

01
Villefranche

SPOT ON



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ITS LEGENDARY STATUS
CONTINUES TO DRAW THE
SUPERYACHT SET, BUT THE
REAL STAR ATTRACTION OF THE
CÔTE D'AZUR IS THE DAZZLING
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STRIKES YOU THE MOMENT
YOU SEE THE SHIMMERING
COBALT MEDITERRANEAN

WORDS MIRIAM CAIN

VIERA

The Côte d'Azur is the perennial favorite destination for the yachting crowd, and rightfully so. This sun-soaked corner of southeast France is a quintessential summer playground for superyachts. From the legendary beach clubs of Pampelonne to the renowned haute cuisine of St. Tropez, Cannes and Monaco, the 40 miles of coastline is the epicenter of yachting, attracting some eighty percent of the charter fleet during the summer months. *Navigator* reveals how to make the most of this sunny destination as you cruise from St. Tropez to Monaco, soaking up market-fresh cuisine with a spritz of glamor as you go.



ST. TROPEZ & ÎLES D'HYÈRES

Once a quiet fishing village, St. Tropez shot to fame in the 1950s when director Roger Vadim made the film *Et Dieu... créa la femme* (And God Created Woman) starring the stunning Brigitte Bardot. The film itself sealed their careers as well as the fate of St. Tropez, which has shimmered in the spotlight with its star appeal ever since.

Dine @

With its celebrity credentials confirmed it's hardly surprising that there is a glut of fantastic restaurants in St. Tropez. For a gastronomic feast in a spectacular setting **La Vague d'Or** is one of two restaurants at the Cheval Blanc St. Tropez (known as La Résidence de la Pinède until earlier this year). Chef Arnaud Donckele dishes up an eight-course tasting menu making full use of Mediterranean flavors. With three Michelin stars, five toques and a score of 19/20 by Gault & Millau, be prepared for a memorable evening of gastronomic excellence.

This spring sees Hôtel Byblos opening a brand new restaurant **Cucina** to replace Alain Ducasse's Le Rivea. Still to be overseen by Ducasse, the new eatery will be 100 percent Italian.

Just a ten-minute walk from the old port of St. Tropez, the elegant Relais & Châteaux property La Bastide de St. Tropez is home to the Michelin-starred restaurant **L'Olivier**. Again, elegantly crafted dishes are made from locally sourced produce.

There are excellent tasting opportunities for foodies on Île du Levant, including **La Colombe**. Pascal Bonamy's flavorsome Mediterranean cuisine has earned this fantastic restaurant a coveted Michelin star.

Drink @

Lying just around the headland from St. Tropez the sandy three-mile stretch of Pampelonne beach is dotted with some of the hippest beach clubs in the world. Ask your charter yacht's captain to book you in for lunch at the hip French Riviera institution, **Le Club 55**. Probably the classiest and certainly the most discreet of all the beach restaurants on Pampelonne, it started life as a simple beach shack and was adopted as the canteen for the crew making *And God Created Woman* in 1955 – hence the club's name. Set back from the beach on a canvas-shaded deck, consummate host Patrice de Colmont welcomes a steady flow of yacht tenders arriving to the private jetty throughout the summer.

The ever-popular **Bagatelle Beach** remains a magnet for the stylish beau monde, who come for its terrific Mediterranean-style cuisine, friendly staff and a jubilant soupçon of party atmosphere that still allows you to relax. Alternatively, **Shellona** draws a young crowd and was one of the top places to be seen in 2018. It promises daybeds, cocktails and bucket-loads of glamor. And new for 2019, Hôtel Byblos opens its own **Byblos Beach Ramatuelle**, with a restaurant serving light Mediterranean cuisine.

Return to port for a top up at **Maison Blanche Champagne Bar**. The stylish and sophisticated hideaway serves nothing but champagne in a stunning courtyard setting. A great spot to enjoy a pre-dinner glass of bubbly.

For a restaurant and brasserie that turns into a club after dark, head to **L'Opéra Saint-Tropez** where you will find cabaret and a variety of performing artists and entertainers. The **Brasserie des Arts** has a similar vibe, where, as the evening progresses the atmosphere heats up with dancing on the tables and much else besides. If cabaret isn't your thing, then the famous **Les Caves du Roy** is a fabulous A-list haunt located underground right at the heart of the Hôtel Byblos.

02



03



04





02
La Vague d'Or

03
Alain Ducasse at
l'Hôtel de Paris

04
L'Opéra Saint-Tropez

05
The red roofs of
St. Tropez

Culture @

Climb the wooded hill to the 16th-century **Citadel** that sits atop St. Tropez for stunning views across the village. Built to defend the coast, it was also used by the French authorities to watch the Tropicéziens who were far too rebellious and seditious for their liking. Art lovers should step ashore on Porquerolles to the **Fondation Carmignac** where you will find Edouard Carmignac's extensive art collection.

