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at 3am on Sunday 27th**

The Riviera Gazette

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The Côte d'Azur's English-language newspaper

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THE RISE AND FALL OF VILLA PELLERIN

By **JENNY PAUL**

BULLDOZERS moved in on Tuesday to begin the long-awaited demolition of the infamous 2,000 square metre Villa Pellerin, on the tip of Cap d'Antibes.

The destruction comes as the final blow in a 12 year legal battle between the villa's French designer and former owner, Christian Pellerin, and the planning authorities.

Pellerin, who was the golden boy of 1980's French property development and designer of the architecturally renowned 'La Defense' business district in Paris, acquired the land and its 300 square metre villa in 1988.

With astonishing disregard for planning regulations, and despite receiving a verbal warning from the local authorities, Pellerin ordered a new structure to go ahead in 1990. On completion the extensions amounted to a breathtaking 1600 square metres, or the equivalent of ten average two-storey villas.

The creation of the mansion cost an estimated FF149 million, with new rooms including a 130 square metre lounge opening onto a 160 square metre terrace, a Jacuzzi with spectacular sea views nestled in a solid marble and stone room, and a large cinema lined with exotic wood panelling.

The spectacular new buildings were so large that they obstructed the beam of the Cap's lighthouse, which had to be altered to pass beyond them.



€23M VILLA TO GO... after a 12 year battle, demolition of France's biggest ever planning permission infraction will take six weeks

However it was the removal of the 5,000 square metres of earth during the creation of the vast underground area that first alerted locals to the scale of the renovations being carried out.

In January 1993 a formal investigation was opened. This led to the Antibes Mairie retracting planning permissions it had granted as they were found to be based on false declarations.

In March 1999 Pellerin and the manager of the property, Alain

Jaubert, were found guilty of breaching planning regulations by the Grasse courts. They lost their appeal in Aix en Provence in 2000 and Pellerin's dream-house was condemned. In April 2001 the demolition set to commence in October that year.

Despite this verdict, the property was sold twice during this time, lastly to its current owner, Luxembourg company SA Palmetto.

The company is believed to belong to Russian billionaire Arcadi

Gaydamak, suspected of trafficking arms to Angola.

The final appeal against the villa's destruction was turned down on 17 July 2002, with the Grasse court granting the state the right to proceed with the demolition - but it took until the 14th of October for the villa's occupants to be expelled.

It will take just six weeks to shatter Pellerin's magnificent vision, with the €150,000 demolition bill to be paid by the mansion's own creator.

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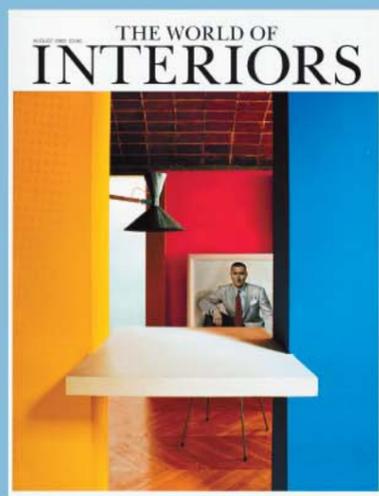
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Al Qaeda's network reaches into Menton

By Jenny Paul

A MENTON-based Al-Qaeda activist, Imed Ben Mekki Zarkaoui, was arrested with three other terrorist suspects in Italy earlier this month, the Italian authorities have revealed.

Another Tunisian based in Menton, Lotfi Rihani, escaped arrest and is still at large. He left Menton in late September, headed for the Middle East.

On October 12 Hamadi Bouahia was extradited from Malta in relation to the same case, and two days later another Tunisian, who was reportedly involved in a failed attempt to bomb a cathedral in Strasbourg in 2000, was arrested in Marseille.

The 200 page dossier and arrest document signed by Judge Maurizio Grigo stated that "a violent act was imminent - not in Italy but in another country, probably France."

French and Italian counter-espionage services, working with British and US counter-



BIN LADEN... al Qaeda's terrorist network had bases in Menton, San Remo and Marseille

parts, have had the Al-Qaeda cell under surveillance for several months.

Italian police found €10,000 on one of the suspects and ten camouflage uniforms at an apartment in Milan.

One of the suspects, Ben

Khalifa, is alleged to have used video cameras to film public areas for potential suicide-bombing attacks.

