privileged moment of sharing", she explains. Wednesday afternoons are reserved for children age 6 to 12, without their parents, since they can do it alone. These 2-hour classes are for preparing sweet and savoury recipes - presentation counts, too. The menus change every week and use only products in season.

Teenagers, too

"Children are tomorrow's adults. This is why teaching them about good homemade food incites them to eat better, open up to cuisine from elsewhere and develop their taste, since obviously, all classes end with sampling", adds Aude Bertaux.

Two Saturday afternoons a month are for would-be Chefs age 12 to 16. "With them, I can do much more: talk about junk food, explain how to choose vegetables and where to buy them, teach them the right ways to cook... The aim of these classes is to have fun while doing something nice and encourage them to become active at home. This makes them feel good and very enriching for the whole family".

Cuisine sur Cours - Tél. 00 33 (0)4 93 96 17 29

> www.cuisinesurcours.com - contact@cuisinesurcours.com

CANNES

"LES APPRENTIS GOURMETS"

Taste the pleasure of learning to cook the best recipes. "We are all Novice Gourmets!" - Fabrice Masse

> www.lesapprentisgourmets.fr

CAGNES-SUR-MER

MIC MAC MACARON

Macaroon-making lessons for kids by the pastry cook, Bruno Laffargue.

> www.micmac-macaron.com

GRASSE

TAPENADE-MAKING WORKSHOP

> www.espaceterroirs.com/animationGastro.htm

LA COLLE-SUR-LOUP

Cooking and cake-making workshops for children at the luxury hotel/restaurant

ALAIN LORCA**** recently awarded a star in the Michelin Guide.

> www.alainlorca.com

LE BAR-SUR-LOUP

WORKSHOP FOR COOKING WITH FLOWERS - YVES TERRILLON

Throughout the year, Yves Terrillon varies his cooking lessons for children depending on the flower of the moment: rose, violet, jasmine... all offer opportunities to discover sweet dishes typical of the French Riviera!

> www.crea-t-yvesculinaire.com

MENTON

WORKSHOP FOR BUDDING COOKS FROM 6 TO 12 YEARS OLD, "LES PETITS CHEFS EN HERBE"

After visiting the 'Serre de la Madone' garden with a lecture-guide, the budding gourmets will cook a tasty dish to offer their parents with advice from the head chef of the Paris-Rome restaurant.

At the end of the lesson, the little chefs will gather their strength with a happy, lively break for a snack. They will go home with their chef's hat, the recipe and the fruit of their labours.

Children's workshops organized by the Heritage Service.

> <http://www.tourisme-menton.fr/IMG/pdf/programme-animations-du-patrimoine.pdf>

MOUGINS

COOKING SCHOOL, "LECOLE DE CUISINE DU MOULIN DE MOUGINS" WITH THE CHEF, SÉBASTIEN CHAMBRU, (Awarded the title of Best Worker in France)

> www.moulindeougins.com

SAINT-PAUL-DE-VENCE

Sunday Brunch at the **MAS DE PIERRE*******. Every Sunday, you can meet up for a seasonal brunch in outstanding surroundings while the children become "Little Chefs".

> www.lemasdepierre.com

VILLENEUVE-LOUBET

ESCOFFIER FOUNDATION - A game for discovering the fascinating world of kings' chefs and the king of chefs.

Find out the real recipe for Peach Melba, Crepe Suzette and the traditions of the culinary art.

> www.fondation-escoffier.org

FAMILY PICNICS!

After a long walk exploring the hinterland, nothing is nicer than finding a quiet spot and having a family picnic. You need to think ahead, of course, with a freshly prepared picnic hamper topped up with local produce bought at the market.

> 5 PLACES TO SEE AT ALL COSTS

"L'ÉTANG DU BATÉGUIER" - THE LAKE ON ILE STE MARGUERITE

A freshwater lake surrounded by the sea, "l'Étang du Batéguier" is to be found on one of the Îles de Lérins, just a few minutes' boat trip from Cannes. It is the meeting point for hundreds of migrating birds. This peaceful spot is ideal for recharging one's batteries after strenuous exercise.

"L'ÉTANG FONTMERLE" - MOUGINS

The 5 hectare, "l'Étang de Fontmerle" has abundant flora and fauna. It is a favourite nesting spot for migrating birds as it attracts very few visitors and is well protected. The park makes a perfect leisure area for families and children and has a cycle path that goes all round the lake. It is suitable for picnicking and walking. Visitors must not feed the ducks!

THE CREEKS AT THÉOULE-SUR-MER

The beautiful creeks in the red rock of the Estérel have always been popular with tourists and residents. Their isolation attracts large numbers of swimmers and families trying to get away from the crowds on the town beaches. "Théoule Bay is a natural port where as many *billionaires' yachts lie at anchor as modest sailing boats.*" (Nice Matin)

"LA GROTTTE DE GARDANNE", A CAVE DUG OUT BY TIME

"La Grotte de Gardanne", located near the Aiguille Point at Théoule-sur-Mer, is a unique, isolated spot that can only be reached by sea, like many other creeks nearby. In the course of time, the rock was hollowed out to form "La Grotte de Gardanne", on the extremity of the "Promenade de Pradayrol".

