

The Riviera Gazette

OfficeXtra
Sophia Antipolis

26 September 2002 • Number 10

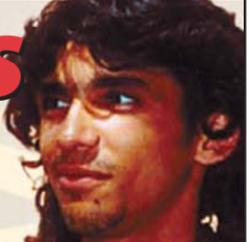
The Côte d'Azur's English-language newspaper

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Bonjour!

Voici le nouveau journal hebdomadaire pour les Anglophones qui habitent et visitent la Côte d'Azur. Chaque semaine, ce journal donnera les actualités de la région aux 10,000 Anglophones, de Monaco jusqu'à Cannes et le Var. Utilisez-le pour toutes vos petites annonces qui peuvent intéresser les 'expats' de la région ou pour promouvoir votre commerce. Pour plus d'information en Français, téléphonez 04 93 09 66 43.

SNOW WAY!

Freak hailstorm leaves Valbonne under 40cm of ice



SNOW JOKE... The big clear-up gets underway in Valbonne

HUNDREDS of Sophia Antipolis office workers were stranded on Tuesday night when a freak hailstorm hit the area just after 6pm. Flurries of giant hailstones quickly piled up, reaching up to 40cm deep in places.

Over 50 stranded vehicles had to be

By ALISON CRADDOCK

dug out by the sapeurs-pompiers. By seven o'clock snow-plows were busy clearing the A8 between Mougins and Antibes, where long tailbacks stretched in both directions. "We just

couldn't get out of Sophia. The roads were blocked from Valbonne all the way to Antibes," said David Britten of Infocandy, whose usual 20 minute journey home to Peymeinade took over two hours.

"Although hail is not unusual at this time of year, the magnitude and veloc-

ity of this hailstorm was remarkable," Gerald Amiel, the Nice weather station chief, told *The Riviera Gazette*.

"Hail does occur sometimes on Autumn evenings, as warm daytime air meets cold air coming from the mountains. Thick clouds form and the moisture then condenses into hailstones."

The new WEEKLY Riviera Gazette: 15,000 copies distributed this week. Look for the next issue on Thursday October 3



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DEE-LIGHTFUL

STARS were in the audience as well as on the stage at The Red Pear Theatre's latest production.

West End darling Janie Dee popped in to catch *A Celebration of Sondheim* at the Théâtre Antibéa in Old Antibes on Saturday night.

Also present was TV pundit, wit and raconteur Gyles Brandreth.

The show, put together specially for its two-night run at the Antibéa, starred Christopher Biggins, Garth Bardsley, Anna Nicholas, Gay Soper and Stefan Bednarczyk. The company kept the packed house enthralled with

By Alison Craddock

brightly polished renditions of nearly thirty favourite Sondheim numbers.

Chris Biggins, who directed the show, told *The Riviera Gazette* "Most thirty-somethings remember me from kiddies' TV like 'Rentaghost' and 'On Safari', but theatre is more my thing."

"It's been great here - it's a lovely little theatre and a great audience. It's my first time at Red Pear, but I come to the area quite often because I'm lucky enough to have friends who live here."

"I think Sondheim is the greatest songwriter since the sixties. He's witty and clever, and modernised the musical" he enthused.

Awards

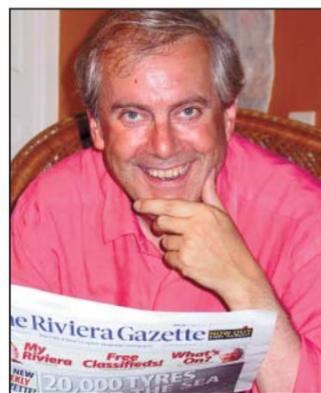
Janie Dee is taking a break after playing opposite Tim Flavin in the highly acclaimed Gershwin musical *My One and Only* at the Picadilly Theatre in London. Janie's currently a hot property in the West End, and her mantelpiece is groaning under the weight of awards, including two Oliviers. She's in the region to visit her parents, who live in Provence,

and her sister, a Nice-based ballet dancer.

