RIVIERA residents sweltered then shivered earlier this week as the weather, ever changeable in April, went from one extreme to the other.

Bikinis were the order of the day on the beaches and on the ski slopes on Sunday as the temperature topped 20°C for the first time this year.

“We had new snow at Isola, but at the same time it was hot enough to ski in a bikini,” brave Marjorie Boulot of Isola’s Tourist Office told The Riviera Gazette. “Normally I don’t go skiing in a bikini, but my boss thought it would be a great publicity stunt,” Majorie added.

But the weather turned in the early hours of Monday morning and the region woke up to grey skies and major tailbacks in the Villeneuve-Loubet area as strong winds caused freak waves to breach the RN98 coast road yet again, closing it and causing gridlock on surrounding roads.

And by late Monday night, the temperature had dropped to record breaking lows as a cold front swept in from Scandinavia leaving much of the Riviera coated by a thick layer of hail and the ski resorts, winding down for the end of the season, covered in fresh snow. In Nice, thermometers registered a low of 4.9 degrees and between 60cm and 70cm of snow fell at Isola 2000 and Auron.

“Spring is not here yet,” Mathew Ajeu from Meteo-France warned. “The cold snap has been due to this wind coming in from Scandinavia, but it could very well continue to be cold for the rest of the month,” he added.

April is always very variable, “like a young woman”, Gerard Amiel from Nice Airport’s weather centre told The Gazette. “We say in France, ‘le mois d’Avril, c’est comme une fille’. One day, it’s hot and the next it’s cold and you never know which way the weather will turn.”

In Villeneuve-Loubet, the council was caught out by the unseasonably high waves. The warm weather forecast led the roads department to remove the winter anti-flood barriers from the coast road only last weekend, just before high winds led to the road being inundated.

“We have to get the beaches ready for summer and clean them up for the tourists. It was unfortunate, and we have to do a lot of work to clean the beach and get rid of all the rubbish that the waves washed up,” Marie Paul Sentime at Villeneuve-Loubet town hall told The Gazette.

INUNDATED ... The RN98 on Monday, as gridlocked drivers fumed in huge traffic jams

PLUCKY ... Marjorie braves Isola’s slopes

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REVIEWS

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Getting to Serravalle Outlet couldn’t be easier – it’s just a couple of hours up the motorway, in northern Italy: Take the A8 to the Italian border, then follow the Aso to Genova. Follow the A7 from Genova towards Milano and leave at the Serravalle Scrivia exit (local road SS15 bis). You’re there!

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Serravalle outlet

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Kite surfer's railway hangup

TRAINS in the region were delayed for two hours on Friday when a kite surfer's 'wing' tangled in overhead high-voltage cables on the coastal line in west Cannes.

The unknown kite surfer lost control of his rig whilst surfing off Cannes' Plage du Midi, when a strong gust swept him inland across the beach and the coast road, and deposited him on the Marseille-Ventimiglia train line.

His kite then took to the air again, wrapping itself around the 25,000 volt cables that supply power to the trains.

The hapless surfer ran off, leaving local firemen and SNCF engineers to remove the fabric wing whilst twenty trains were held at local stations.

Barkeep in court for serving drunk who went on to kill

A CAFÉ OWNER who served a visibly drunk man who then went on to kill three men in a car accident was dapped with a two month suspended prison sentence last week.

Marc Baudin, who owns a bar in the tiny village of Varanges, near Dijon, served Philippe Schehr with alcohol on October 3 last year. After he left the bar, Schehr, who had already lost his licence in a prior drink-driving incident, dashed his vehicle into another car, causing the death of its three young passengers. Schehr had been handed a four year prison sentence.

Café owners in the Alpes-Maritimes have reacted angrily to Baudin's penalty: “This is the first time in France that a bar owner has been taken to court for serving someone who is drunk and then has driven,” Hubert Bovin, President of the Cafetiers et Limonadiers association told The Riviera Gazette.

“I don't want this to become the norm. I am here to serve my customers and be congenial. I am not here as a doctor to assess whether or not my clients are ill.”

Hubert Boivin, President of the Cafetiers et Limonadiers association.

Over 59,000 people are now in prison in France – an all time high.

Prison population for their holidays instead of from French nationals visiting the region for their holidays instead of threats of violent protest action. says the Interior Ministry.