Shop @

The quintessential French town of St. Tropez is well known for fashion, with iconic labels such as Chanel, Dior and Louis Vuitton all having a noticeable presence along the picturesque cobblestone streets. Stepping into Dior is an event in itself – the boutique is housed in an 18th century honey-colored stone hôtel particulier (grand townhouse) with a stunning garden restaurant.

Spa @ La Réserve Ramatuelle

Escape the crowds at Pampelonne and head to **La Réserve Ramatuelle**. The hotel's 10,000-square-foot wellness center offers customized programs (think luxury-style bootcamps), hydrotherapy sessions and a fabulous selection of massages and facials.

Anchor @ Îles d'Hyères

Escape to the wilder corners of the Riviera and visit the Îles d'Hyères. These sun-drenched islands lie just west of St. Tropez and offer unpretentious charms. Low-key in every way, discover Porquerolles by bicycle (private cars are forbidden), enjoying the violet bougainvillea and windswept pines as you ride along. Step ashore on the neighboring rugged island of **Port-Cros**, which, with its scattering of beach bars and palms, has a Caribbean vibe.

Like Porquerolles, Port-Cros and the surrounding waters are a protected conservation area and as such its hilly trails are impassable by any vehicle and provide stunning scenery at every turn. Some of the most spectacular sights, however, lie beneath the water. Discover the underwater trail with panels explaining the marine flora and fauna as you snorkel off the beach at **La Palud**.

06



07



08



09



CANNES & ANTIBES

Artists, poets and writers have all fallen under the spell of Cannes and Antibes, and before them the Romans and Napoleon. Today, both Cannes and Antibes are illuminated with a glow that goes beyond the ethereal sunlight, and boast culture, restaurants and elegant boutiques ashore.

Dine @

Cannes offers both fabulous big-budget restaurants and charmingly authentic smaller bistros. The city's finest hotels share Michelin-starred inventions, while some of the best Provençal cuisine can be found in tiny cobblestone back streets. The two-Michelin-starred **La Palme d'Or** is set in the Hôtel Martinez on the Cannes Croisette. Offering panoramic views of the bay from its terrace, resident chef Christian Sinicropi blends a combination of Mediterranean styles with his own contemporary fusion inspiration.

Set in the medieval hilltop village of St Paul de Vence, the iconic **La Colombe d'Or** has a fantastic ambience. Dine in front of original works of art by Picasso, Matisse and Braque while enjoying authentic Provençal cuisine. Reservations are essential.

One of the glitziest celebrity hotspots for Riviera splendor, the **Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc** sits in a pine forest surrounded by nine acres of landscaped gardens. Renowned for its star-packed deck, the Belle Époque landmark is home to one of the finest restaurants on the coast, the **Eden Roc Restaurant** (see *Dock & Dine* page 34). For some of the best bouillabaisse on the Riviera, step ashore to the family-run **Le Bacon**. Located across from the old town of Antibes and on the Baie des Anges, the Sordello family typically serve the catch of the day, Provençal style.

For a lazy lunch, toes-in-the-sand style, take the tender ashore to Plage Keller and the Michelin-starred **Le César**. A former haunt for F. Scott Fitzgerald, the fabulous setting is complemented by the freshest dishes, simply prepared.

Explore @

If you are in need of a spot of culture head to the Old Town in Cannes and try the **Musée de la Castre** in the remains of a medieval castle, or the **Bellini Chapel Museum**, which houses painter Emmanuel Bellini's works.

Shop @

For designer labels and unique gifts, Cannes is a treasure trove of boutiques between the Croisette and the Rue d'Antibes. You can expect to find every leading designer on display here.

Anchor @ île Saint-Honorat

Lying just off Cannes, **île Saint-Honorat** is the place to head for a peaceful anchorage. Resident monks live in the **Abbaye de Lérins**, and you can stock up on their award-winning wines.

Spa @ Spa Eden-Roc by La Prairie

The **Spa Eden-Roc** by La Prairie, nestled in the Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc's rose garden, offers a selection of pampering treatments inspired by the Mediterranean waters that surround the property.



06
île Saint-Honorat

07
Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc

08
La Colombe d'Or

09
The Carlton, Cannes

10
Cannes, France

10





VILLEFRANCHE, BEAULIEU & CAP FERRAT

The pretty villages of Villefranche, Cap Ferrat and Beaulieu offer idyllic backdrops to an anchorage. Villefranche is known for the terracotta-colored buildings that tumble down through the steeped streets to the large bay, while Cap Ferrat and Beaulieu are 100 percent old Hollywood glamor.

Dine @

The stately old-world palace of the **Grand Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat**, run by the Four Seasons, has been tempting guests with its award-winning cuisine since 1908. Whether you choose to dine al fresco on the terrace at **La Véranda**, or opt for the Michelin-starred **Le Cap** (open for dinner only), you can expect fantastic Mediterranean cuisine conjured up by Michelin-star chef Yoric Tièche.

For stunning views that pan from Cap Ferrat to Monaco, it is worth stepping ashore to the Michelin-starred restaurant at **Cap Estel**. Expect faultless French cuisine with a modern twist. For a more dramatic vista and elegant local cuisine, climb the cobblestone path to **Château Eze**, atop the medieval village of Eze. The dining terrace hangs over the cliff some 400 meters above sea level.