Gyles Brandreth, who was once president of the Oxford Union and is a former Conservative member of parliament, is an old friend of Red Pear. He and his wife found time to visit whilst taking a short break with friends in St Paul de Vence.

"Now that Euro MP candidates aren't restricted to standing only in their country of origin, I think I'll stand as the Riviera's MEP. My campaign slogan will be 'The Riviera, c'est moi'" quipped Brandreth.

DEE-VA... West End theatre star Janie Dee



PUNDIT... Gyles Brandreth knows a great newspaper when he sees one



PLAYERS... the cast of "A Celebration of Sondheim" caught at the after-show soiree: Garth Bardsley, Stefan Bednarczyk, Anna Nicholas, Chris Biggins and Gay Soper

Antibes road closures start next week

WORK will begin next week on a major renovation of rue Thuret in Old Antibes, writes Jenny Paul.

"We are going to re-do everything on the entire road." Sabrina Meceli from Antibes town hall told *The Riviera Gazette*.

"The work will stop for Christmas, then re-start at the beginning of January. It should be finished by March 20th next year."

The work will cost €787,000, and the road is expected to be closed for much of the time.

The ramparts in Old Antibes will also be closed for four months during a €244,000 renovation scheme starting in January. The Rampe des Saleurs and the Promenade Amiral de Grasse will be closed between Heidi's bookshop and the Vieux Murs restaurant.

Project architect Monsieur Corbiné told *The Riviera Gazette* "The work is essential as these are very old roads. They can't support the summer traffic of 500 cars a day. They will become dangerous."

"Traffic will be congested during the work but we have chosen a quiet time of year to do it."

Freak hunting death

A 75-YEAR-OLD man was killed in a bizarre hunting accident in the Luberon on Sunday.

Fernand Blanc was riding his moped on a forest road when a bullet ricocheted off a wild boar and hit him in the stomach, killing him instantly.

A police investigation found the hunter belonged to a group who had failed to post the legally required notice boards signalling their presence. A 30-year-old hunter is in police custody.



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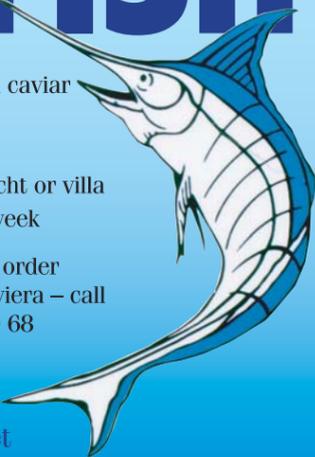
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Unhappy pianist 'throttled' by angry restaurateur

RESTAURANT MANAGER ATTACKS BRIT

A BRITISH concert pianist was grabbed by the throat by a restaurant manager in Vieux Nice last Saturday after he refused to pay for a pizza he considered to be of poor quality.

The assault happened when the pianist visited the La Bécasse restaurant on Rue St Francois de Paule with two friends, one female, both of whom speak good French.

The pianist ordered the €12 'Pizza Surprise' but, when it arrived, it was "quite nasty tasting", the pianist's friend Mr S told *The Riviera Gazette*.

"We're not that fussy, but we couldn't eat it. Although it was the most expensive item on the menu, the ingredients were really cheap and it wasn't cooked properly".

"We called the waiter and said we wouldn't pay for the pizza", Mr S continued. "The waiter said we must pay, so I asked him to get the manager to come over. The manager

refused, so we went up to speak to him. He lunged over the counter, grabbed my friend round the throat and started throttling him.

"His mates got up to help him. They encircled us in a very threatening way. My friend's necklace got broken.

"We paid up and left."

Refused

The restaurant's manager, Monsieur Christophe, agrees he put his hands around the pianist's neck but says he thought the Brits were trying to get out of paying anything for their meal.