VAUGRENIER DEPARTMENTAL PARK

In this departmental park, visitors can be close to nature. Thanks to the Tourist Office and Conseil Général, hundreds of plant and animal varieties have been discovered by means of children's activities.

In particular, a treasure hunt has been set up that allows children to discover the secret code that will open the magic chest!





MUSEUMS FOR FAMILIES



Who said that kids find museums boring? On the French Riviera, many of the museums have thought up activities to arouse their curiosity and creativity. Visits and workshops suitable for children and adults help in understanding the works and sharing the pleasure of creation.

ANTIBES

► "MUSÉE PICASSO"

"If you want to see the Picassos of Antibes, you must see them in Antibes", Pablo Picasso.

The Picasso Museum was founded on the former acropolis of the Greek town, Antipolis. In 1946, Picasso, who was living in Vallauris Golfe-Juan, was offered part of the castle to use as a studio by Dor de la Souchère, curator of the museum. Picasso spent several months in the chateau where he created many works. In 1949, the museum took the name 'Musée Picasso' and was the first museum to be dedicated to an artist in his lifetime.

Workshops for young children: sounds, images, colours and objects spring out of a treasure box to help young children appreciate the works. For children from 2 to 4 years old.

> <http://antibes-juanlespins.com/les-musees/les-activitesculturelles>

BEAULIEU-SUR-MER

► "VILLA KÉRYLOS"

The emblematic Greek villa of the French Riviera organizes a range of educational workshops for children on various themes (art, Greek crafts, feasts, literature, theatre, etc.) and treasure hunts.

> www.villa-kerylos.com

BIOT

► "MUSÉE NATIONAL FERNAND LÉGER"

The "Musée Fernand Léger" organizes painting workshops from 10 am to noon and from 2 pm to 4 pm on Wednesdays in term time. In the Easter holidays, it also runs ceramics workshops focusing on modelling on 18, 20, 21 and 22 April and on enamelling on 25, 27, 28 and 29 from 10 am to noon and from 2 pm to 4 pm.

> www.musees-nationaux-alpesmaritimes.fr

CANNES

► "MUSÉE DE LA CASTRE" AND "MUSÉE DE LA MER"

The "Musée de la Castre" and the "Musée de la Mer" organize workshops and birthday parties. The "Musée de la Castre" houses collections of primitive art, Mediterranean archaeology, fine arts (Cannes in the 19th Century) and musical instruments from all over the world and the "Musée de la Mer" (Ile Sainte Marguerite), is particularly well-known as the location of the cell of the Man in the Iron Mask.

> www.cannes.com

GRASSE

► "MUSÉE INTERNATIONAL DE LA PARFUMERIE"

Visit the museum as a family and organize your birthday parties on the theme of the mystery of perfume at the MIP.

> www.museesdegrasse.com

LE CANNET

► "MUSÉE BONNARD"

"I hope that my paintings will last without cracking. I would like to be seen by young painters in the year 2000 with the wings of a butterfly." Pierre Bonnard, 1946.

The "Musée Bonnard" runs a workshop consisting of a cultural walk that aims to show families the landscape that inspired Bonnard. Accompanied by a guide, you can appreciate the wide variety of plants and beauty of the surroundings as you stroll. Introduction to sketching and drawing techniques.

> www.museebonnard.fr

MENTON

► "MUSÉE JEAN COCTEAU" - SÉVERIN WUNDERMAN

Educational activities; booking required:

romy.tirel@ville-menton.fr Tel. 00 33 (0)4 89 81 52 56

> www.museecocteaumenton.fr

MOUANS-SARTOUX

► SUNDAYS AS A FAMILY AT "L'ESPACE DE L'ART CONCRET"

> <http://espacedelartconcret.fr>

NICE

► "MUSÉE DE PALÉONTOLOGIE HUMAINE DE TERRA AMATA"

The Museum organizes workshops using modelling clay every day in the Nice Academy school holidays. Children will also find a lot to do with the questionnaire that they are given at the entry to the museum at any time of year.

> www.musee-terra-amata.org

Visiting **MAMAC** Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art helps children to get to know works and artists from the 1960s to the present day. On Wednesdays, the museum organizes visual arts workshops based on the cycle of the museum's temporary exhibitions. The programme includes drawing, painting and sculpture.

> www.mamac-nice.org

NICE

► "MUSÉE D'ART NAÏF"

Games and riddles are dotted around the exhibition rooms as children search for works listed in a document.

> www.museeartnaif.com

► "MUSÉE DÉPARTEMENTAL DES ARTS ASIATIQUES":

Workshops on origami, Chinese and Japanese calligraphy and overtone singing take place on Wednesdays and Saturday afternoons. The instructors adapt the workshops for children.

> www.arts-asiatiques.com

► "MUSÉE ET SITE ARCHÉOLOGIQUES DE NICE CEMENELUM"

The museum's collections cover the Metal Ages, Antiquity and the High Middle Ages. They focus on the life in Cemenelum (now Cimiez) and the Alpes-Maritimes province. Objects from all over the region are on display. Located at the north-west edge of the old town, the Cimiez amphitheatre, listed since 1865, is one of the smallest in France.

Children's workshops (FR/GB/IT) take an unusual approach to archaeology, looking at it from the differing perspectives of a visual artist and an archaeologist. Every Wednesday from 2pm to 4 pm unless there is a school visit.