Officers are warning that the threat of violent protest action.

The Easter holidays are the reason for their holidays instead of threats of violent protest action. says the Interior Ministry.

The owners hope to get the restaurant back to its former glory before a good year.

Rosy summer ahead

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An extra boost is expected to come from French nationals visiting the region for their holidays instead of travelling abroad.

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**NEWS**

**The Riviera Gazette**

Thursday 10 April 2003

**NICE prepares for dirty bombs**

**THE CENTRE of Nice was transformed into a scene from a horror movie last week when emergency services took part in France’s first public nuclear disaster simulation.**

Seventy specialist personnel from across France, including thirty doctors, took part in an exercise which simulated the aftermath of a ‘dirty bomb’ terrorist attack in Nice city centre. The simulation allowed the emergency teams to put into practice what they’ve learned in the classroom and find out how well theory translated into practice.

So-called dirty bombs are seen as an increasingly likely terrorist threat, and use conventional explosives to scatter relatively small amounts of radioactive material over difficult-to-clean urban areas. Authorities expect terrorists to use them to cause chaos rather than destruction.

**Chirac says sorry to the Queen as hate graffiti spreads to the Riviera**

ANTI-US graffiti appeared in the region this week, as President Chirac sent an official apology to the Queen after obscene anti-British graffiti was daubed on the cenotaph at Etaples.

In Sophia Antipolis vandals painted ‘US Go Home’ in large red letters under a sign welcoming visitors and workers to the technology park. And further anti-American graffiti has been spotted at Nice’s airport. Unlike at Etaples, where the graffiti was cleared off sight immediately, the Sophia graffiti was still there several days later and action to remove it was only taken after The Riviera Gazette asked why it had not yet been cleaned off.

“Yes, I saw it, it’s terrible,” Catherine Gentil of Côte d’Azur lawyers explained. “Of course, he won’t be able to pay it at the moment.”

Workers at the technology park, home to many American companies, reacted angrily to the appearance of the graffiti and the local authorities’ slow reaction to removing it. “I’m going to contact the director of the cleaning service and ask why it had not yet been cleaned off.”

**Monaco prisoner’s €207,000 bill**

AMERICAN nurse T ed Maher’s run of bad luck continued all over again as he was put back to guard the rest of his sentence he may serve in Monaco to skincare the rest of his sentence he may serve in Monaco to skincare the rest of his sentence he may serve in Monaco to serve the rest of his sentence he may serve in Monaco to serve the rest of his sentence he may serve in Monaco to serve the rest of his sentence he may serve in Monaco to serve the rest of his sentence.

The former commando escaped from Monaco’s prison in January after getting ten years for starting the penthouse fire which killed billionaire banker Edmond Safra in 1999. He is now being charged for the cost of his trial.

A whopping US$2,578,000 in prize money is up for grabs, the Spanish players are tipped to be tricky to beat on the Monte Carlo Country Club’s clay courts, but favourite in 2002 champion Juan Carlos Ferrero.

France number one Sebastien Grosjean, a semi-finalist in 2002 and 2001, is 2002 champion Juan Carlos Ferrero. Stars Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne and Carrie-Anne Moss are all expected in town for the gala evening, along with newcomer Jada Pinkett Smith.

**Tennis stars arrive**

ANDRE AGASSI, Tim Henman and Pete Sampras are among 52 top tennis players arriving in Monaco this weekend for the Monte-Carlo Rolex Masters tournament.

A whopping US$2,578,000 in prize money is up for grabs, the Spanish players are tipped to be tricky to beat on the Monte Carlo Country Club’s clay courts, but favourite in 2002 champion Juan Carlos Ferrero.

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**‘Matrix’ sequel to premiere at Cannes**

THE long awaited sequel to cult film ‘The Matrix’ will get its world premiere at the Cannes film festival on May 18.

Stars Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne and Carrie-Anne Moss are all expected in town for the gala evening, along with newcomer Jada Pinkett Smith.

The Matrix Reloaded, which will be shown ‘out of competition’, is the second films in a trilogy. The Matrix, which is one of the best selling DVDs of all time, attracted plaudits for its new and innovative special effects.

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Rugger ruckers risk penalties

Magistrates have applied for international arrest warrants for Welsh international rugby player Gareth Thomas and three rugby union team mates, writes Jenny Paul.

