

MEET ME IN MONACO – THEN EZE: THE C&TH TRAVEL GUIDE

TRAVEL / 1 MONTH AGO

Monaco's interiors are those of dreams

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BY ROSALYN
WIKLEY

*To rule out spicy tax haven antics would be foolish. But to overlook Monaco's rich history, cultural booty and sustainability effort would be even more so. Monaco has, after all, operated as historic short-hand for European glamour. Amid a backdrop of Grand Prix, casinos and superyachts, not only does the government dedicate five per cent of its budget to culture, treating residents and visitors to fairly priced tickets for opera, ballet, exhibitions and theatre, but curiously, a burgeoning artisanal, ethical movement is vying for space in the second smallest country in the world, writes **Rosalyn Wikeley**. Once you're through with Monaco, land of the haves and have-yachts, you'll be yearning for a convertible car or boat ride to Eze — a village of art and gastronomy with one of the most beautiful views in the French Riviera. And just a mere three miles away from Monaco, adds **Caroline Phillips**.*



EXPERIENCE

If you want another experience, try an Airbnb one. You'll soon find yourself paddling through the Bay of Eze and Cap d'Estel. Think stand-up paddleboard, turquoise water and the sort of coastline that you'll want to put in your pocket to admire forever. You don't need to be an athlete to join. But it helps. [airbnb.co.uk](https://www.airbnb.co.uk)

BUY

The Fragonard Factory Laboratory

The factory's not for sale, but its gorgeous perfumes, soaps and creams are. Welcome to the 1926 usine (factory) of Fragonard perfumer. The two in Grasse manufacture essences. But the Eze one produces soap (delicate bars with soapy flowers on, and hand-painted duck-shaped ones for children) and cosmetics — such as body lotion, and a mere 330 pounds of face cream a day. Ask for Nilane — a medical student who's chocka with information and charm — to guide you. She'll show you eight aluminium tins of essential oils, and you have to play at being a nose and match the smell to its name on a board. Lemon, mimosa, orange flowers and so on. Harder than you think. (There are only 50 noses in the world, and they can identify 3000 smells.)

You can also make your own eau de toilette and choose the head, heart and base notes. Or better still, just grab a 600ml eau de toilette in an aluminium bottle for 69 euros from the shop afterwards. It's a boutique that smells prettier than a bowl of fresh petals. Luckily, they're bottling its fragrance and you're taking it home. usines-parfum.fragonard.com



VISIT

The Gateway

The poterne (aka postern or gateway,) defences for the village that was then on the edge of the county of Savoy. You'll stand at the double door protected by two towers and a drawbridge, and breathe in history. Listen up: in the mid 16th century, the House of Savoy — alongside Charles V — was at war against François and his Turkish ally Suleiman the Magnificent. But even with this poterne, locals didn't manage to resist 'Redbeard' in 1543.

The Church

Admire the 1773 neo-classical facade with monumental pilasters of the church of Notre Dame de L'Assomption. Then enter the interior —with its Baroque-style trompe l'oeil —of this charming building by architect Antonio Spinelli. After your walk here (up steps too many to count) in the stifling summer heat, you'll breathe in calm and restore your soul by sitting in the eglise with its flickering candles, Händel playing (sadly just a recording; Concerto Grosso Op. 6, No. 1 in G Major, since you ask) and internal air so hot that the second burning bush must have just taken place here.



Interior of villa

EAT

Nibble on Provencal olives with garlic and herbes—or taste the octopus with sauce courgette and Julie pimentée (32 euros), if My Octopus Teacher hasn't put you off — and sip chilled rosé at the Chateau de la Chèvre d'Or . Bag a seat at its ramparts (les remparts) with ooh-ah views over Cap Ferrat. You'll get a welcome sea breeze (or should that be BreEze?) in this garden café as you lounge under a parasol and gaze dreamily at the coastline.

Monaco Travel Guide

Only once through Nice Airport's Monacair gates and into a shiny blue chopper (the most efficient way to zoom into the Principality) can you fully digest the bracket of wealth in the Monegasque slipstream, unperturbed by excess. As you hover along the fringes of the Côte d'Azur, a calm Mediterranean lies below you, a sun-soaked, busy scene beckons ahead. Preconceptions of Monaco can be unforgiving: where the money comes to roost and taste comes to perish – a riot of red Ferraris, a fake-tanned limb and gazillionaire ghetto, rolling out to form a wealthy country no larger than New York's Central Park, fuelled by gambling revenues.