> www.musee-archeologique-nice.org

► SUMMER WORKSHOPS, "AU CŒUR DU TEMPS"

In July, the Nice Heritage Information Centre organizes heritage and archaeological workshops, entitled "Au cœur du temps". The workshops centre on the Middle Ages, with activities that combine local history, the practice of archaeology and the discovery of ancient techniques.

There are different modules each day of the week to provide a greater variety of activities and learn about history through different approaches. Tel. 00 33 (0)4 92 00 41 90 (booking advisable).

► "LE MUSÉE DE LA CURIOSITÉ ET DE L'INSOLITE"

Plunge into a crazy, dream world in this magic little museum: Tarzan's house, the haunted room, robots' hall – full of thrills!

> www.museedelacuriosite.com

VILLEFRANCHE-SUR-MER

► DISCOVER THE CITADEL AND ITS MUSEUMS – ACTIVITY PACK FOR FAMILIES

Play, laugh and dream as a family in the museums' collections with the new family pack and earn the Citadel's "little historian" diploma.

Free admission from 10 am to 1 pm and 3pm to 5:30 pm.

Ask for a pack at the Valti Museum - Information on 00 33 (0)4 93 76 33 27

► **FAMILY WORKSHOPS** - Discover the museums at the Citadel through recreational workshops run by a specialist. You will explore unexpected and amusing aspects of the collections, from "Exquisite Corpse" to the "storycube", taking in the technique of "cire perdue" (casting with wax).

For family groups from 8 to 15 people (length of visit: 1½ hours)

Adults, €5 - Children, €3 - Tel. 00 33 (0)4 93 76 33 27

♥ ONE OF OUR FAVOURITES

Tourrette-Levens

ALAIN FRÈRE'S CIRCUS MUSEUM

(private museum – advance booking required)

Doctor Alain Frère has patiently collected all the precious objects amassed during his travels and encounters in the basement of his house. He was given most of these objects by the big names of the circus in France and abroad, like Bouglione, Rancy, Pinder, Amar, Zavatta, Gruss, Medrano, Knie, Orfei, Togni, Casartelli and the artists themselves. In addition, this enthusiast has made purchases all over the world to enrich this outstanding museum, a living memory of the world of the circus. Visitors can admire Grock's pastiches, Charlie Rivel's wig and a huge number of pictures, costumes, including clown costumes, posters, postcards, china, films, records, models, toys, robots, etc. The atmosphere is magic. As they enter, visitors are greeted by circus music, played on an authentic gramophone of the period. The walls and floor are red because "red is the colour of the circus, which enhances all these treasures", explains the doctor. Each room we go through is dedicated to circus celebrities, their names embroidered in multi-coloured sequins specially made by the magician, Yanco (Jean Conte). Each step is full of emotion. It is very moving to find oneself in front of the tail coats of Master Riders, Fredy Knie Sr and Alexis Gruss Sr, and the frogged coats of the trainers. Visitors cannot fail to be touched by coming face to face with Alfred Court's famous snow leopard, Douchka, musical instruments belonging to the greatest clowns like Charlie Rivel, Grock and the Frères Fratellini or the costumes and accessories of artists that have given us dreams and excitement and made us laugh...

Worth knowing:

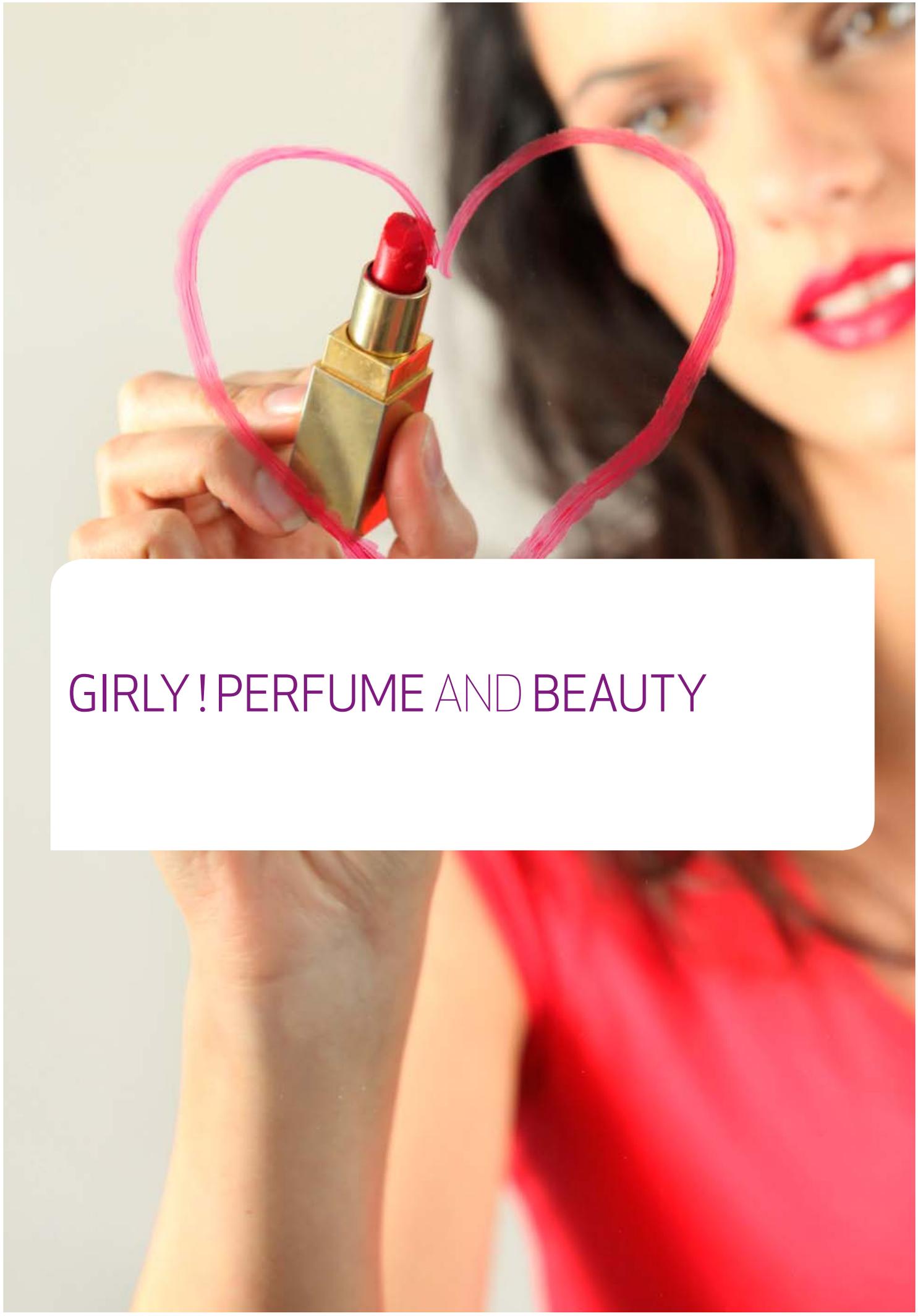
- *Every winter:* The Monte-Carlo International Circus Festival
- *Every summer:* Arlette Gruss Circus performs for several weeks at Cabris and then in Nice.

In Tourrette-Levens, there are three free museums open all year:

- "Le Musée des Métiers Traditionnels" (Museum of Traditional Trades)
- "le Musée d'Histoire Naturelle" (Natural History Museum), with an outstanding butterfly collection
- "le Musée du Cirque" (Circus Museum).







GIRLY! PERFUME AND BEAUTY

**Holidays - summer - sun - shopping - spa -
relaxation - beauty - make-up -
gloss - girl - perfume - pleasure - mum -
nails - party - varnish**

GRASSE

For 200 years, Grasse has held the enviable position of world perfume capital. Known for technical innovation, Chanel, Dior and Rochas perfumes are created here. Here too, the legendary Chanel N°5 was invented. Grasse was originally a wealthy, powerful mediaeval town because of its tanneries and the presence of the bishop until the Revolution. The richness of the architecture in the town centre is amazing: mediaeval houses, the bishop's palace, cathedral and private mansions. Grasse also has numerous golf courses and other sporting facilities and outstanding gardens.

► "MUSÉE INTERNATIONALE DE LA PARFUMERIE"

The International Perfume Museum displays the most beautiful collections on the five continents, from Antiquity to the present day. Free guided tours allow visitors to discover 3 500 m² of unusual collections.

A perfect place for stimulating the senses! The museum has developed a trail designed for children from 7 years old, with interactive terminals and games for touching, moving and smelling... and provides special facilities for the youngest from 3 to 6 years old (looking after the children for the length of the visit and buggies).

Holiday workshops: Children make a toilet water, toothpaste, a model or a regional speciality.

> www.museesdegrasse.com



► "FRAGONARD - MOLINARD AND GALIMARD": GRASSE PERFUMERS

The French Riviera is the perfumers' favourite land. In the heart of Grasse, the museums present a wonderful private collection of bottles, boxes, stills... narrating the history of perfumery from ancient times to the present day. Here, visitors can discover the various phases of perfume production.

Become an apprentice in perfumery for a moment and make your own perfume!

♥ CHIC FAVOURITES

VENCE

Vence is a treasure that has had the luck or skill to keep its spirit intact. Magic of a sort and a timeless grace infuse this attractive and privileged town. Many painters have tried to capture its landscape and colours on their canvases: Matisse, Dufy, Chagall, Dubuffet, Soutine... and its hotels have the same qualities as the town.

► SPA - "CHATEAU DU DOMAINE SAINT MARTIN"

Treatments for children (between 5 and 12 years old).

Going to the Spa to pamper yourself is good but going with the kids is even better!

All the treatments are 100 % organic and paraben-free.

- **Princes & Princesses of the Château:** Introduction to relaxation for little princes and princesses (one of the two parents must accompany the child for a relaxing massage. Only in a double cubicle)
- **Fairy's fingers / Princess Nails:** Decorative nail varnish application for little princesses
- **Like dad:** Relaxation for the feet, back and head for little princes
- **Ado & Spa** (between 12 and 18 years old): Teens'Spa: back scrub, skin cleansing, back + shoulder + head relaxation (one of the two parents must accompany the child for a relaxing massage. Only in a double cubicle)

SAINT-JEAN-CAP-FERRAT

Mothers and daughters can pamper themselves at the **THE SPA OF THE "GRAND HÔTEL DU CAP FERRAT"**

> <http://www.grand-hotel-cap-ferrat.com/fr/presentation-du-spa.php>

or at the "SPA DU CAP" (a new feature on St-Jean):

> www.lespaducap.fr



CRAFTS
FOR CHILDREN

BIOT - GLASSBLOWER!