The four have been placed under judicial investigation for assault by magistrates in Pau, in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques. The latest move comes after they failed to appear at a hearing in the town on January 31.

Thomas, Bridgend assistant coach Richard Webster, and players Andy Moore and Phil Booth are accused of being involved in a scuffle in October, following a Challenge Cup match they lost 18-6 to Pau.

"Exposed" Investigators say Booth started the brawl by exiling himself to local girl Colline Arnaud, 22, at the El Barrio club in Lescar. When Arnaud’s fiancé Jean-Michel Gonthier, 24, tried to intervene they say, other members of the Bridgend team got violent. Gonthier was punched and he ended up taking ten days off work to recover.

Booth accepts he was "exposed" but denies the charges. The reason Booth was set to play bar counter with his pants around his ankles was because "someone had pulled them off from behind," says his lawyer William Charter.

Thomas was in the country as recently as two weeks ago, when he appeared at the Stade de France to support his club, co-signing for Cardiff. The home team won 33-5.

French Gump kicked out of Oz

A FRENCH Forrest Gump faces deportation after being accused of hitching rides and scamming roadhouses into giving him food and accommodation.

Sylvain Quenel, 20, claims he is running around the world for peace. He started from his home in Toulouse two years ago and has so far travelled 30,000 kilometres through 37 countries including Brazil, Senegal, Greece, Iraq, Nepal and Indonesia.

But the long distance runner has hit a brick wall in Australia.

Authorities in the West Australian town of Eucla suspect him of cheating. They say the distances involved are too large to have been covered on foot – he was spotted in a roadhouse 200km away from Eucla just the day before he arrived in the town – and so they're convinced he is a cheat.

Arrest

As a result police and immigration authorities have become involved and Quenel is now under arrest and faces being deported back to France.

But Quenel’s internet site says his tour involves "No taxi, no bus, no trains, no bikes, no skates – only run and boats" and explains he has chosen to devote his life to protesting against the destruction of the earth and against all wars. He goes on to state: "I prefer to die than participate in the pollution of the planet!"

In the six-time Oscar winning 1994 film Forrest Gump Tom Hanks portrayed the intellectually challenged title character. Forrest Gump was famed for his remark "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get."

A potenti...
My Riviera

‘Resting’ bullion trader Gareth Griffiths talks to Jenny Paul about life on the Cap d’Antibes, singles style...

...I worked in the city all my life when I got offered the chance in 2000 to work in Sophia Antipolis, setting up the trading arm for a South African gold producer.

The guy picked me up in Antibes, we drove to Théoule, and I took one look at the beach and thought ‘this is for me!’

I loved it here because it was such a complete change of lifestyle after London. I was used to twelve hour days and phone calls throughout the night. But after just eight months the firm re-located to South Africa, and I left – or rather I just sort of stayed.

I live on the Cap d’Antibes every time I drive down into Juan the view blows me away.

And I love cooking food. Before I left England, I used to cook cordon bleu casserole food. You knew, just to meet women. I didn’t do so well on that front, but I came away with a real appreciation of French food.

I like cooking anything but fish. I love the fact that I can go to the market in Antibes and buy excellent quality cheese, herbs and vegetables. I also love cooking curries – when I first her to the market...
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Motorways

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**Local roads**

**Antibes** The leisure around the car-parks in the old town is closed for extensive works until April 30.

**Beaulieu-sur-Mer** Road works on Blvd Wilson until end of April.

**Biot** Biot/biot line & traffic lights on RD 41 until April 11.

**Cannes** Numerous roadworks in city centre expect delays until April 30.

**Menton** Long-term delays on Blvd Carnot during road widening works.

**Nice** Maritime: Sun 20th fixed until June 5. Ovens is RE9 and RD 409.

**St Jean-Cap Ferrat** Fix flat traffic lights on RD 217 until May 10.

**Villefranche-sur-Mer** Traffic lights & 50km limit on RD 218 until April 30.

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All ads must be legal, decent and honest. We reserve the right to omit or alter ads. We reserve the right to alter any published offer if free ads run only. Payment due with booking. Free ads will be published in first available issue. Ad deadline: Monday, midday.
What’s On and Where To Go...