"On Saturday night some English people refused to pay their bill, saying they had ordered too much, the pizza was too large and they hadn't eaten it, so therefore they wouldn't pay," said M Christophe.

"This may be the law in

England, but here in France you are obliged to pay, whether you finish your meal or not.

"I explained this, but they wanted to leave my restaurant without giving me any money, so I stopped the man by putting my hands around his neck.

"A lady intervened, who spoke good French and English, and told them they had to pay, which they did.

"I had broken a chain around the man's neck when I had my hands around it, so we reimbursed him €10 so he could get it fixed.

"I have no problem with the English in general and we have many happy English customers," he says.

"Two of us speak rather good French," Mr S told *The Gazette*. "I think it was pretty clear what we wanted... we were made to settle the bill in full, then another man gave us €10 to fix the necklace. We felt very, very intimidated."

BORIS IN COURT FOR MONACO TAX PROBE

TENNIS ace Boris Becker, 34, will appear in court on tax evasion charges next month.

It is alleged that the German tennis champ claimed to be resident in Monaco whilst really living in Munich.

German authorities have served him up a whopping backdated tax bill of €6.5m, plus interest.

The troubled star has just gone through a pricey divorce

and is paying child support for the daughter he fathered during a love-in with a Russian model in a laundry cupboard at a top London restaurant.

In attempts to net the cash to settle the tax charges out of court, Becker has sold his Munich house and put property in Majorca up for sale.

He is now believed to have agreed to accept a two year suspended prison sentence at the hearing in Germany, set for October 23rd.



TAX RAQUET... Boris Becker

Speed cameras coming to the Côte

LOCAL authorities are making good the governments' promise to improve France's road safety record, reports Jenny Paul.

In a project spear-headed by motorway operator Escota and the Préfecture of the Alpes-Maritimes, speed cameras are to be installed on the A8 and in accident blackspots in Nice and Cannes.

The cameras, which cost up to €100,000 each, will be in place by the start of next year.

André Nicolas of Escota told *The Riviera Gazette* "This is not to catch motorists breaking speed limits, but to deter them. Many fatal crashes are caused by excess speed.

"There have been thirty fatal road accidents

in the last year around Nice. People must realise the consequences of speeding can be far worse than a fine or licence suspension."

There will be six cameras along the Alpes-Maritimes stretch of the A8.

In Nice, the Promenade des Anglais and the Voie Rapide are being equipped. Also on camera will be the notoriously dangerous Boulevard Carnot in Cannes.

In the meantime police are out in force with hand-held radar speed traps.

A police spokesperson in Nice confirmed that this week they had booked 32 drivers in just one evening; 25 had their licences taken away on the spot, pending court hearings.

Expat firms miss out on tax rebates

EXPAT businesses are missing out on the chance to save up to 55% of their staff training costs, delegates to a British Chamber of Commerce seminar heard on Friday.

Businesses with less than ten employees pay 0.25% of their wages bill as a training tax each year. Those with ten or more pay 1.5%.

The money can be reclaimed and used to provide on-going vocational training for staff, for everything from language skills, including French, to IT training and more specialist skills.

Under the scheme up to 55% of the cost of training is covered by the state.

But, to get their hands on the money, businesses need to take action, by either signing up with an approved training organiser, known as an OPCA, or by notifying the authorities that the firm is opting out and will manage its training budget itself.

If a business doesn't opt out, as many expat-owned firms unfamiliar with the system neglect to do, the tax is collected but the benefits are lost.

When training is needed, specialists evaluate what is required to take employees to the target level of knowledge needed. They prepare a quote and then submit it to an approved training organiser.

The organiser then helps the business work out how to fund the training, Nathalie Chiusano of training organiser Agefos told the seminar. Extra funding is available for staff aged under 26.

But Chiusano warned "get ready for lots of paper."

For further information, in English, contact Nathalie Chiusano on 04 93 19 36 90.