► THE "VERRERIE DE BIOT"

Biot village is full of craftsmen and craftswomen - Master Glassblowers - who create unusual and classical works. Some of them can be considered as works of art.

The "Verrerie de Biot" runs introductory workshops in glassblowing. The "Ecomusée" organises an introductory course in glass blowing run by a Master Glassblower that teaches students about glassblowing tools and techniques.

The course takes place over five days for one and a half hours each day. This allows students to plan and practise all the phases in the process and, at the end, make an object.

> www.verreriebiot.fr



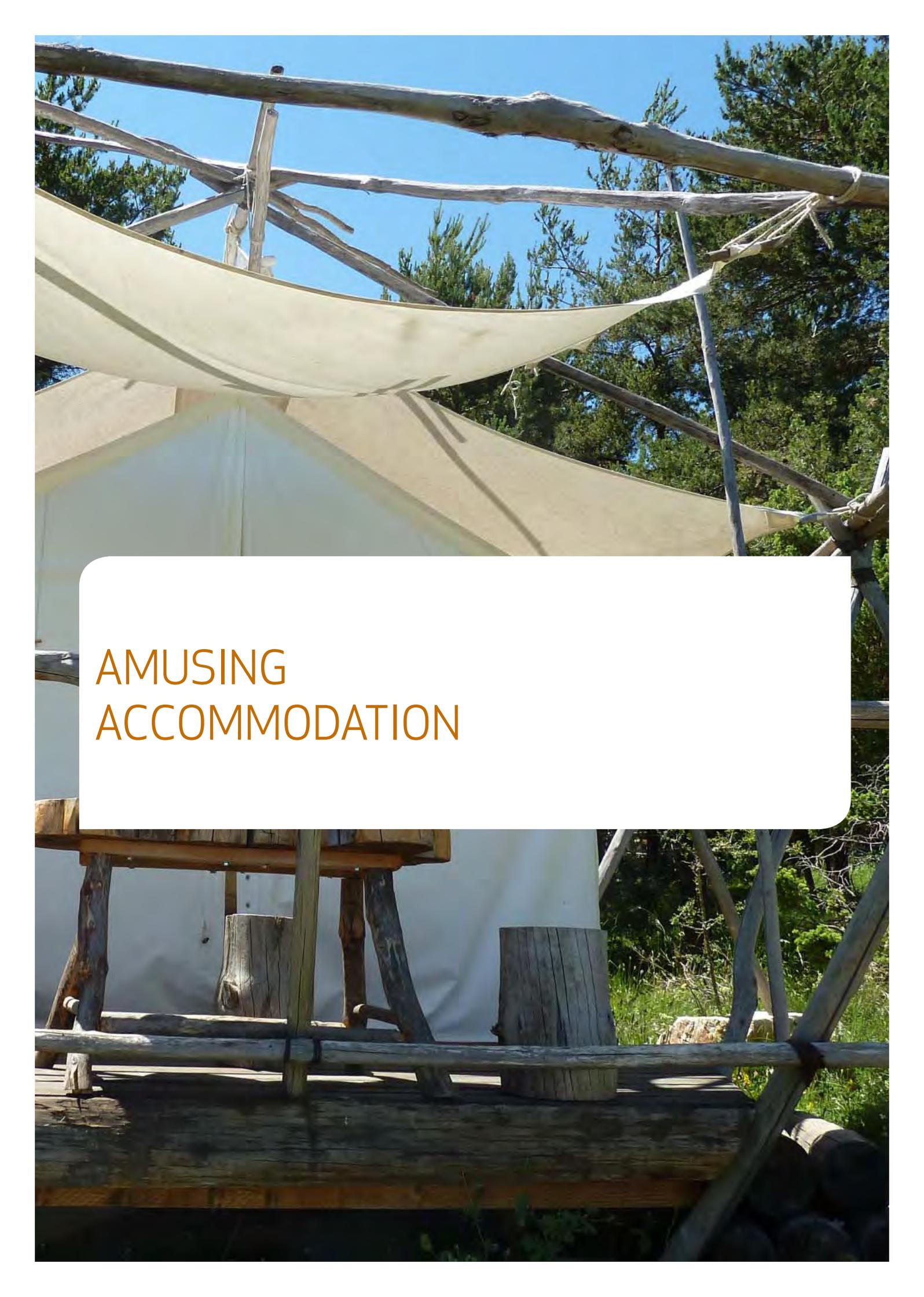
CALLING ALL ARTISTS: SHOW YOUR POTTERY TALENTS!

► MAGALI'S WORKSHOPS

Get ready to put your imagination to work, Magali is teaching you pottery! For once, the kids are allowed to play with earth, but they are going to make magnificent objects with it. In the children's workshops, the little ones first choose a theme, then make, and paint an object. Magali bakes it and the little poppets come and collect it several weeks later. A programme to put all their artistic talents to work.