Thursday 10
- The 9th Jumping International de Monte-Carlo show jumping competition began today at 14:00 at the Palais des Congrès, Grasse.
- The 15th Festival du Bateau d’Occasion et du Motoannuaire – a second hand boat sale – takes place in the old village of Grasse on April 11 and 12 from 10:00 to 19:00, today until Monday. Tel 04 93 64 80 09.

Friday 11
- Local school-break up for two weeks of Easter holidays. Tel: 06 81 99 98 21.
- LOTT Buses to Cannes, Grasse, Proence and Varanne at 16.30.
- Continuing today are the Jumping International and the Festival du Bateau.

Saturday 12
- The Monte Carlo Tennis tournament starts today. Tim Hemman, Andre Agassi et al will be there. Call 04 93 41 30 15 or tickets: 04 90 70 70 00.
- The olive growing town of Tucancence is holding a Salon de l’Olive today and tomorrow with guided tours of olive oil mills. Exhibitions: 04 93 26 92 93.
- Antique lovers head to Aix en Provence for the 21st Salon Antiquités-Brocante du Vieux Aix, an annual market fair open 11:00-18:00 daily until April 17. Tel 04 94 92 90 50.
- Vénusia, an exhibition with everything to do with beauty, health and fitness, is on today and tomorrow at the Palais des Congrès, Grasse. Entry: £3. Tel 04 93 86 86 66.

Sunday 13
- Head to Draguignan today or tomorrow to check out a wide selection of camper vans at the Salon de l’Occasion Auto, Business in France’ at 12:00 at the Hotel Omega, Bar-sur-Loup is celebrating the Fête de l’Oranger today in the old village with provençal guided tours, a women’s self protection class and everything to do with oranges from 10:00 to 18:00. Tel: 04 93 42 72 21.
- Continuing today are the Jumping International, the Monte-Carlo Tennis Masters and Expofleurs.

Monday 14
- LOTT Buses to Cannes, Grasse, Kikreo, Stockholm, Tel Aviv and Warsaw at 16.30.
- Continuing today are the Salon de l’Olive, the Monte-Carlo Tennis Masters, Vénusia, the Salon du Camping Car, the Nico Polooy exhibition and Expofleurs.

Tuesday 15
- A women’s self protection class is being held on the beach in Aix en Provence, open to all ages and fitness levels. Call Simon on 06 22 82 16 18.
- Continuing today are the Monte-Carlo Tennis Masters and Expofleurs.

Wednesday 16
- LOTT Buses to Cannes, Grasse, Kikreo and Warsaw at 16.30.
- Continuing today are the Monte-Carlo Tennis Masters and Expofleurs.

Thursday 17
- The British Chamber of Commerce presents ‘An International Lawyer’s Guide to Doing Business in France’ at 12:00 at the Hotel Omegon, Sophia Antipolis, followed by lunch. Tickets are £30, call 04 99 29 26 00 to book.
- The world premiere of L’Oise rive à l’autre, a new ballet from Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo choreographed by Jean-Christophe Maillot is at 10:30 in the Salle des Princes, Monaco with further performances on April 18-22. Tickets from £26, call +377 99 99 3010 to book.

Friday 18
- Today is Good Friday, a normal working day and public holiday.
- LOTT Buses to Copenhagen, Gdansk, Prague, Stockholm and Varanne at 16.30.
- Continuing today are d’une rive à l’autre, the Monte-Carlo Tennis Masters and Expofleurs.

Saturday 19
- St Irish Week in Villefranche-sur-Mer, with the local restaurants serving typical Irish cuisine, a lecture by the Consul General of Ireland on April 22 and an exhibition of photographs of Ireland in the citadel. Tel 04 93 01 73 84.
- A circus comes from Quebec, the Cirque Één, is at the Grand Auditorium, Cannes tonight at 20:30. Call 04 93 32 25 54 for tickets.
- Football: Monaco FC plays Strasbourg at Stade Louis II at 20:00. Tel +377 93 05 37 44 for tickets.

Sunday 20
- Today is Easter Sunday.
- LOTT Buses to Copenhagen, Gdansk, Krakow, Stockholm, Tel Aviv and Warsaw at 16.30.
- Continuing today are d’une rive à l’autre, the Monte-Carlo Tennis Masters and Expofleurs.