The men have been charged with forming a criminal terrorist group, trafficking in forged documents and illegal immigration.

"The French anti-terrorist service identified in Menton a Tunisian national, a member of a logistics group supporting Al-Qaeda of which group members were arrested in Italy on October 10," confirmed French Interior Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy in a

statement on the arrests on 21st October.

He played down the threat of an attack on France, however; "The investigations made in France and Italy regarding this Tunisian have never revealed the preparation of an attack in France or against French interests by this group."

But the Côte d'Azur is on "maximum alert", DST (the French government's anti-espionage specialists) in Paris confirmed to *The Riviera Gazette*. "Security measures have been reinforced and appropriate anti-terrorism groups are being very vigilant."

This would perhaps explain a two-hour delay at Nice airport last week while customs checked suitcases following a mistaken gun-threat, the thorough investigation by divers of an American cruise ship in Villefranche, and the presence of thirty CRS riot police at the hearing of a muslim cleric's indictment in Nice for a parking infringement last Thursday.

Le Pen again

NATIONAL Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen has announced he will stand for the presidency of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA) region - the party's heartland - in 2004.

The move comes as proposals for devolving power from Paris to the regions have been announced.

Under the plans each region will have the right to set local taxes and decide how revenue is spent. They will also be able to hold referendums.

Maeterlinck's planning kink

THE luxury Hotel Palais Maeterlinck is the subject of a planning probe after it emerged that 950 square metres of facilities may have been built without proper permission.

Planners say unauthorised work at the hotel, on the Basse Corniche between Nice and Villefranche, includes new bedrooms, a restaurant, changing a terrace into an indoor lounge area and even the construction of a funicular lift from the cliff-top hotel down to the sea.

Air strike won't hurt

AIR France unions have called an all-out strike for November 5.

The strike will take place just one day after the airline begins its €38 each way Nice-Paris campaign in a bid to compete with low-cost airlines.

But Air France maintains the strike will not severely disrupt services.

Var is pricey - official

PROPERTY prices in the Var are up by 10% this year. The department is now the second most expensive in which to buy a house, after the Alpes-Maritimes.

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Fungi lovers hunt down a bumper crop



REWARDING... a day's picking produced a four basket haul

THIS summer's mix of rain and sunshine has brought a plentiful crop of wild mushrooms to the Riviera, writes *Déirdre Mooney*.

And it has meant an early start to mushroom hunting season, which is set to last until the end of next month.

Mushroom gathering in the Alpes-Maritimes is not just an autumn tradition going back centuries; it's almost like a secret society with its own code of ethics. It is also a great opportunity for a weekend family outing in the fresh air.

There are literally hundreds of different types of wild mushrooms to be found in the area.

The most common are the *chanterelle*, easily recognisable by their long yellow stem. There are *girolles*, *cepes* and also a group called *sanguin* because they release a red juice like blood when cut. Then there is the *petit gris* and a more rare

variety known as *morille*. There are, of course, also deadly poisonous mushrooms and the golden rule is 'if you don't recognise it, don't pick it'. It's also always a good idea to go with an expert.

Many pharmacies have charts showing the edible and the dangerous, and pharmacists are usually happy to advise on unidentified specimens.

The fungi are usually to be found in woodlands under oak and pine trees and in mossy low grass areas.

Popular places for the 'hunt' include the Col de Turini north of Nice, St Vallier north of Cannes, the Parc de Valmasque near Sophia Antipolis and even on parts of Les Iles de Lérins.

People tend to go early in the morning. Mushroom etiquette dictates that they never intrude on another group's 'patch' and nobody ever gives away the secret of where they found their mushrooms!

All that is required for the 'hunt' is a good pair of hiking boots, a knife and a wicker basket.

Local experts Robert Russo and Serge Belda, who came home with armfuls after a recent expedition, say: "It's great fun, a kind of a hike with a purpose and it becomes a game."

The mushrooms can be frozen or dried until use. If drying, add some black pepper corns to protect the delicacy.

"They add a wonderful flavour to any meal", says Serge.

"Sauté them in olive oil, parsley and garlic and don't overcook them. They are wonderful for all sorts of sauces with fish and meat."



STUMPED... damp places, like near this rotting tree stump, are favourite spots to find fungi

Maher jurors chosen

A JURY has been selected for the Monaco trial of American nurse Ted Maher.