STAY

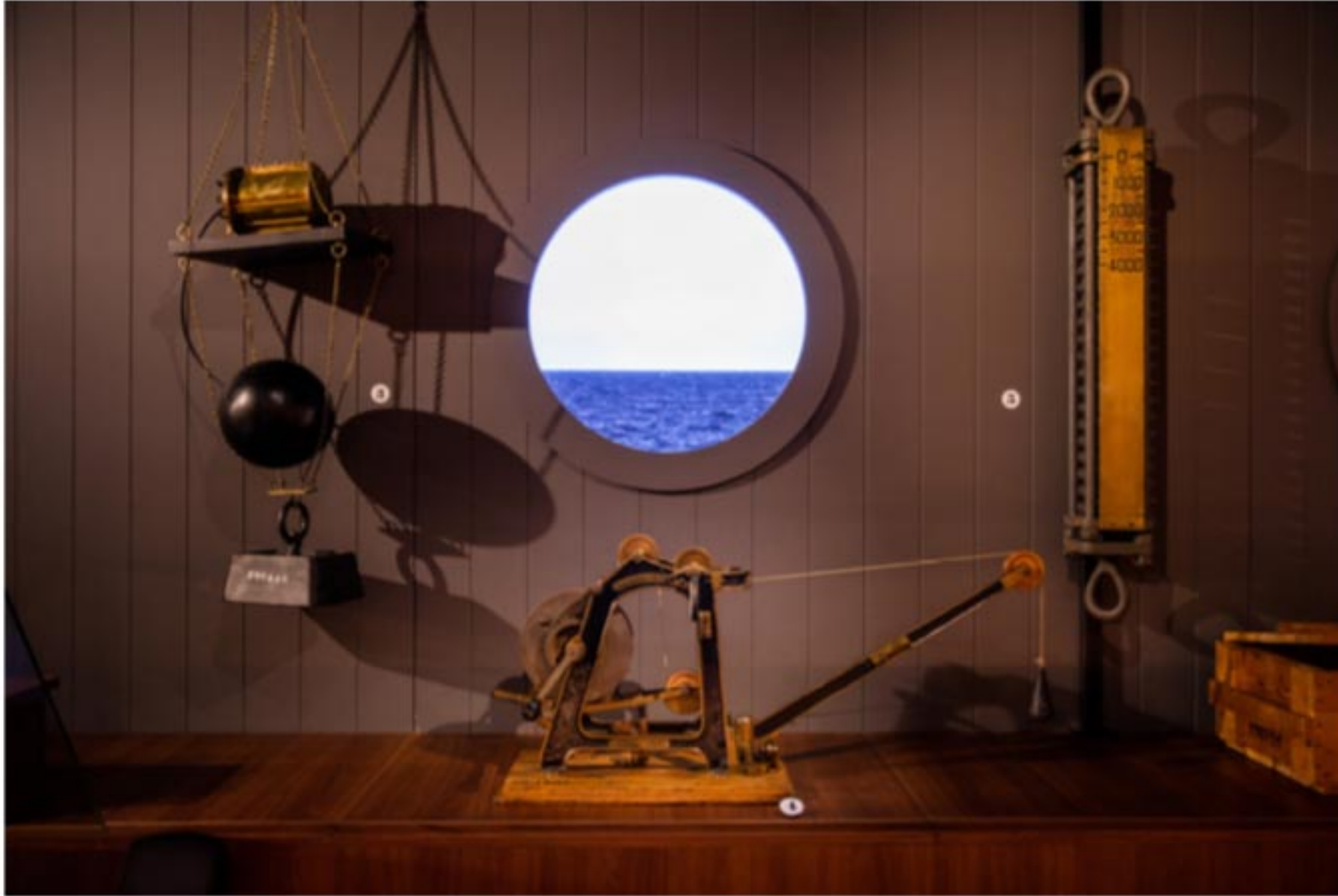
Hotel Metropole



There's something gloriously refined about Monte Carlo's Belle Époque Metropole. Jacques Garcia has filled its palatial bones with a warm contemporary finish, calling on a soft, yesteryear glamour rather than chasing a fleeting and uncomfortable modern one. Its grand lobby hosts a roster of contemporary installations amid Venetian tapestries and marble floors while sumptuous, pillar-clad suites celebrate Monaco's golden era. Gluttony gets an elegant seal of approval for breakfast and a Riviera-ready spa serves up Givenchy treatments and a pool area designed by Karl Lagerfeld. Add to the mix the Golden Square location and fashionable haunts, Odyssey and Joël Robuchon restaurants, and this Belle Époque beauty really is the most culturally astute, lavish spot to park your Goyard trunks at. *Superior Rooms from €340. metropole.com*

VISIT

Oceanographic Museum



Built by Albert I, a passionate marine scientist and explorer, this exquisite early 20th-century building beautifully presents the Principality's relationship with the marine world over the decades with an impressive, curiosity cabinet-style exhibition Monaco & The Ocean: from exploration to protection. The building itself, dramatically positioned over the cliff, is something to behold. oceanomc.mc

Villa Paloma



One of the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco buildings, [Villa Paloma](#) – once the villa of a well-heeled Monegasque – is now home to rotating contemporary art exhibitions (currently Tom Wesselman's provocative American prints until 6 January 2019).

Monte-Carlo Casino



Integral to Monaco's history, Charles Garnier's magnificent casino remains Europe's most opulent playground – the risky, beating heart of the Principality, dripping in Fleming-inspired glamour. Place your bets and indulge in Monegasque, international culture at its finest.

montecarlosbm.com

The Palace and Cathedral



Wind through the toytown that is Monaco-Ville until you reach the Grimaldi marvel with a regal, candy-coloured flamboyance that only Monaco can pull off. [The State Apartments](#) fulfil all opulent expectation, opening from April to October. The tombs of Prince Rainier and Princess Grace lie in the cathedral nearby, [by St Martin Gardens](#).