The art of lending

AN INNOVATIVE lending library for works of art by local painters and sculptors has opened in Valbonne.

Renting a painting or sculpture for a month costs from only €7.50 – including insurance – and the largest items cost no more than €30.

"We aim to make art accessible to the general public," said Patricia Civel of L'Art Tisse, the association behind the new library.

"Contemporary artists from all over the region contributed their work to our association. Anybody, an individual or a business, can come and borrow any piece for a month.

"Locals have shown plenty of interest, as there is something for everyone. The Mayor of Valbonne has lent us a building and sponsors are helping with the project."

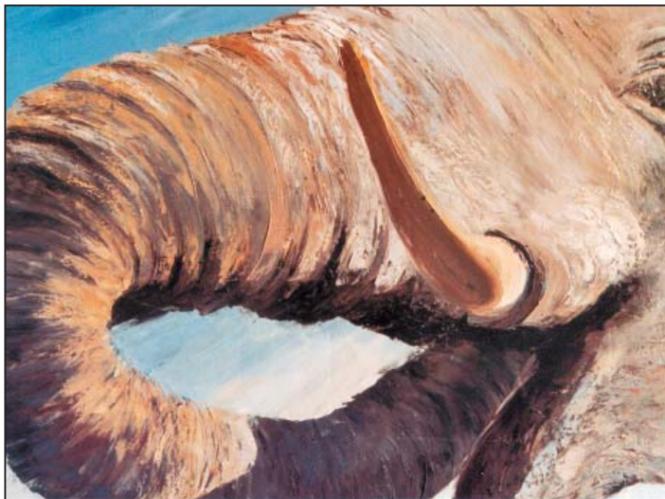
All the works are available for viewing on the internet at www.art-tisse.com, or at 11 rue du Pontis in Valbonne village. Call Patricia Civel on 06 82 09 88 21 for opening times.



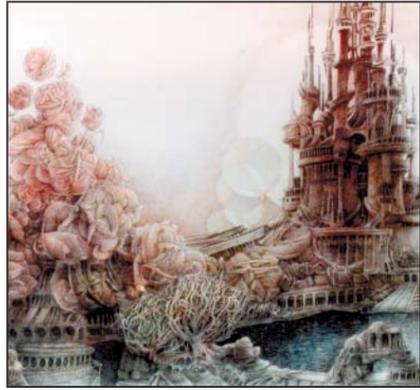
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◀ FANTASY... 'Le Chateau des Sables' by Bernard Jan, Nice, €22.50 per month

Local economy strong

THE local economy is faring better than the national average, despite a spate of closures and redundancies in Sophia-Antipolis.

"Yes, big companies have done badly here, but at the same time new ones have started up and are booming," Catherine Gentil of Côte d'Azur Development told *The Riviera Gazette*. "Sales of new office space have fallen in the last year, but the last two years were exceptional, not the norm," she explained.

The downturn in the hi-tech sector is balanced out in the Alpes-Maritimes by a continued rise in income from tourism.

British beef back

THE ban on British beef is due to be lifted within ten days, following a French food safety agency report which says it is as safe as domestic beef.

Seven hundred cases of BSE have been recorded in France since 1991 — with 458 in the last two years. France says this is due to better diagnostics and screening rather than a sudden surge in infection.

Instant mash recipe

A COOK was surprised to find a hand grenade in a bag of potatoes in the kitchens of a Nice tax office last week.

Police quickly ruled out any risk of explosion and think the device, a relic from World War II, was dug up at the same time as the spuds.

Eze joins Nice

EZE will become part of Metropolitan Nice, rather than joining Menton.

But Beaulieu and St Jean Cap Ferrat, which were forced to join Nice earlier this year, are still refusing to take up their seats on the council.

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My Riviera

Sarnie queen **Sarah Dawson** tells Sarah Clark about yachties, bacon butties and her life on the Riviera...