> <http://lesateliersdemagali.wifeo.com>





AMUSING ACCOMMODATION

Basic accommodation has had its day. New-style accommodation, blending art, architecture, culture and respect for the environment has arrived on the French Riviera. It's your turn to try it!

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

GREEN ACCOMMODATION - Anne Sallé

Some sites offer you the opportunity to enjoy your holidays while taking care of the planet.

Environmentally-friendly by nature or committed to a sustainable development process, some sites offer you the opportunity to enjoy your holidays while taking care of the planet.

Yurts, ecolodges and treehouses are pioneers in the field of environmental awareness. Set away from roads, most sites are self-sufficient in terms of energy and water. Bore holes, solar panels, wood burning furnaces, composting toilets, water purification using bamboo, composting, waste separation, locally-sourced supplies, fauna and flora awareness are practical realities for sites such as the Terre d'Arômes in Séranon, the Yourtes de Domette in Villars-sur-Var, the Yourtes de l'Oustamura in Entraunes, the yourtes de Coul'âne in Saint-Auban, the ecolodges at the Réserve biologique des Monts d'Azur in Thorenc, Graine et Ficelle in Saint-Jeannet, Moonlight in Saint-Martin-Vésubie, the treehouses of Mercantour Monts et Merveilles in Saint-Dalmas de Tende or the Cabanes d'Orion in Saint-Paul de Vence.

Identifying labels

Concerned with reducing their environmental impact, around fifteen of the more "usual" Riviera establishments across all categories have undertaken a voluntary sustainable development process in recent years. Their commitment relates to real objectives in terms of long-term economic viability, involvement in the economy and local life, the quality of life, social equality, developing heritage and cultural life, protecting sites and biological diversity, the controlled use of natural resources, reducing pollution and changing their culture for sustainable development. The associated labels make sure they can be identified, although not all have the same objectives or the same international recognition. Our region features the most well-known, Green Globe 21, the European ecolabel, Green Key and even the ISO 14001 certification. However, no award does not mean is no commitment. In general, whatever your holiday destination, you can still perform all the actions you do at home.

NEW IN 2012

► **AMAZING! SLEEP IN A BUBBLE CABIN AT SAINT-JEANNET!**

The first two bubble cabins in The Alpes-Maritimes will be available from 20 August 2012 in this beautiful vineyard at Saint Jeannet for a period that includes the grape and olive harvests... and, for now, up to the end of November.



In the heart of the "Vignoble des Hautes Collines de la Côte d'Azur", you have the opportunity to sleep under the stars... in comfort.

In partnership with the Rasse brothers, vineyard owners, Bubble Experience offers visitors a 100% natural experience, where the only ceiling is the immense expanse of the Milky Way. Your bed will still be comfortable and dinner delicious.

Tasting fine wines with pronounced local characteristics is also on the programme as the Rasse family have been wine producers for generations and enjoy introducing their specialities, in particular, a hearty wine, matured in the sun in demijohns. Something to arouse the curiosity and taste buds!

> www.bubble-experience.com/index.php/vignoble-saint-jeannet-reservation



AMUSING WAYS OF GETTING ABOUT



For exploring Nice as a family without any stress, what could be better than these 'new' ways of getting about. Entertaining and pleasant to use, children will like them as much as adults!!!

NICE

► "GYROPODE SEGWAY" (SEGWAY PT)

"Convivial" and "surprising" are the words that sum up the "Gyropode Segway®"! Visitors can discover the treasures of Nice while having fun. There is a choice of two circuits. Initiation takes place on the "Promenade des Anglais", in idyllic surroundings facing the sea.

From 14 years old (minimum weight 45 kg).

Tel. 00 33 (0)4 93 80 21 27 - 00 33 (0)6 45 50 79 21

> www.mobilboard.com

► "CYCLOPOLITAIN" - THE CYCLOTAXI

The new generation taxi: Explore Nice in an unusual, eco-friendly way with this electric tricycle! This is the Cyclopolitain's motto. The driver of the cycle-cab takes clients where they want, using cycle paths and pedestrianized streets. Two circuits are available: the discovery circuit (le cyclotour) and a tailor-made circuit (le cyclocourse) that allows the tourist to choose the itinerary. A "cyclopolitain" can carry a maximum of 2 adults and 1 child (under 12 years old).

For further information, look at the "Cyclopolitain" site on the link below or phone:

00 33 (0)4 93 81 76 15.

> www.cyclopolitain.com

► ROLLER BLADES

FUN'N ROLL - NICE

Roller blades from size 30.

> www.fun-n-roll.com

ROLLER STATION

Bikes, baby seats, stabilisers, helmets, protective equipment for children and adults. Roller blades, sizes 25 to 47, scooters, skates.

Tel. 00 33 (0)4 93 62 99 05

ANTIBES - JUAN-LES-PINS

► "LE VISIOBULLE"

This comical looking boat with a transparent hull enables visitors to see the seabed in Billionaires' Bay.

IN SEVERAL TOWNS

► THE LITTLE TOURIST TRAIN

The best way of seeing a town in under an hour? The little train!

