MONACO’S HSH Princess Stephanie married a Portuguese acrobat in Switzerland last Friday in a low-key ceremony at the town hall in Eaux Vives, Geneva.

Divorced Stephanie, 38, said ‘I do’ to Adans Lopez Perez, 29, an acrobat with the Swiss Cirque Knie.

The vows were taken in the presence of the princess’ three children and two witnesses – the Monaco royal family’s lawyer Thierry Lacoste and Ivan Lopez Peres, the groom’s younger brother.

Fears that the news – and that of a rumoured pregnancy – could prove devastating to her father, HSH Prince Rainier, who’s fragile health has shown little sign of improving, were quashed on Tuesday by the palace.

“HSH Prince Rainier wishes all his children much happiness,” Armand Deus, the royal family’s chief press officer, told The Riviera Gazette.

When asked if the princess may be pregnant, he replied ‘no comment.’

The couple first met in 2001 at the International Circus Festival of Monte-Carlo – Adans is one half of an act called the Perez Brothers and performs a daring stunt where he balances his brother on his head. The pair are fifth-generation performers – their father Salvatore was an acrobat and their mother a flamenco dancer.

Elephant trainer

This is not the first encounter the princess has had with the Knie Circus. She famously dated circus boss and elephant trainer Franco Knie, traveling with him in a circus caravan until their split in February last year.

Stephanie’s love life has been the subject of much media scrutiny and a cause for concern within the Grimaldi family. Past lovers include bodyguard Daniel Ducruet, who she briefly married in 1995 after the birth of their two children, Louis, 9, and Pauline, 7.

Their marriage hit the rocks when Ducruet was captured on camera canoodling with a 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 was made public, Stephanie revealed she was four and a half months pregnant with daughter Camille, now 5. Stephanie has always refused to publicly name the father.

After Camille’s birth, the princess retreated to Auron to escape media attention, and fell for bartender Pierre Pinelli. She then embarked on her infamous elephant trainer affair.

But the princess, youngest of Prince Rainier’s three children, returned to Monaco’s 253-room palace in February last year. There she was linked with butler Richard Lucas and, earlier this year, a palace gardener.

Baby speculation as Monaco’s Stephanie weds Portuguese tumbler in secret Swiss ceremony

HE AIN’T HEAVY ... Steph’s new husband Adans supports brother Ivan in Monaco

ROYAL ... HSH Princess Stephanie last week in Monaco

PRINCESS TIES KNOT WITH ACROBAT

Inside this week

Rain Man

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22 English-language films in seven cinemas this week, p7

WHAT’S ON?

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**WAT-ER GOOD IDEA**

A FREJUS plumber has invented an ingenious system to protect homes threatened by forest fires. The system is based on roof-mounted sprinklers attached to a heat-detecting device. This can switch automatically and pump water out of a tank to soak the walls and roof of the house.

“I had August off work,” André Werner told The Gazette, “and with all the fires around I was inspired to build this. I originally had the idea ten years ago when a friend’s house in St Aygulf burned down. “And so with all the dramatic fires this summer I decided to bring the idea back to life. I made some small prototypes and now have a fully working version on my garage. And now I can install it in any home.”

Gazette readers wanting to know more should call 04 94 53 09 84.

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**SCIENTISTS are predicting that the charred area will regenerate over the next five years, with previously mature woodland being replaced long term by small shrubs. This summer’s blazes in the Maures hills registered six, the most serious level, on a scale drawn up for the ministry of the environment to calculate the seriousness of forest fires, according to scientists from Cemagref near Aix-en-Provence.**

The measure reflects the damage done to the environment by age – seven people died – as well as damage to property and disruption to the population.

**Tourists down 15%**

TOURISM was down five per cent in France this year, according to figures released last week. The PACA region suffered one of the biggest drops, with visitor numbers down by 15 per cent on last summer.

The government has announced plans to re-launch the industry, starting with a campaign to promote the country to Britishers and disruption to the population.

**Var deaths ‘high’**

The highest mortality rate in the south-eastern departments during the August heatwave was recorded in the Var, according to figures out last week. Ecologists believe pollution is to blame, with the Var exceeding safe ozone levels on 33 separate occasions out of 55 incidences of high ozone levels across the whole region.

**No wine tax**

GOVERNMENT spokesman Jean-François Cope has put an end to fears that an extra tax would be levied on wine to help pay off the social security deficit. François Copé has put an end to fears that an extra tax would be levied on wine to help pay off the social security deficit.