“ I USED to work on the boats, at first in Palma, then in Antibes. I moved here to join my boyfriend Alex.

Then, one day, I thought ‘I’m getting too old for this. I want to go home at night.’ The yachtie life is very social but, at the end of the day, you’ve got to grow up.

So I went back home to the Wirral in northern England. I was going to open a sandwich bar there, but I got beaten to it. I came back to Antibes and started cooking in villas.

My friend Tina and I went partners in Le Pit Stop. She was on the boats and wanted to come ashore. I’d trained at catering college and I always wanted to start my own business. I knew catering and I saw a gap in the market. Sandwich bars are so popular in the UK but there was nothing here. We sat down and discussed it, made plans and found premises. It took seven months to get to opening day.

Our neighbours were a bit sceptical when we opened. And when we moved in, the shop opposite was empty. But three businesses have come in since we’ve been here.

Ellie Plenier at ASAP was a huge help with the paperwork. She started up at the same time as us, helping people get set up here. She’s French, a friend who used to work on the boats. We were her first proper client.

Tina’s since left to have a baby, and I’ve been on my own for a year now. I’m here every day.

Maybe 35-40 percent of our customers are French. They mostly stick with their traditional favourites but

they will try something new, like a tortilla wrap, when they see it being made up in front of them. The rest of the clientele is English-speaking, and their favourite is our Breakfast Butty – sausage, egg and bacon. Everyone goes mad for it.

Everything is freshly made – else you just don’t know how long a sandwich has been sitting there.

We’ve started doing deliveries to the business park at Sophia Antipolis. I bought a van with a logo and had a website built. I thought, being technical types, they’d like to order online, but mostly they still phone in their orders. The breakfast butty doesn’t travel too well but customers say it’s so good they don’t mind if it turns up a bit messy! We’ve also got a bike that goes around town, to the boats and the offices.

Sunday is about the only time Alex and I have with each other. We go out for lunch, we like to try different places and talk about things other than work, or visit friends. I close the shop for two or three weeks in December/January. That’s it for our holiday.

I think we live on one of the most attractive coastlines in the world. I don’t want to say I’ll never go back to the UK, but I’m very happy here.

I do get frustrated at not speaking French. I want to be part of the community but I can’t chat with my neighbours. I was taking lessons but I’ve just been to busy to keep them up.

And the things I like most about the Riviera are the weather and the other people who’ve made the effort to be here.



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TRAFFIC UPDATE

Motorways

- **A8, Nice** Expect long delays in the Nice St-Isidore area from 8pm Friday to 6am Monday during resurfacing work

Local roads

- **Antibes** Rue Thuret access restricted until Mar 20, 2003
- **Antibes** Traffic lights and 50km/h speed limit on RD4 until Oct 31
- **Auribeau-sur-Siagne** Traffic lights and 30Km/h limit on RD9 until Sept 30
- **Cannes** No vehicular access to a 190m stretch of Rue d'Antibes until Dec 2002. Diversions in place
- **Eze** Traffic lights and 50Km/h limit on RD2564 until Sept 27
- **Gattières** Traffic lights and 30Km/h limit on RD2209 until Sept 27
- **Mandelieu-La Napoule** Traffic lights and 50Km/h limit on RD109 until Oct 25
- **Pegomas** Traffic lights and 30Km/h limit on RD9 until Sept 30
- **Valbonne** 50Km/h speed limit during construction of new roundabout on RD103 until Sept 27
- **Villeneuve-Loubet** Long-term 50Km/h limit and delays on the RN98 coast road, caused by lane closure due to last winter's storm damage

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK...

"Time wounds all heels"
Groucho Marx

5

Send this form back to: Classifieds, The Riviera Gazette, 738 Route Notre Dame, Cidex 47, 06330 Roquefort les Pins, France • Tel: 04 93 09 66 43 • Fax: 04 93 09 66 53 • Or email your ad to classifieds@TheRivieraGazette.com

What's On and Where To Go...