Former commando Maher stands accused of causing the deaths of his boss, billionaire banker Edmond Safra, 67, and nurse Vivian Torrente, 57, in a fire at Safra's Monaco penthouse in December 1999.

Donald Mannasse, Mahers' Monaco-based lawyer, told *The Riviera Gazette* "There is no reason to doubt the impartiality or conscience of the jury. They are sworn in under oath and will take the evidence as they see it."

"There is to be a full examination of everything that occurred on that night. Much has not been revealed in the public arena and has remained secret for Ted's benefit."

"Ted is confident that there are many elements in the case file that considerably diminish his responsibility," he continued.

The trial begins on November 21.

Spirit calls on schools

RED PEAR Theatre's latest production is touring local English-speaking schools this week in an initiative to take theatre to younger people.

Illona Linthwaite has performed her one-woman show *The Spirit of Aphra Benn* at Valbonne's CIV school and Nice's International School, and is today holding a theatre workshop at Mougins School.

Said Illona "I'm so happy to have had the chance to bring Aphra Behn and her unique view of womanhood to these schools — but it's the first time in my life I've ever started a per-



SPIRITED... Illona, right, discusses Aphra Behn's life with Terminale IB students at Valbonne's CIV school

formance at 8am!" Tickets for public performances in Antibes this Friday and Saturday night are available at €20 from Red Pear on 04 93 61 01 71.



FOUR PLAY... The Professional Yachtsmen's Association held its second annual golf tournament at La Grande Bastide in Opio on Friday. Overall winner was Nicolai Shur, with Chris Russell taking the prize for the best ladies' score. Our photo shows the Kingdom Hookers team, from the megayacht Kingdom, exhibiting their usual yachtie fun-day restraint.

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MAFIA DON SENTENCED

ITALIAN Mafia boss Luigi Facchineri was sent to prison for eight months by a Grasse court on Monday.

Facchineri, 36, was arrested at the Cannes apartment of Roberto Peregalli on August 31. A search of the flat netted five pistols and two machine guns, plus counterfeit identity papers and a large amount of cash.



Facchineri told police his name was jailed in Grasse Angelo Galizzi and handed over a fake ID card as proof.

Both men maintained their innocence throughout the trial.

Facchineri told the court he didn't know "why I am here with this other Italian, whom I met by chance this summer on the beach in Cannes." However, Italian police say he is one of the country's thirty most dangerous Mafia bosses.

Peregalli, 48, is wanted in Italy on drugs charges. He told the heavily guarded court he was in France to improve his fragile health, and that the guns were found in the boot of a car he bought from an old Italian man he'd met at the casino in Juan-les-Pins.

The court sentenced Perrigalli to 18 months and €900 in fines for possession of guns and using a false ID.

Facchineri got eight months and a €2,500 fine for using false identity documents. He now faces extradition to Italy, where he has already been sentenced to thirteen years in prison.



DOWN UNDER... Australian cycle racer Joe Doran is homeless after his yacht was blown onto rocks at St Jean Cap Ferrat last Friday

Yacht wrecked at Cap Ferrat

A YACHT owner has been left homeless after his boat was wrecked at Saint Jean Cap Ferrat last week, writes Alison Craddock.

Australian Joe Doran, 36, is now racing to organise recovery of former Fastnet winner *Seaquiver* before more bad weather finishes her off.

Doran was out of town on Friday when a sudden *mistral* wind forced his unattended boat onto rocks in the rade de Villefranche. It is thought the yacht's anchor dragged, allowing her to drift onto the shore.

Bystanders raised the alarm but, although Pompiers rushed to the

scene, it was too late to save her.

"I was in Aix en Provence for the day, to see a specialist about an injury I got in a cycling accident in England three weeks ago," Mr Doran told *The Riviera Gazette*.

"I'm normally always on board as I live on the boat - and had I been there I could have dropped another anchor.

"I hadn't heard heavy winds were forecast, so I just asked a friend to keep an eye on the boat. But it all happened so fast that by the time he knew what was happening it was too late."

"*Seaquiver*", a 15-metre Camper and Nicholson wooden sailboat, was

built in 1965 and won the Fastnet race the same year.

Mr Doran, a well-known cycle racer who won the 252-kilometre Ardèche Bicycle Marathon in 1998, bought *Seaquiver* in 1988. He brought her back to France for restoration after spending two years sailing around Israel and Turkey.

