MONACO'S Princess Stephanie checked out of the palace and into a hotel this month, amid speculation that yet another love affair with a member of the palace staff had been the final straw for her father, HSH Prince Rainier. 

The Princess' past lovers include her bodyguard, a barman, a butler, and an elephant trainer. This time, it is a palace gardener who is alleged to be the object of her affection. 

The unhappy Princess, 38, was spotted arriving with eyes "reddened with tears" at pal David Coulthard's Columbus Hotel in Fontvieille, accompanied by her three children and a set of Louis Vuitton suitcases. Paris Match claims Stephanie's stay at the hotel followed a row with her father, Prince Rainier, after he discovered she'd been having a bit on the side with his gardener, "the magazine claims, before he "chased her out of the palace. " 

But Prince Rainier's office has issued a strongly worded denial. "Certain publications have stated that Princess Stephanie was chased from the Palace by her father the Sovereign Prince. The Royal Palace refutes, with great strength, these allegations, which are without any foundation and are designed purely to cause suffering to His Royal Highness the Prince and his family," says the statement. 

But it stops short of specifically denying that the Princess had had a dalliance with one of the Royal staff, or making any reference to whether father and daughter had argued. "The Princess has now left the hotel," a spokesman from The Columbus told The Riviera Gazette on Tuesday. But the Palace refuses to confirm or deny if she is now in residence there. "There is nothing further the Palace wishes to say that is not already in the press statement," spokeswoman Katia Zykowski told The Gazette, when asked this week. 

The Princess' past lovers include her bodyguard Daniel Ducruet, whom she briefly married in 1995 after the birth of their children Louis, 9, and Pauline, 7. The marriage hit the rocks when Ducruet was caught on camera canoodling with a Belgian model who carried the accolade "Miss Bare Breasts of Belgium". 

Next on the list was her Head of Security, Jean Raymond Gottlieb. Then, seven months after their romance became public, Stephanie revealed she was pregnant with daughter Camille, now five. Stephanie has always refused to publicly name the father. 

After Camille's birth the Princess went to a local mountain resort to escape media attention, but promptly fell for Auron barman Pierre Pinelli. She then embarked on an infamous affair with Swiss elephant trainer Franco Knie, with whom she and the children travelled in a caravan. 

The Princess split up with Knie in February last year and returned to the 253-room palace. She was then linked with her Father's butler Richard Lucas and now, it seems, a palace gardener. 

Hollywood heart-throb Rob Lowe and Manchester United goalkeeper Fabien Barthez have also been linked with the Princess in the past. 

The bodyguard, the barman, the butler, the elephant trainer and now the gardener? 

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McArthur Glen’s purpose-built Serravalle Outlet is the largest designer outlet mall in Europe. In this ‘City of Bargains’ you’ll find the world’s best-known names in fashion, sport and homewares.

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**And Riviera Gazette readers get even deeper discounts! Bring this advert with you to claim a special 10% additional discount card at the reception desk when you arrive.**

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 Ato to Genova. Follow the Ay from Genova towards Milano and leave at the Serravalle Scrivia exit (local road SS35 bis). You’re there!
**Car club’s flying start**

FOUNDER members of The Riviera Classic Car Club met up for a run from Grasse to Lac de St Cassien on Sunday April 13.

According to organiser Jon King, the club is open to owners of classic and prestige cars, and “is all about relaxed and informal runs in the countryside, followed by a good meal.”

It’s not full of classic car bores.” Dilip Soni, a trust consultant based in London and South Africa, told The Riviera Gazette “It’s great to meet other people with a shared interest. I’ve got a 1966 Mercedes SL, and I’m looking forward to bringing it on future runs.”

“Indeed, I’m going to programme all my overseas trips around the club’s meeting dates!” he continued.

Not all the cars were old, though. Andy, a yacht skipper from Villefranche, persuaded his boss to lend him a Ferrari 355 Spyder for the day. “It’s one of the benefits of living in the shadow of the rich,” he quipped.

Anyone who’d like to go to the next meeting can call Jon on 04 93 36 81 58.

**Windy outlook looms for sea views**

AN ENVIRONMENT Agency plan for green electricity generation on the Riviera could result in a cluster of wind turbines standing in the sea between Nice and Menton.