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**SPROUTING OFF … plumber André believes his invention has fireproofed his garage**

A charity concert held in Cotignol on Saturday night raised “thousands of euros” for the families of the firemen who died in the Var fires. Messages of sympathy from Sir Roger Moore, Brigitte Bardot, Prince Albert of Monaco and Carol Drinkwater were read out in English and French during the evening.

Among those who gave their time to perform was Justin Hayward, lead singer of the Moody Blues, who travelled from Monaco to perform hits Forever Autumn and Nights In White Satin.

Afterwards Justin told the Gazette, “My thoughts are with the families of the firemen. I’ve never known such brave people, we all need them, they’re always there, you see them taking their lives every day for us. “I was here two weeks ago visiting friends in St Tropez and as I drove through the area I couldn’t imagine what would have taken to get there when the fires were raging. I hope this evening helps in some way.”

Fire brigades and stations that fraudsters posing as collectors for the firefighters’ families are approaching companies, shops and individuals. Suspect approaches should be reported to the pompier’s Centre de Secours.

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**Fundraising success**

A 19-year-old was motivated by a bonus in the 1999 Nice Matin/PH Arnassan Sports Challenge 2005 saw fifteen Beneteau manufacturers OKI, has been announced. The fifteen week OKI European round-Europe yacht race, backed by Japanese printing equipment manufacturer OKI, has been announced.

The 32 year-old actor, who had a leg amputated five years ago after a motorcycle accident, was handed a nine month suspended sentence, fined €3,000 and ordered to undergo counselling.

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**OKI new race**

A NEW round-Europe yacht race, backed by Japanese printing equipment manufacturer OKI, has been announced. The fifteen week OKI European Challenge 2005 will see fifteen Beneteau manufacturers OKI, has been announced.

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**Patlout**

THY government is considering reducing penalties for cannabis use and introducing a sliding scale of fines ranging from €60 to €1,500.

Under current regulations, offenders can get up to 1 year in prison and a €5,000 fine.

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- Wednesday, 29th October at 10.00 for 10.30am, until 12.00noon Château de la Pioche, Alcèn Provence

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**Children hospitalised in poisoning accident**

SIXTEEN school children were hospitalised after inhaling tear gas on their way to a swimming lesson in the Saint Roch area of Nice last Friday. The children, aged between 10 and 11, were rushed to hospital with streaming eyes, covering their faces with waving hands as they were turned away at the entrance to the Jean Giono college on Rue Humbert Ricolfi. “We first thought someone had hurled tear gas天空 was black and many children were crying and it was a very traumatic experience,” explained the school’s headmaster, told The Gazette.

The children are pupils of Jean Giono college on Rue Humbert Ricolfi. “It was an accident and the man had no intention of hurting the children. Now after the inquiry, the police found out a 54-year-old man had carelessly thrown tear gas on his way to a swimming lesson in the Saint Roch area of Nice last Friday.”

**Green taxes loom**

THE government has unveiled new measures to combat pollution after record levels were recorded this summer. Among the proposals are plans to increase diesel fuel tax to boost investment in the rail network and encourage people to leave their cars at home.

The proposed increase of 2.5 cents per litre will raise €180m, but will not affect commercial road users who benefit from tax rebates for fuel.

**Food prices rise in wake of heatwave**

FOOD prices are at an all-time high after the summer heatwave destroyed or damaged much of the season’s crop yield. Another reason cited for rising prices is the inflationary effect of the nation’s switch from tax rebates for fuel.

**New Old World tourist tax kicks in next year**

The proposed increase of €3,050 for those who buy a great gift that lasts a year – give a subscription to the Riviera Gazette (20 payments of €69.75) – is Eurocentric. However, it also affects French supermarket chains, but on Tuesday they were spotted on sale for a whopping €720.

French supermarkets are now turning to the rest of Europe for cheaper supplies as local producer prices soar. Even meat markets are affected, with veal up between 10-12 per cent and beef up six to eight per cent.

Another reason cited for rising prices is the inflationary effect of the nation’s switch from the franc to the euro, but not everyone is convinced that the reasons are so clear cut – local consumer organisation UDCAM (The Union Departementale des Consommateurs) has announced its intention to launch an inquiry next month to ascertain exactly why prices have risen so sharply.