With equally appealing panoramic ocean views, the dining room of the two-Michelin-star **La Chèvre d'Or** is a gastronomic mecca with a reputation for both its spectacular setting and celebrated cuisine. Located in a château in Eze, meals can be enjoyed on the terrace or in the garden.

Party @ Anjuna Beach

For Indian Ocean style in a stunning Mediterranean setting with cuisine to match, head to the trendy private beach club **Anjuna Beach** in Èze-sur-Mer. This is the type of place where lunch turns to dinner and then to dancing the night away.

Explore @

The Côte d'Azur has some of the most beautiful gardens in the world, including the **Villa et Jardins Ephrussi de Rothschild**'s formal green spaces (including French, Japanese and Spanish gardens), the cactus-filled Jardin Exotique de Monaco (with plants from Mexico, Central America, South Africa and beyond) and the **Jardin Exotique d'Èze**, which is located on the site of a medieval fortress.

11



12



13





11
Grand-Hôtel
du Cap-Ferrat

12
Château Eza

13
Villa et Jardins
Ephrussi de Rothschild

14
Villefranche

15



MONACO

Fast cars, superyachts and designer boutiques are all part of the Monte-Carlo lifestyle, but there is more to the principality of Monaco than extravagance. Look beyond its manicured streets and you will find a dose of culture at every turn. Step ashore to soak up the decadent glamor, and most importantly, enjoy some of the finest dining in the world.

Dine @

From local eateries serving regional fare to lavish once-in-a-lifetime restaurants, Monaco's food scene is both indulgent and fresh. No one should leave Monte Carlo without experiencing the gastronomic delights of Alain Ducasse. Located inside the gilded Belle Époque Hôtel de Paris, the Michelin-star **Le Louis XV** serves haute contemporary cuisine inspired by the Riviera, while the newly opened **Omer** offers landscaped-garden views and Mediterranean flavors. And then there is the renowned **Le Grill** boasting outstanding Michelin-star cuisine and panoramic views from its recently renovated rooftop location.

The late Joël Robuchon was one of France's best-known chefs, and his eponymous restaurant continues to bring his inventive Mediterranean cuisine to the table at the **Hôtel Métropole**.

The whole of the Riviera is awash with fresh, healthy market produce and locally sourced meat, fish and cheeses. Taking advantage of its proximity to fresh, organic produce, **Elsa** was the first 100 percent organic restaurant to earn a Michelin star.

Party @

Port Hercules is lined with waterside bars for an informal drink, while the Shisha Bar at **Twiga Monte-Carlo** attracts a young crowd. For a more refined place for an evening drink try **Hôtel Métropole's** book-lined bar, or watch the sun set from the **Sea Lounge**. The seafront Pisco Bar at Peruvian newcomer **Coya** is where Monaco socialites vie for attention. After dark, rub shoulders on the dancefloor with the A-list cognoscenti at the legendary **Jimmy'z**.



15
Port Hercules

16
Hôtel de Paris

17
Elsa at the Monte-Carlo Bay Hotel

18
Le Grill at the Hôtel de Paris

19
Thermes Marins Monte-Carlo

20
Monte-Carlo Beach Hotel

16



Even if you don't feel like wagering, the famed **Casino de Monte Carlo** is well worth a visit. Order a martini at the bar and admire the Belle Époque building with its many chandeliers and frescoes.

Spa @

Two spas rule the wellbeing scene in Monte Carlo. **The Givenchy Spa** at the Hôtel Metropole is a stylish urban oasis set back from the bustling Casino Square. Alternatively, the **Thermes Marins Monte-Carlo** boasts a vast menu of treatments ranging from one-off thalassotherapy experiences to individually tailored services.

Culture @

Monaco's **Musée Océanographique de Monaco** (Oceanographic Museum) is famous not only for its 450,000-litre aquarium but for the building itself, which sits perched on the edge of a Monaco cliff. The **Open Air Cinema**, where films are projected against the dramatic backdrop of Monaco's rock, must be one of the world's most spectacular cinema settings.

Explore @

Wander the narrow streets of the old town and visit the **Prince's Palace** and **Saint Nicholas Cathedral**. If you are a fan of Grace Kelly, then head to the rose garden in **Fontvieille Park**, which was built in her memory. For further space in Monaco, check out **Jardin Exotique de Monaco** and the Japanese Garden.

Shop @

The long-awaited **One Monte-Carlo** mall has finally opened. From Piaget to YSL and all the other LVMH brands, among many others, there is no bona fide international designer without a boutique at either this address or neighboring streets including Avenue de Monte-Carlo and Avenue des Beaux-Arts. For tableware and interior inspiration **Sabrina Monte-Carlo** is a favorite for Monégasques.

If you have time, *Navigator* recommends spending a few days at either end of your luxury yacht charter exploring the Riviera's hinterlands. With dramatic gorges for kayaking and canoeing, they offer ample opportunity for active adventures. ●



17



18

19



20