The giant windmills would have to be less than three kilometres from land according to organiser Jon King.

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**Scandinavia. Now a LOT closer than you think**

The world is fast becoming a smaller place. LOT Polish Airlines now flies from Nice to Dublin, Stockholm and Copenhagen via Warsaw six times a week. Which means faster and convenient connections whether you’re flying on business or to see family and friends. Combine that with our famous Polish hospitality and flying comes alive. Visit us, of course, Scandinavia, LOT Polish Airlines Nice: 04 93 21 48 90 Miles & More*

**Gay porn comes to TV**

THE country’s first gay TV channel has been given the go-ahead by French broadcast watchdog, the Higher Audiovisual Council. Pink TV, a subscription-based cable station, will also be allowed to broadcast pornographic content – but it only between midnight and 5am.

**Concorde sadness**

OPRO’s Beatrice Vialle, the first female Concorde pilot, expressed “very great sadness” at hearing the news, announced last week, that Air France and British Airways were retiring the pioneering supersonic airliners.

**Leccy price rise**

BUDGET MINISTER Alain Lambert announced last week that the price of electricity is likely to go up, with consumers likely to receive higher EDL bills from this summer.

**Fakes kill**

CIGARETTE packets will soon display bigger and bolder warnings in a heavy black-edged frame. Labels like ‘light’ that suggest the contents are less harmful will also be banned.

CIGARETTE packets will soon dis-...
News

RIGHT WING firebrand Jean-Marie Le Pen was in Nice this week for the Front National’s party conference. Le Pen was re-elected President of the far-right party unopposed, but he later caused waves of dissent in the party ranks by shooing in daughter Marine as one of the party’s four vice residents, in the face of lack of support for her from the other party members.

Le Pen shocked France when he ran Lionel Jospin out of the presidential contest last year to go head to head with Jacques Chirac for the Presidency. Le Pen, 76, garnered over 28% of the vote in the Alpes-Maritimes and has vowed to run for president again in the next election, scheduled for 2007.

Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy visited the area to support the fight against crime last week — as the third prison breakout in as many months threatened to throw his tough anti-crime strategy into disarray.

In the latest breakout, three prisoners escaped by helicopter from a prison in Laynes, SE France last week. In the daring escape, two thugs hijacked a helicopter from a nearby airfield and ordered the pilot to take them to the prison. A masked man then abseiled from the chopper, cut through security fencing above the exercise yard with a chainsaw and helped two of the lags to climb aboard.

The gang then rescued the third man from another area of the jail before flying off to a waiting getaway car.

In March, a gang used a rocket launcher to blast open the doors of a prison in Southern Paris just a few weeks after a convicted murderer escaped from a Corsican jail after sawing through the bars of his cell.

In Nice, the minister opened the new police station in Saint-Augustin and awarded medals to the six police specials involved in ensuring the safe deactivation of the bomb found at the Nice Treasury in October 2002.

M Sarkozy then moved on to Cannes. He inspected the state of the art video surveillance system installed in the city centre in January. The system, said to be second only to Monaco’s, uses 40 colour cameras and has helped detect over 250 crimes in its first three months of operation. By 2004, at least 87 cameras will be in place.

M Sarkozy also found time to meet the Cannes Ladies Volleyball team, recent winners of the European cup.

Minister Sarkozy visits the Riviera

Learning French doesn’t have to be difficult. In the right hands, you can pick up the basics in no time. Our professional bi-lingual teachers use a proven and efficient method to teach you the language — and you’ll learn a lot about the culture as you go along.

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- Authentic countryside courses in Provence
- Wine appreciation courses and tasting tours
- Discursive seminars
- Sight-seeing tours in French throughout Provence and the Riviera

Call now to find out how easy it is!}

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Call now to find out how easy it is!}
Nice Jazz Festival gets funky with Jamiroquai

JAMIROQUAI, Robert Plant and Kool and the Gang are just a few of the names set to rock Nice during this summer’s ‘Jazz Fest’. The festival, one of the largest in Europe, is held over eight days and draws over 45,000 visitors every year. Three stages accommodate over 500 performers and celebrate all genres of jazz, from avant-garde to gospel, blues and urban funk.