**Tart trial starts**

THE trial of a British woman accused of masterminding an international high-class prostitution ring started in Paris yesterday.

Margaret MacDonald, 44, is accused of “aggravated procuring for the purposes of prostitution,” and faces up to eight years in prison if convicted.

MacDonald says she was unaware that her employees may have been selling sex.

**School reforms**

THE government plans to encourage schools to create “free-thinking individuals,” it was revealed at a debate on education in Paris on Monday.

Jean Pierre Raffarin met senior educationalists to discuss how best to improve schools. “This debate is open to everybody – pupils, parents, elected officials and associations, because school concerns everybody,” he said.

**Gilding deaths**

TWO people died in accidents at a British Paragliding Open Competition at Laragne, between Sisteron and Gap, on Friday. A 33-year-old Frenchman perished when his delta-wing glider smashed into another competitor, a 35-year-old New Zealander, who was seriously injured in the accident. And in a separate incident a 35-year-old woman died after crashing into a mountain.
Flats up 10.5%, but houses flat

The cost of buying an apartment went up 10.5 per cent in the Alpes-Maritimes last year, to an average €2,365 per square metre. But house prices remained fairly stable with an increase of only three per cent in 2002.

Apartment prices now range from €790 per square metre in the hinterland – the mountainous areas north of Venice and Grasse – to €4,081 per square metre on the Côte d’Azur’s waterfront, where prices went up 20 per cent on twelve months ago.

The rise in apartment prices not only differs from town to town but also from area to area within the larger towns.

As a whole we saw an 11.1 per cent increase in apartment prices last year but, while the Collines Mougins, up by 18 per cent, and Cannes area were up only 1.7 per cent. Prices in the upmarket Cimiez residential north-central Nice saw a rise of 22 per cent, in apartment prices last year but, while area within the larger towns.

The Riviera Gazette

Houses

The average cost of a house across the department is now €318,200, but again, there are major variations across the region. At the top of the list is the Trois Corniches, which includes Cap Ferrat, Beaulieu and Villefranche, where the average purchase price of a home was €674,600 in 2002.

Apartments is in second place with an average cost of €375,100 up 9.5 per cent year on year. St Paul de Vence comes next at €567,400, then Mougins (€458,000), Cannes (€410,100), Roquefort-les-Pins (€428,100) and Vallauris (€412,100).

Houses in the popular expat towns of La Colle sur Loup, Biot, Mouans-Sartoux, Tourrettes sur Loup, Biot, Mouans-Sartoux, La Gaude, Le Rouret, and Valbonne (€412,100), then Mougins (€458,000), Cannes ($567,400), Roquefort-les-Pins (€428,100), and Vallauris (€412,100). Houses in the popular expat towns of La Colle sur Loup, Biot, Mouans-Sartoux, Tourrettes sur Loup, Biot, Mouans-Sartoux, La Gaude, Le Rouret, and Valbonne ($412,100).

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The Riviera Gazette

GERMAN athlete Tim Lobinger faces being slapped with a US$5,000 fine after he bared his buttocks at the World Athletics championships last weekend in Monaco.

Lobinger caused a stir by celebrating his winning 5.91m pole vault by mooning the crowd. The 30 year old athlete told reporters afterwards “I felt it was funny. It’s not something you plan in advance. It just happens.”

“I knew I had underwear on.”

But the sport’s governing body was not amused, and now $5,000 could be deducted from his $30,000 prize money. IAAF spokesman Nick Davis said Lobinger, who pulled the stunt in front of 10,000 spectators including Cap Ferrat, Beaulieu and Monaco’s HSH Prince Albert, faces a fine for “unbecoming behaviour”.

The weekend event attracted some of the world’s best athletes including Eunice Baruff, Hestrie Cloete and sprinter Gail Devers.

“The event was a great success, we are very pleased and we had two world bests,” an IAAF spokesperson told The Riviera Gazette. 150m champion Hicham El Guerrouj and South African high jumper Cloete both picked up awards at the World Athletics of the Year and each took home $100,000 in prize money.

Australian sprinter Cathy Freeman also picked up the Distinguished Career Award.

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 common practice dies, 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.

London bids for Tour

LONDON has put forward a bid to host part of the Tour of France. The proposals, as yet unseen by French officials, include plans for several stages of the race to be held in the south of England in 2006.