Every day, Nice, Cannes, Juan-les-Pins, Villefranche-sur-Mer, Menton and Grasse run visits, with a commentary on the most important sites and their architectural heritage and anecdotes about the towns along with their history.

Our experts introduce you to the French Riviera

THE "TRAIN DES PIGNES" - Claudine Francini

This heroic railway very nearly did not exist and its preservation proved to be equally fraught. In the Alpes-Maritimes, the line follows the shores of the Var which are dotted with ancestral villages in an unspoilt natural setting.



This gigantic work with its 25 tunnels, 16 viaducts and 15 metallic bridges, opened to the public on 3rd July 1911. It was an amazing human feat launched in 1883 from Digne which stopped almost as soon as it had begun because of the construction costs generated by the harshness of the relief. So the engineers chose to shorten the line initially planned and use a metric gauge which reduced the restrictions imposed by the mountains. Work more or less restarted in 1885. Cutting some of the tunnels took several years and the engineers had to put in place a system of cradles on cables to transport men working on the viaducts; all this under the permanent menace of floods and landslides. In the 1990's, the future of the train was called into question, especially because of the 1994 flood which carried away 6 kilometres of track. In the 21st Century, the vogue for eco-friendly transport, the development of Nice and enthusiasm of tourists for the mountainous areas of the region has saved it. Today, work is continuing on renewing the track and replacing the old trains with comfortable, air-conditioned ones with picture windows. Four were put into service last March.