This year’s festival runs from July 22 to 29 and has a distinctly British flavour. Jamiroquai and flamboyant front man Jay Kay, as notorious for drug and drink fuelled bust-ups with paparazzi as he is for his groovy brand of ‘space funk’, are set to play in Monday night’s line up in the Les Arenas area of town.

Portsmouth lad and 80’s star Joe Jackson will be one of the performers wowing Nice on Tuesday, while Beth Gibbon of Britsol-based band Portishead will be singing on Friday night. Former Led Zeppelin front man Robert Plant will be bringing back memories of those student days to play in Monday night’s line up in the Les Arenas area of town.

Parents demand Roquefort college

LOCAL parents have hit out this week saying the Roquefort les Pins, Valbonne and Opio areas are in dire need of a college for their children. The Conseil General has given the go-ahead to a new college in the Les Lucioles area of Sophia Antipolis, but campaigners say this is too far away.

Online tax returns up

THE number of taxpayers who declared their earnings via the web is up 500% on last year. Despite technical hitches, more than 600,000 tax returns were filed online nationwide.

Inheritance tax

Inheritance tax in France is charged at up to 40 per cent, depending on the relationship between the deceased and the beneficiary. This is payable regardless of the residency of the owner of the property. As a company nominee, this tax can normally be avoided with the correct legal entity ownership structure. This may also provide you with additional planning opportunities for the eventual transfer of the ownership – through a discretionary trust, for example.

Patrimonial tax

This is an annual three per cent tax applicable to French and foreign companies owning real estate in France, where there is no tax treaty and the appropriate declarations have not been made. The charge means that more traditional property holding structures using offshore companies are not recommended.

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FRENCH PROPERTY – MAXIMISE YOUR INVESTMENT

According to a recent survey, half a million Britons own property in France. The overseas property market is booming and on the Côte d’Azur the average price of property is now EUR450,000 – an increase of 50 per cent over the past two years.

Stock market uncertainties have made property an attractive option. But the way in which you purchase your property can have long lasting implications on your wealth. Please research your options before you buy. Purchasing property overseas may increase your liability to capital gains tax, inheritance tax or both, leaving you with an unexpectedly high bill.

To maximise your investment, using a legal entity to purchase high-value properties could reduce or even avoid these tax liabilities. The correct ownership may also provide other benefits including savings on legal fees, transfer taxes, value added taxes and stamp duties on any future sales.

Capital gains tax

Unless you have owned the property for over 22 years, French capital gains tax is payable regardless of your country of residence and is charged for direct ownership or the sale of shares in a property based entity up to 33.3 per cent less relief after two years.

To put this into perspective, a property on the Côte d’Azur purchased two years ago for EUR250,000 may well be worth over EUR500,000. If you sell the property, this would yield a profit of EUR250,000 but also a capital gains tax bill of approximately EUR83,000.

Buying through a structure, however, may mean you can avoid paying capital gains tax. Using a legal French entity held in a Luxembourg SOPARFI (a special type of company combining the commercial and holding benefits of Luxembourg’s tax treaties), the property is sold through the transfer of shares. This means the capital gain is in Luxembourg where there is currently no tax.

Phone masts safe

MOBILE phone masts are not dangerous, according to the environmental security agency (AFSSE). However, while the health fears about the masts are not proven, experts from the agency warn that there are still questions to be answered about long-term effects of holding mobiles against the head.

Online tax returns up

The number of taxpayers who declared their earnings via the web is up 500% on last year. Despite technical hitches, more than 600,000 tax returns were filed online nationwide.

Online declarations were made in the Alpes-Maritimes.
Yacht captain Ian Hawkins talks to Jenny Paul about why making music is better than making money...

When we did realise it was doomsday for all the arrangements, I’ve made in the port next door are going to be ok.

I’m going to leave here and go back to the UK to make that clean break. You have to move on in life. With all the boats around I’d be tempted to come back, I want to put a barrier up, not burn bridges.

So I’m giving up good restaurants and Armani and swapping it for baked beans and Orfam. I’m going to miss loads of things, I’m going to miss the boat and spinning things about down here. I’ll be cooped up and am always out and about.