Huge business debt


FRENCH PROPERTY – MAXIMISE YOUR INVESTMENT

According to a recent survey, half a million britons own property in France. The French property market is booming and on the Côte d’Azur the average price of property is now €458,000 – an increase of 10 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 financial implications, so thoroughly 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 tax bill.

To maximise your investment, using a legal entity to purchase high-value properties could reduce or even avoid these tax pitfalls. 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.

Capitais 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 at 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 €250,000 may well be worth over €300,000. If you sold the property this would yield a profit of €50,000 but also a capital gains tax bill of approximately €16,600.

Buying through a structure, however, may mean you can avoid paying capital gains. Use 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.

Top names

AN annual list of the most popular names for French babies has been updated – Lea, Manon, Emma and Chloe are the top names for girls and Lucas, Theo, Thomas and Hugo are the winners for boys.

London bids for Tour

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Huge business debt


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The Riviera Gazette

Thursday 18 September 2003

5 News

In the groove

FOUR hundred top executives from the world’s video games industry were treated to a glittering bash at La Maison des Pecheurs in Juan les Pins on Tuesday night.

Computer software giant Microsoft took over the club and its beach to show off its new XSbox – a new version of its X-Box console. Music was laid on by a DJ from Bristoltwig hop band Massive Attack.

Snip a peace of Yoko

YOKO Ono, widow of Beatle John Lennon, has made headlines again with a bold performance – all in the name of peace.

In a recreation of her famous 1966s perfor- mance in Japan, the 70-year-old artist sat on a stage in Paris as the audience snipped off her clothes with scissors. They were then urged to send their snip- pings to ‘someone they love’.
I was born in London’s West End just around the corner from Bond Street, which is why I’m a complete shopaholic! I was educated at St Paul’s in London and I always loved fashion. My grandmother used to take me to all the fashion shows when I was a child. They were amazing as women put a lot more effort into dressing in those days.

Then, in the 1970s, with the dawn of New York’s trendy Studio 54 and fashion moving towards very flamboyant clothes, I found myself starting a hat revolution. Then, in the 1980s, with the dawn of London’s fashionable Newman’s, I moved to Monaco three years ago. I’ve been all over the world and haven’t found anywhere better than here. And I’ve travelled – in the 1990s I headed a number of projects around the world working as a senior consultant on design for the United Nations. I went to Africa, Asia and Latin America. I was even made president for life of a small village in Papua New Guinea, but all that meant was they put a banner up across the street to mark my visit!

Nearer home, one place I love to visit is the Hotel du Cap on the Cap d’Antibes. The view from the terrace is fantastic. I was rather certain I shall be staying in the hotel when I was just 12 years old and I’m rather certain I shall be staying in my hotel for the rest of my life! My Riviera

Celebrity hat designer David Shilling tells Jenny Paul about his passion for fashion, hot chocolate and his first titfer...
Thursday 18

- The German Ton un Kirchen Theater troupe are performing music, circus acts, dancing and acrobatics at the Zeste de Verbe in Grasse. Tel: 04 94 04 69 03.
- Gerard Uleri is exhibiting his photographs at Villa Aurelienne in Fontvieille until November 16. Tel: 04 94 38 89 55.
- The Moulin Rouge opens every day between 19:00 and 17:00 and entrance is free. Tel: 04 95 14 83 93.
- A photography exhibition showcasing scenes by locals is open every day until Sunday at Tourrettes-sur-Loup's tourist office. Tel: 04 95 39 30 11.

Friday 19

- Adapt in France's morning workshops for new arrivals in France start today at the Centre de Verbe in Garbejaire, Sophia Antipolis at 9:30. This morning’s topics are accommodation and insurance. More on it’s on ‘culture shock’.
- The Red Pear Theatre presents Fasching Aida, featuring Dillie Keane, Marilyn Cutts and Adele Anderson – with Russell Churney on piano. The curtain goes up at 20:00. Tel: 04 93 99 99 50.
- St Tropez Welcome to the Tourrettes-sur-Loup’s tourist office. Tel: 04 93 59 04 33.
- Revival’s photography exhibition is being held in the picturesque Esplanade Frontvialle. Old cars and accessories will be on display until Sunday. Tel: 04 93 99 99 50.
- Monaco’s first Retro Motor Festival is being held in the Principality’s Esplanade Frontvialle. Old cars and accessories will be on display until Sunday. Tel: 04 93 99 99 50.
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