Supercross comes to Nice

THE finals of the French national Supercross championship take place at the Palais Nikaïa this weekend, as part of the 6th Supercross Indoor de Nice.

As much spectacle as serious competition, the programme also includes Speedcross competitions for 125cc and 250cc motorbikes and the Nice Air Contest, featuring freestyle motorbike acrobatics specialists.

Shows are at 8pm on Friday and Saturday. Tickets are €32, €38 or €44 from 04 92 07 83 30.

Riviera Weather

	Morning	Afternoon
Today	Partly Cloudy 12C	Partly Cloudy 20C
Friday	Sunny 13C	Sunny 23C
Saturday	Sunny 13C	Sunny 23C
Sunday	Sunny 13C	Sunny 23C
Monday	Sunny 14C	Sunny 23C
Tuesday	Sunny 14C	Sunny 24C

Call 08 99 70 11 11 for an update - in English - on today's weather in your town or to get a three day forecast. Calls cost €0.34 per minute



PLAIN SAILING ... The famous 'Stormy Weather', one of the competitors in this year's Prada Challenge for Classic Yachts, racing in classic style. Catch them in Cannes until Saturday or pop down to St Tropez on Sunday to watch them arrive for next week's final regatta of the year, les Voiles de Saint-Tropez. The sea wall of the port at St Tropez is the ideal place to watch as these graceful craft jostle for starting positions and glide to triumphant finishes.

Top brass to remember French role in US War of Independence

VICE-ADMIRAL Scott Fry, Commander of the Sixth Fleet of the US Navy, and Samuel V Brock, the US Consul General in Marseilles, will be amongst the VIP guests at Sunday's Fête de l'Amiral de Grasse.

The annual Franco-American event gathers French and US military and civil dignitaries, military bands and local people to celebrate the role played in the American War of Independence by Bar-sur-Loup's most famous son, Admiral François Joseph de Grasse.

De Grasse's arrival with 3,000 men in Yorktown on 19 October 1781 was the turning point in the American fight for independence. It allowed George Washington to gain victory over the British stronghold and go on to win independence for America.

The next year, de Grasse was captured by Admiral Rodney and taken to Britain. In London he became a key member of the team that negotiated the Treaty of Versailles.

Bar-sur-Loup and Yorktown are now twin towns.

This year's event starts with a commemorative service in Grasse cathedral at 9:30am, followed by ceremonies at the War Memorial and at the Amiral de Grasse monument. There's another ceremony in front of the Amiral de Grasse statue in Bar-sur-Loup at 4.30pm, followed by drinks. All the events are open to the public.



● ROMANI YAG performs traditional gypsy songs and dances at the Salle des Fêtes, Valbonne on Friday at 8:30pm. Tickets are €5 and €8 - free for kids - on the door or call 04 93 12 30 92.

The Riviera This week

- The inaugural meeting of the Nice branch of **Toastmasters** takes place tonight. Contact Lesley Joines on 04 93 43 71 22 to join in.
- Charles Gounod's **opera Romeo et Juliette** continues at the Opéra de Nice with performances at 8pm on Friday, Tuesday and Wednesday, plus a matinee on Sunday at 2.30pm. Tickets from €7 to €82. Call 04 92 17 40 40 to book.
- The yachting industry has descended on Monaco for the **12th Monaco Yacht Show**. One of Europe's top yacht trade shows, the event gives brokers, traders, re-fitters, manufacturers and equipment-makers the chance to show off their wares. The show is open daily from 10am to 7pm until Sunday.
- Tom Tennant, 63, and Geoff Treloar, 56, will **walk 30km** from Menton to Nice on Friday to raise money for the Holy Trinity Nice organ restoration fund. They set off from St John's Church, Menton at 8am. Both moral and financial support are welcome, call 04 93 72 97 08 to donate either.
- Antibes and Juan-les-Pins are hosting a series of **free concerts and parades** this weekend. On Friday night there's free rhythm and blues with the Chris David Band at 7.30pm in Vieux Antibes' Place des Martyrs de la Résistance. Saturday sees a parade through the streets of Juan-les-Pins, starting at 3pm, and a jazz concert at the Palais des Festivals at 9pm. On Sunday night there's another free concert in the Place des Martyrs, this time with the Mario Canonge Jazz Band, from 11.30pm.
- Visit Gourdon this weekend to watch forty of France's leading **blacksmiths** in action creating sculptures, ironmongery, cutlery and other works. Ten forges will be set up in the town's main car park and each 'Maitre de Forge' will spend two hours working hot metal. The smiths will also work together