But after this summer, my Riviera life is over and I’m trying my hand at another which I’m really excited about...

FROM SEA MAN TO FREE MAN . . .

(Yacht Captain)

I’m not one of those Captains who only socialises with other yachtsmen, I don’t want to hang out in a clique and only talk about work. At the moment, I’m really into composing music – soundtracks for TV and film. I’ve made the decision to really go for it and I’m going to leave the yachting industry at the end of this summer and leave the yachting industry at the end of this summer and the full time with music.

When you’re a skipper you spend all your time in the studio recording demos, over a year or so, I made a hard decision whether I wanted to go full time with music. Having worked for someone who’s loaded, I’ve been cured of my materialism. When you’re a skipper you deal with a lot of money and, after a while, you lose sight of the value of it. A lot of people get on that trip of chasing cash all their lives and then get to sixty, look back over their lives and wonder what they’ve done. If I don’t do the music thing now, I’ll kick myself in ten years time for not giving it a shot.

We did once manage to leave the port without the owners on board – we didn’t even realise...

I love that feeling when we would get back in contact with them, rather than waste time by turning the boat round, they had to get the train to Tiviers in the west of France, where we picked them up.

I’m not one of those who’s loaded, I’ve been cured of my materialism. When you’re a skipper you deal with a lot of money and, after a while, you lose sight of the value of it. A lot of people get on that trip of chasing cash all their lives and then get to sixty, look back over their lives and wonder what they’ve done. If I don’t do the music thing now, I’ll kick myself in ten years time for not giving it a shot. I’m going to leave here and go back to the UK to make that clean break. You have to move on in life. With all the boats around I’d be tempted to come back, I want to put a barrier up, not burn bridges.

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Thursday 24

The British Association of Monaco is holding one of its regular Happy Hours at Le Bistro on Tuesday May 27 between 17:30 and 19:30 at the British Consulate, 1a Rue Broussonet, MC 98000 Monaco. The cost is €25, call 04 93 61 01 71 to book.

The Riviera’s Magic Flute is on at the Opéra de Nice tonight and the last chance of its annual gala concert at the Hotel de Paris season ends on Monday 26.

Friday 25

St John’s Church on avenue Carnot, Menton is holding an exhibition and sale at the Salle des Fêtes in Pigorino today and tomorrow. Entry to the Bourse Exposition National de Conchyliologie is free. Tel: 04 93 45 82 17.

Lottery
draws
for info and tickets.

Traditional English SUNDAY LUNCHEON

Enjoy a perfect English Sunday lunch with beef, lamb or chicken, roast potatoes, vegetables, Yorkshire pudding, mustard sauce and gravy or a delicious vegetarian menu. Service from noon to 3pm. Reservations advised, especially for large groups, both for tables in English or French. Tel: 04 93 28 87 41.

SPECIAL OFFER: don’t miss out on the chance to book your Sunday lunch at
“Chez Erick” before you order. Tel: 04 93 28 84 50.

Contemporary French

BlueWater Golf International Symposium

The Four Seasons, 8 Route de St Jean Cap Ferrat, release their 2004 brochure which includes the French Open 2004, leather goods, fashion, books, wine, art world, etc. There are displays and information. Entry charges are €5, call Si on 06 22 82 16 18 to join in.

Saturday 26

St John’s Church on avenue Carnot, Menton is holding an open day from 10:00 to 16:00.

Scottish piping will play on the hour between 10:00 and 13:00, there are displays and information about the history of the church and its charitable work and church members will be on hand to answer any questions. St John’s always supports and donations are always welcomed.

Call 04 93 57 20 25 for info.

There’s a jazz evening tonight at the restaurant L’Albatros, on the lake side at Lac St Cassien. Menus from €20, call 04 93 69 68 79 for info and bookings.

The Cannes PACA orchestra performs under Schubert, Chopin and Lizst at the Théâtre Don Juan, Cours Mirabeau, Cannes at 20:00. Tickets are €20 and €26, call 04 98 86 72 27 to book.

LOT Biss to Cagnes-sur-Mer, Grasse, Knokke, Stockholm and Warsaw at 16:30.