"The boat was everything to me - it was my home," said Joe, who only has third party insurance cover.

"I am hoping that someone may come forward to help save her, as it would be such a shame to see this famous boat destroyed" he added.

British weather foils French spiderman

RAIN foiled French 'spiderman' Alain Robert's attempt to climb London's Canary Wharf Tower last week.

Robert, 40, climbs without ropes or other equipment. He has scaled over thirty skyscrapers, including the Empire State Building, the Eiffel Tower and Malaysia's Petronas Twin Towers.

He got three-quarters of the way up the 50-floor building, Britain's tallest, before the wet and slippery surface forced him to abandon the attempt.

Pulp friction

JARVIS Cocker, lead singer of British band Pulp, is moving from London to France for a 'safer' life.

"Why do you think I'm moving like a rat deserting a sinking ship? France never gets involved in war. As soon as the first bullet's fired, we surrender," Cocker told *Snug* magazine.

Firemen out

LOCAL firefighters and paramedics this week started an indefinite 'emergencies only' strike. Sapeurs-Pompiers in the Alpes-Maritimes want their pay and working conditions improved.

100 police nab six

SIX people believed to be behind over a hundred thefts from cars near Gourdon and the Gorges du Loup were arrested in dawn raids involving a hundred gendarmes on Tuesday.

Police found large quantities of suspected stolen goods at homes in the Saint Laurent du Var, Cagnes-sur-Mer, La Colle-sur-Loup triangle. A large sum of money was found at one, an apartment in St Laurent du Var. The suspects face up to 7 years in prison if convicted.

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My Riviera

Dr Nathalie Stern tells Jenny Paul why homeopathy in Valbonne beats general practice in New York...

“I'm originally from Lille, where I trained to be a conventional doctor, a general practitioner specialising in Ear, Nose and Throat.

It was there that I met my half-French, half-American husband, Jordan. He dragged me off to New York at a time when I had only just finished my studies, was pregnant and spoke little English.

I soon grew to love it, although I had to retrain in American medicine.

During my internship, I took up an offer for French-speaking doctors to learn about homeopathy – I really took to the holistic approach, although I'd trained twice as a 'traditional' doctor in two countries.

But last year Jordan decided he had had enough of the American healthcare system. As a surgeon, he'd have to wait half a day to get the go-ahead from the insurance company to perform a simple procedure on a patient. It was all just too much.

So we moved here to Valbonne, with our kids, Lucas, ten and Mia, three. Both sets of grandparents are nearby, which is helpful, and Valbonne is very cosmopolitan now.

I loved the vibrant energy of New York and miss it so much.

It's so different here, but I know that the Riviera is a better place to bring up the kids. Our quality of life is way better. And



RELAXED... Nathalie Stern enjoys the simple pleasures of life in Valbonne

village life is friendly, which is nice.

Eventually I adjusted, and did a French homeopathic exam. I now treat children with

chronic illnesses, like asthma, eczema and sleeping or behavioural disorders, but what I do is complementary to traditional medicine... don't get me

wrong – if a child turned up at my practice with meningitis, I'd send him straight down the hospital for antibiotics!

I'm so excited to have opened my own practice in Valbonne last week.

Homeopathic medicine is interesting in that it takes an individual approach, in that it should be tailored to each patient.

Take an onion for example: it makes your eyes run. If a patient showed symptoms of runny eyes we'd give them a tiny dose of onion, to work in harmony with the body. It's all about treating like with like.

So, each patient gets a customised treatment, depending on diet, personality and many other things.

That said, there are 'must haves' for the home: arnica for bruises, apis to stop the itching of insect bites and chamomilla, for babies when they are teething.

There are many ways of improving your life in this stressful world – just the smell of a good meal makes you feel good.

It is the simple pleasures like this, and the fact I can no longer go to the supermarket at 2am and instead have time to spend enjoying my family that gets me.

This 'joie de vivre' is what I've come to love about the Riviera.