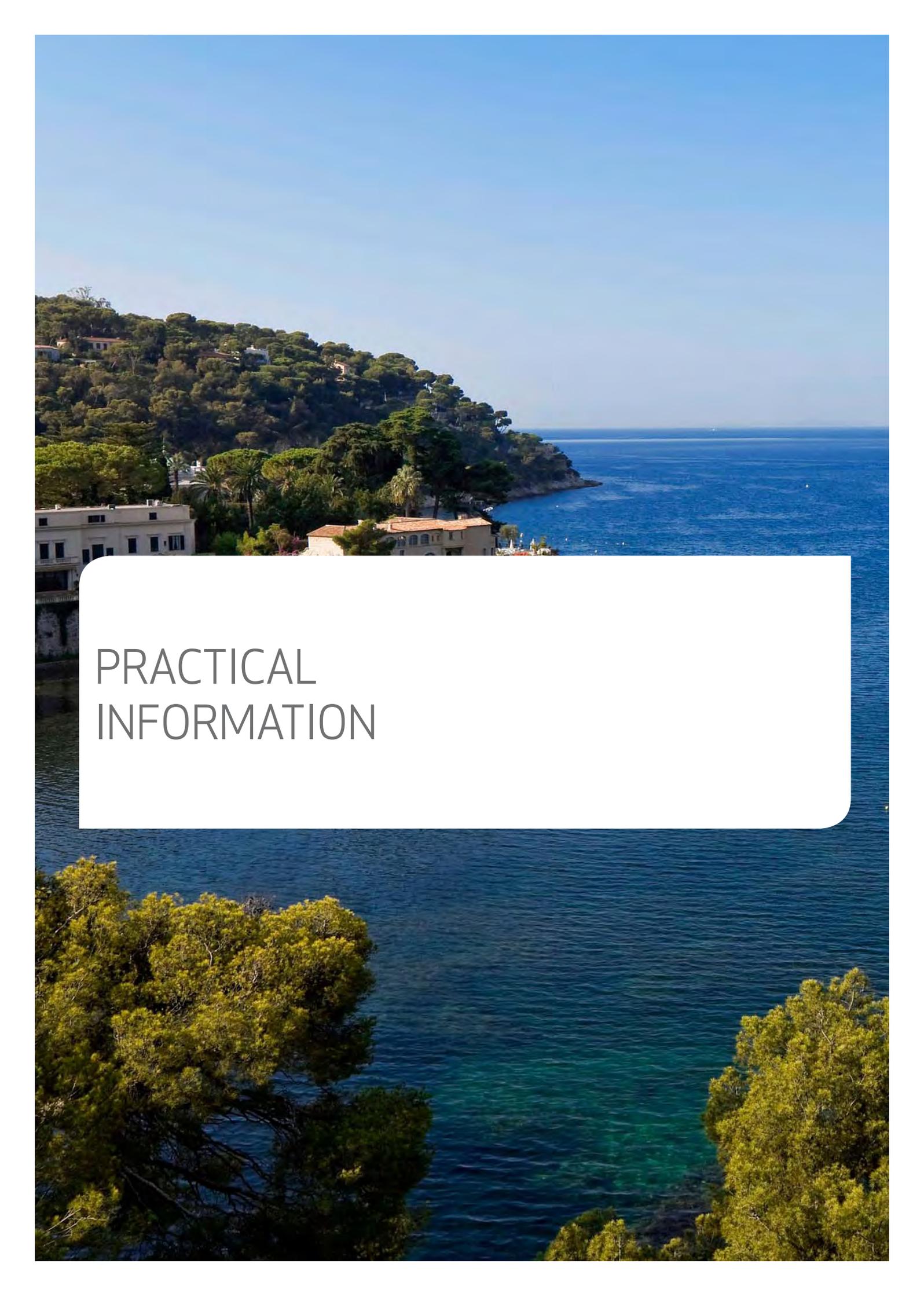
Discovering the Var valley

One hundred years on, the carefree traveller can explore the villages in the Var valley by boarding the train at the "Gare du Sud" in Nice, a little station run by the "Chemins de Fer de Provence" (Railways of Provence). The beginning of the journey passes through the outskirts of the town which encroach more and more to the west. Little by little, the river - which rises well above the village of Estanc, over 2000 m - settles into its preferred surroundings: a long, wide carpet of pebbles topped by forest. The traveller can admire the natural and historical frontier that the Var formed between the former "Comté (County) of Nice" on the right bank and Provence. Further up, there is Villars-sur-Var with its vine covered hillsides. Then, a stop at Touët-sur-Var gives an opportunity to see the old town of tall houses built into the ramparts, clinging to the limestone cliff. At Puget-Théniers, travellers can wander through the narrow alleys of this big village, drink at the fountains and try the local produce at the Maison de Pays (regional centre). The train continues towards the medieval village of Entrevaux, surrounded by ramparts and topped by a citadel from the Vauban era. On the shores of the Var, the day draws to a close while the single carriage rail car leaves for Digne.

For further information on the "Train des Pignes", consult the Chemins de Fer de Provence site:

> www.trainprovence.com

or call: 00 33 (0)4 97 03 80 80



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

"FAMILLE PLUS"



► SITES WITH THE QUALITY LABEL "FAMILLE PLUS" IN THE ALPES-MARITIMES DEPARTMENT

NICE CÔTE D'AZUR AIRPORT, the first airport in France to be awarded this label!

NICE TOWN and the following partners:

- "Plage Hi Beach" - beach
- "Ruhl Plage" - beach
- "Trans Côte d'Azur" - maritime excursions
- "Club Nautique de Nice" - water sports club
- "Plongée Aigle Nautique" - diving club
- "Le Petit Train" - sightseeing
- "Le Cyclopolitain" - electric tricycles
- "Confiserie Florian du Vieux Nice" - confectionary
- "Cuisine sur Cours" - cookery workshops
- "Centre du Patrimoine de Nice" - Heritage Centre
- "Musée National Marc Chagall"
- "Parc Phœnix"
- "Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain"

Accommodation:

- Le Mas des Oliviers
- Hôtel Ellington
- Holiday Inn Nice Centre
- Splendid Hôtel & SPA Nice
- Nice Riviera
- Novotel Nice Centre Acropolis
- Novotel Nice Airport
- Best Western Roosevelt
- All Seasons Nice Vieux Port
- Villa Rivoli
- Hôtel de Verdun
- L'Oasis
- All Seasons Nice Airport Arenas
- Apart'Hotel Citadines - Nice Promenade
- Goldstar Resort and Suites
- HiPark Nice

MANDELIEU-LA NAPOULE DISTRICT and the following sites and partners:

- "Le Château de La Napoule"
- Cannes Mandelieu Rowing Club
- "Centre Nautique Municipal" - municipal water sports centre
- Fun Spot Mandelieu
- "Centre de plongée de la Rague" - diving centre
- "Centre de plongée la Cigale" - diving centre
- JB Watersports
- "Mer et montagne nature essentielle" - diving
- Philippe Vallini - Guide, mountain activities
- Sea Safari
- Tropical Golf

Accommodation:

- Pullman Cannes Mandelieu Royal Casino
- Ibis Cannes Mandelieu
- Le Plateau des Chasses
- Les Cigales
- Park and Suites Village Cannes Mandelieu
- Pierre et Vacances Les Rives Cannes Mandelieu
- MMV Resort & SPA Cannes Mandelieu

MONACO:

- Le Neptune Plage

SAINT-LAURENT-DU-VAR DISTRICT and its partners:

- "Le Centre Nautique" - water sports centre
- "Le Centre Equestre" - riding school
- "Mont Alesne" Tennis Club
- Municipal Swimming Pool
- "La Boulangerie" Cultural Centre
- "La Maison pour tous" - leisure sports centre

Restaurants:

- Le Beach Club
- Chez Panisse
- Le Novotel Café

Accommodation:

- Holiday Inn
- Novotel
- La Résidence Pierre et Vacances
- "Gîtes ruraux" (Gîtes de France n° 7098 - 7106) self-catering accommodation

In the Resorts, **VALBERG DISTRICT** and the following accommodation:

- Les Balcons du Paradis (Péone)
- Le Chalet Suisse
- Blanche Neige
- Le Chastellan
- Le Tremplin

GETTING HERE AND GETTING ABOUT

Worth knowing!

Air France runs direct flights between Nice and the following towns, from €50 one way, excluding service charges:

• Paris • Toulouse • Nantes • Strasbourg • Lille • Bordeaux • Lyon.

(Price on 21 August 2012; conditions apply depending when the journey is taken; subject to modification).

Under 3 hours by plane to over 30 European destinations, the French Riviera has a range of thematic stays throughout the year. Thanks to the Nice Côte d'Azur Airport, 2nd largest airport in France, the French Riviera is within easy reach of over 35 countries, 105 destinations and is served by 59 companies.

> www.nice-aeroport.fr

Buses charge only €1 throughout the department.

COMITÉ RÉGIONAL DU **TOURISME**
CÔTE D'AZUR

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