Jimmy'z

For a flavour of Monaco's party culture, head to its original HQ, [Jimmy'z](#).

EAT

A Roca



[A Roca](#) has been serving up a no-frills, fresh Mediterranean approach to gourmet snacking for over 25 years.

Maya Jah



For lavish Indian cuisine in a moody, refined setting. The cocktails at [Maya Jah](#) taste as good as the theatre accompanying them.

Cova



A new, informal haunt (which for Monaco means Burberry loafers), **COVA** serves fresh pasta, real Italian coffee and their signature panettone to be decadently enjoyed dipped into vanilla and chocolate sauce.

Yoshi



For healthy and exquisite Japanese cuisine (chef Takéo Yamazaki embodies that native precision), head to the Metropole's **YOSHI** with its fresh sashimi, maki, nigiri and a delicious Japanese garden for le digestif.



GOING GREEN

Gardens



Despite its urban jungle-on-sea reputation, Monaco boasts eight meticulously preened parks to take the edge off life in the fast lane. The renowned [Princess Grace Rose Garden](#) blooms with over 300 varieties of roses, [Le Jardin Exotique](#) is a cliffside labyrinth of tropical plants, mostly from South America, South Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, and Le Jardin Japonais is a welcome oasis of zen, waterfalls and bamboo in the touristy Principality.

Terre De Monaco

Unbeknown to many, Monaco is embracing the sustainable zeitgeist with green gusto. Take [Terre de Monaco](#), a company on a mission to establish urban agriculture throughout the Principality, creating ecological vegetable gardens, fruit and herbs and selling products from these plots to owners and tenants of the buildings or local restaurants. Workshops available, too.

Brasserie De Monaco

It's far from Monegasque chic and falls short of hipster approval, but [Brasserie de Monaco](#) on Port Hercule is the Principality's only brewery, with craft beer fermenting away behind an enormous, industrial bar. Even Monaco has yielded to the craft beer movement.



La Distillerie de Monaco

Monegasque Philip Culazzo, a Dubliner with Italian and French heritage, found a way to salvage a relic of Monaco's agricultural past – bitter fruits from its orange trees, too bitter even for charity. In 2015, he founded Monaco's first liqueur distillery, [La Distillerie de Monaco](#). Try the [L'Orangerie](#), a premium bitter orange liqueur handmade using the oranges that grow in this extraordinary Principality. This is artisanal Monaco at its best.

But now you've had your fill of the pocket-hanky sized principality and it's time to head off into the hills. And so to Eze, cité médiévale et village d'Art et de gastronomie, as the locals would have it.

The C&TH Guide to Eze

Who could fail to fall in love with this hilltop village's narrow, terracotta-and-rough-hewn-stone alleys, steep streets that set your espadrilles at right angles, roofs of handmade red clay tiles, and bougainvillea cascading down medieval walls: one of the most beautiful villages in the Côte d'Azur, and all built among the rocks. You'll stop to admire the village towers and drawbridge — who wouldn't? And then as you clamber up the steps for a view over the sea with sailing boats and private yachts — most big enough to fit a cruise liner on board — you'll also look down on what appears to be an al fresco Porsche showroom but is, in fact, a hotel car park. If you run out of puff on your ascent, stop for nougats and calissons de Provence at a roadside stall, the air heady with the smell of almonds being caramelised in burning sugar in a copper pot. Or pick up a pot of miel de lavande, and energise yourself with fingers-full of the sticky stuff, in the style more chic than un ours nommé Winnie the Pooh. Then breathe in the lingering, sweet scent of pink and white oleanda. When you reach the bottom of the village again, decide whether you're ready to walk the mile of the Nietzsche trail — Friedrich did.

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CLUBS IN THE WORLD



Paddle Boarding Experience

STAY

Everyone wants an experience these days. The way people travel has changed forever. So why not search the region for accommodation on Airbnb? You'll be dizzy with excitement at the site's new categories — from 'Amazing Views' to 'Design', 'Countryside' and 'Historical Homes'. (Globally, who wouldn't want to wake up in a Frank Lloyd Wright, lounge around in a Le Corbusier or brew their morning coffee in a once-radical design by Ricardo Bofill? And don't let's get started on the possibility of staying in windmills, shepherd's huts, trulli and houseboats...) But Eze comes into its own in the 'Amazing Pools' category. There are houses with infinity pools with views to die for, where you sip your apéritif while also drinking in the Med. And period villas and apartments that boast style and (almost) guaranteed sunsets. You can get a luxury villa in Eze with pool, terraces, and summer kitchen to sizzle your Provencal rosemary and lamb on. There's Villa Serangen, located between sky and sea (£1851 a night) and just 15 minutes from Monaco. Villa Vue Sur La Mer (£933 a night), just five minutes from the beach and with a wraparound balcony with views of Eze Bay. Just to mention two. [airbnb.co.uk](https://www.airbnb.co.uk)



Prestige Villa on Sea