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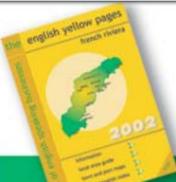
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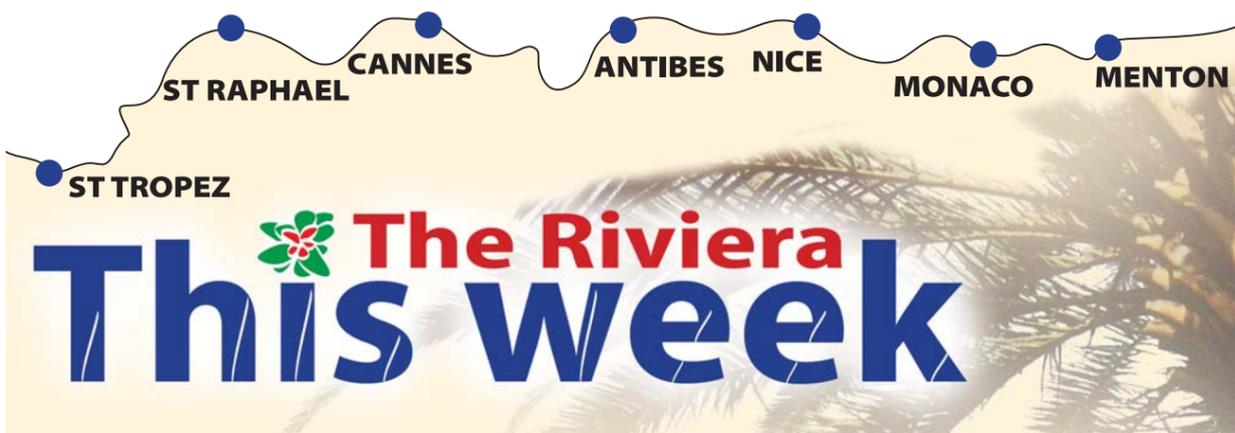
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What's On and Where To Go...



Thursday 24

- Film music supremo **Ennio Morricone** is in concert this evening at the Salle Nikaïa, Nice at 8.30pm. Tickets cost €40, €50, €60 and €91. Call 08 20 02 04 06 to book.
- Contestants for the 37th **Antibes Azur Rally** arrive in town today. Modern and historic cars are taking part in three days of competition, including 16 special stages – four by night. Tomorrow's route takes the drivers from Antibes to Greolieres and back, Saturday sees them go to Valberg and back. Sunday's leg sees the cars heading out again to Greolieres and then back for the grand finish in Antibes.
- The Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo performs **music by Beethoven and Shostakovich** at 8:30pm tonight at the Musée Océanographique, Monaco. Tickets cost €15, call +377 93 15 36 00 to book.
- The Festi'Cant **music festival** opens today with concerts taking place in the churches and towns of the Paillon valley; Berre-les-Alpes tonight, Contes tomorrow night, Lucéram on Saturday night and Peille on Sunday afternoon. Call 04 93 79 32 67 for a full programme.

Friday 25

- **Lisa Stansfield** is in concert tonight at the Palm Beach Casino & Hotel, Cannes at 8:30pm. Call 04 92 98 62 77 to book, or get tickets on the door from 7:30pm.
- Les Animaux de Basse-Cour 2002, with **farm animals** of all types on display and the chance for kids to get up close to them, opens at 1:30pm today at Grasse's Espace Chiris. The event is also open tomorrow from 8:30am to 6:30pm. Entry is free for under-12s, €5 for others. Call 04 93 36 66 66 for info.
- Bargain hunters should head down to St Tropez for the town's **annual mega-market**, the Grande Braderie de Saint Tropez. It's open daily from 9am to 7pm until October 29, 2pm to 7pm on Sunday. Call 04 94 97 45 21 for info.
- The François Bourass Trio and André Leroux play **jazz** at the MJC Picaud, Cannes from 9:30pm. Call 04 93 06 29 90 for info.
- Quatuor Huun Huur, a **Mongolian music** quartet, performs at the Musée des Arts Asiatique, Nice tonight at 7pm. Call 04 92 29 37 00 for info and to book.
- Red Pear Theatre presents 'The Spirit of Aphra Behn' tonight and tomorrow night at the Antibe Theatre, Antibes. "A gem of restoration sorcery, a **huge hit at the Edinburgh Fringe** and a tour de force for Illona Linthwaite who portrays a sassy, sexy poet and spy... what more could you want?" says Red Pear's Hilary King. Tickets cost €20, call 04 93 61 01 71 to book.
- Continuing today are the Antibes Azur Rally and Festi'Cant.