over the two days to create a large sculpture, and there will be blacksmithing exhibits around the village. Watch the smiths between 9am and 9pm on Saturday and from 8am to 6pm on Sunday.

- Sospel is holding its annual **agricultural fair** on Saturday. This working fair will bring together farmers from across the region to buy and sell livestock. A craft and produce market will be held alongside. Be warned, though: the fair starts early in the morning and finishes early in the afternoon.

- Bargain hunters should head to Mouans-Sartoux this Saturday for a **flea market and jumble sale** and to La Colle sur Loup town centre on Sunday for a vide grenier/jumble sale.

- You can buy direct from **artisan potters** at the Marché de Potiers in Biot on Saturday.

- **Contemporary dance** is on the menu at the Théâtre Palais Croisette, Cannes at 8.30pm on Saturday night and 4pm on Sunday afternoon. 'La Rêve du Didon' will be performed by a local dance company - tickets go on sale one hour before the show.

- The Forum, the informal social group for young expats, is holding an **end of summer party** on Saturday night at the Lincoln Pub in Antibes, from 8pm. No pre-booking is necessary; just turn up and join in.

- Monaco FC meet Rennes on Saturday in a **Division 1 football match** at the Stade Louis II at 8pm. Call +377 92 05 37 54 for tickets.

- Former British Prime Minister Sir Edward Heath will be in Monaco this weekend for a **concert and gala dinner** in honour of the British pianist Dame Moura Lympany. The concert, at the Auditorium Rainier III on Saturday, features the internationally-renowned American pianist Murray Perahia playing Bach, Beethoven and Chopin. It

starts at 8:30 pm and is followed by a gala dinner at the Hôtel de Paris. Tickets are available from FNAC and the Monaco Casino atrium - €30.50 or €80 for the concert and €100 for the dinner.

- The Moto Club de la Gaude is holding **motocross trials** on Sunday at Parc des Tuillères in Vallauris. There's also a mini trial for 6-12 year olds. Entry is free.

- **Classical music** lovers have two options on Sunday evening. The Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra performs a concert version of Richard Strauss' opera Elektra on Sunday at the Grimaldi Forum at 6pm. Call +377 99 99 30 00 for tickets. Alternatively, the Orchestre de Cannes PACA performs music by Bizet and Ravel at Saint Charles church, Le Cannet. Call 04 93 45 49 58 for ticket info.

- Monaco's **Princess Grace Irish Library** will be shut from Monday until October 14 whilst it hosts a symposium entitled The Irish Book Lover.

- The Ensemble Baroque de Nice celebrates its 20th birthday on Wednesday with a performance of Handel's **Fireworks and Water Music** at the Opéra de Nice at 8.30pm. Call 04 92 17 40 40 for tickets.

- The new season at Monaco's Théâtre Princesse Grace opens on Wednesday with **Monte-Carlo Magic Stars**, a gathering of magicians from around the world. The two-part show features young magicians from Japan, France, Russia, the Netherlands and the Ukraine in competition for the gold and silver Magic Wand prizes. There are also performances by professional French, Austrian and American magicians. Shows are on October 2 and 6 at 3pm and on October 3, 4 and 5 at 9pm. Tickets are €40 for adults and €20 for under-21s from +377 93 25 32 27.

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