Starting today are the Printemps des Arts, the Salon Mer & Vigne et Gastronomie, the Salon des Antiquités-Brocante, the Bourse Exposition National de Conchyliologie, The Magic Flute, the Salon des Fleurs and the Salon Antiquités-Brocante.

Monday 28

LOT Biss to Cagnes-sur-Mer, Grasse, Knokke and Warsaw at 16:30.

Continuing today are the Printemps des Arts, the Salon Utlitiàres and the Salon de l’Automobile.

Tuesday 29

Weekly women’s self defence lessons – in English – start at 18:00 on the beach in Antibes. Cost is €5, call 06 22 82 16 18 to join in.

LOT Biss to Cagnes-sur-Mer, Grasse, Knokke and Warsaw at 16:30.

Continuing today are the Printemps des Arts and The Magic Flute.

Wednesday 30

LOT Biss to Cagnes-sur-Mer, Grasse, Stockholm and Warsaw at 16:30

Continuing today are the Printemps des Arts.

Now Booking

The Sporting Monte-Carlo’s summer schedule includes George Benson and Natalie Cole on July 4 and 5, The Beach Boys on July 19 and 20, Johnny Hallyday on July 26, 27 and 28, Toto on August 1 and 2, Bill Wyman and Guests on August 3, and John Illigan on August 9 and 10. Call 03 93 72 27 45 for tickets.

Jariroqa, Robert Plant, Kool and the Gang and Joe Jackson are amongst the stars of this year’s Nice Jazz Festival. Also appearing are Dr John, Jimmy Cliff, Wilson Pickett and The Drifters. The entire £20 festival programme is available on www.nicejazzfest.com. Tickets from Fraus, Carrefour and Virgin, by phone on 92 00 800 450 or online at www.fraus.com, from €27.

The first Cannes Beach Festival will take place from July 19 to 22. Contemporary music and lots of reggae for summer evenings will be on offer with four bands a night, including Massive Attack on the Monday, and facilities for 7,000 people to party every evening. Tel: 04 93 33 24 53 for info and tickets.

No reservations for this day

Cafe Bruni

Prix fixe €15.60, Dining room open from 7:00 to 22:30.

What’s on and Where to Go...

Mougins’ third annual Brocante will be held on Saturday plus a children’s concert on Sunday.

The inaugural gala concert at the Hotel de Paris season ends on Monday 26.

Stockholm and Warsaw at 16:30.

LOT flies to Copenhagen, Gdansk, Kraków, Simone and The Magic Flute.

● Eighty exhibitors offer top quality sea food,

● The Salon Mer & Vigne et Gastronomie, a one-woman show, tonight and tomorrow night at 20:30.

● St John’s Church on avenue Carnot, Menton is holding an open day from 10:00 to 16:00.

● The Salon Mer & Vigne et Gastronomie, a gourmet’s delight, runs from today until Sunday at the Palais des Congres Europe, Mandelieu. Eighty exhibitors offer top quality sea food, wines, chocolates and other foods, all at direct-from-the-produce prices. Open 10:00 to 19:00 daily. Tel: 04 72 41 36 17.

● Galilei Juifs, a giant car boot sale on the Quai des Etats Unis for info and tickets.

● Bistroquet in Monaco from 18:30 to 20:00. New branches are holding an exhibition and sale at the Salle des Fêtes in Pigorino today and tomorrow. Entry to the Bourse Exposition National de Conchyliologie is free. Tel: 04 93 45 82 17.

● The 9th Festival du Miel, celebrating all things bee related, tonight.

● The 119th Marathon de Nice starts from Place Massena at 10:00 today. The 21.1km route starts from Place Massena at 10:00 today. The 21.1km route includes the Promenade des Anglais, the Marché Marseillaise and the Salon Antiquités-Brocante.

● St John’s Church on avenue Carnot, Menton is holding an open day from 10:00 to 16:00.

● The Sporting Monte-Carlo’s summer schedule includes George Benson and Natalie Cole on July 4 and 5, The Beach Boys on July 19 and 20, Johnny Hallyday on July 26, 27 and 28, Toto on August 1 and 2, Bill Wyman and Guests on August 3, and John Illigan on August 9 and 10. Call 03 93 72 27 45 for tickets.

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- End -