Saturday 26

- The **Salon des Enfants** opens today at the Espace Fontvieille, Monaco until October 29. Toys, activities, kids clothes, furniture and soft furnishings, games, exhibitions and all things fun for kids are on offer. There are over 100 stands, 28,000 people visited last year. Entry is free for under-7s, the event is open 10am to 7pm daily. Call +377 97 98 50 00 for info.



MOBY... playing in Nice on Tuesday night

- American **Rodeo** comes to La Palestre in Le Cannet this weekend with two shows, at 8:30pm tonight and 3pm on Sunday. Tickets cost €27.50 for adults, €17.29 for children. Call 04 93 46 48 88 to book.
- Le Cannet hosts Rocheville à l'Italienne today from 10am to 6pm in Place Foch and other locations. The event celebrates **all things Italian**, including food and drink, cars and music. Call 04 93 69 21 71 for info.
- The 8th **Festival de Blues** concludes tonight at the Salle Nikaïa, with performances by Willy Deville and Calvin Russell. Tickets cost €20. Call 04 93 19 37 40 to book.
- Relive the 1970s tonight at the Casino Ruhl, Nice with a disco and live performances by disco maestros **Boney M and Imagination**. Tickets cost €32 and the show begins at 9pm. Call 04 93 87 95 87 for tickets.
- Continuing today are the Antibes Azur Rally, Festi'Cant, Les Animaux de Basse-Cour, the Grande Braderie de Saint Tropez and the Spirit of Aphra Behn.

Sunday 27

- Clocks **went back one hour** last night
- National **sheepdog trials** take place today at the Domaine des Courmettes, 4km outside Tourrettes-sur-Loup, on the road to Grasse. The trials begin at 8:30am and continue until dark. Thirty sheepdogs and their owners are

taking part, entry is free of charge and there'll be refreshments and stalls.

- **Chestnut festivals** continue across the region today. Make it to Collobrières in the Var in time for the last day of its festival. Throughout the village there are food, wine and craft stalls – including stands devoted to the ubiquitous chestnuts – and street entertainment. Smaller, local events are also being held in the mountain villages north of Nice including Utelle, Roure-sur-Tinée, Lantosque and Saint-Sauveur-sur-Tinée
- Head to Saint-Jeannet today for the annual **Fête des Vignerons & des Agriculteurs**. The festival takes place in the streets of the old town from 10am to 4pm and includes traditional and folk music, provençal dancing and wine tastings. Local wine and food producers will be displaying their wares.
- Offenbach's **opera** La Fille du Tambour Major opens at 2:30pm today at the Opéra de Nice, with further performances on October 29 and 30 at 8pm. Tickets are between €7 and €82, call 04 92 17 40 44 to book.
- Continuing today are the Antibes Azur Rally, Festi'Cant, the Grande Braderie de Saint Tropez, the Salon des Enfants and Rodeo.

Monday 28

- Continuing today are the Grande Braderie de Saint Tropez and the Salon des Enfants

Tuesday 29

- **Moby** is in concert at the Palais Nikaïa, Nice tonight at 8:30pm.
- The Festival de Marionnettes **puppet festival** begins in Cannes today, until November 2, with a series of children's plays and performances. Tickets for each show cost €6, contact the ticket office at the Palais des Festivals for info on 04 92 98 62 77.
- Continuing today are the Grande Braderie de Saint Tropez, the Salon des Enfants, La Fille du Tambour Major

Wednesday 30

- The Cannes branch of the **British Association** is holding its Autumn lunch today at the Oasis Restaurant, between Golfe Juan and Juan-les-Pins. Tickets are €26; call 04 93 77 77 40 to book for lunch or to find out more about joining the association.
- The annual Festival Mondial de l'Image Sous-Marine, a major **underwater photographic and film festival** which attracted 800 entries from 41 countries in 2001, opens today at the Palais des Congrès, Juan-les-Pins until November 3. 24,000 visitors attended the exhibition last year. Call 04 93 61 45 45 or visit www.underwater-festival.com for opening times.
- The final performance of La Fille du Tambour Major takes place tonight.

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	Thursday 24	Friday 25	Saturday 26	Sunday 27	Monday 28	Tuesday 29
AM	10C Sunny	14C Partly Cloudy	13C Partly Cloudy	11C Sunny	12C Sunny	14C Partly Cloudy
PM	20C Partly Cloudy	21C Partly Cloudy	20C Partly Cloudy	22C Sunny	22C Sunny	19C Partly Cloudy

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