



THE MANY SHADES OF CÔTE D'AZUR

THE FRENCH RIVIERA IS WORLD-RENOWNED FOR ITS GLAMOUR AND BEAUTIFUL BEACHES. BUT DESPITE ITS PRESTIGIOUS NAME, THIS COASTLINE OFFERS RUSTIC CHARM AND EXCEPTIONAL SAILING.

Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*, Picasso's foray into ceramics, Brigitte Bardot's *La Madrague*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*, Vincent van Gogh's seascapes. To even list the works of great art produced in and about the French Riviera could be a lifelong project for a dedicated curator. This is a place that inspires. Hillsides fragranced with fresh lavender tumble into the clear blue Mediterranean waters. In countless seaside villages, life slows with the heat of the summer into a leisurely stroll, a drift in the sea. The language here, like the English of the American South, is spoken in a slow drawl that belays the unhurriedness of it all. Provençal French is a dialect of honest farmers and hardworking fishermen. The French Riviera is their not-so-hidden gem, shining bright from any angle you view it.

Stretching between the cliffs of Cassis and the independent microstate of Monaco, the French Riviera—or "Côte d'Azur" as it's known to the French—exudes a cultural passion for sailing. The traditional fishing boats here carried sailing rigs and the more modern history of recreational sailing has a strong presence on this coast as well. It's not unusual to see a regatta on the horizon with 100 boats under their full press of sail. They are out there for the love of sailing as much as for the coastline that they are tacking to. Whether you come primarily for the sailing or for the Côte d'Azur itself, you'll be delighted by the interplay of

how they come together—a classic pairing like Chardonnay and Gruyère, or butter on a freshly baked baguette.

Along this coast there are ancient towns where the fortified walls, originally built to protect against pirates and invaders, still stand doing their best to keep out the big power yachts and helicopters that buzz around them with the annual influx of the rich and famous. Events such as the Cannes Film Festival and the Monaco Grand Prix are like a siren song for mega yachts and their patrons who recognize the beauty here too, even if they are only enjoying it through the tinted windows of their upper deck lounges. On a sailboat the beauty is inescapable and becomes a part of you even as you become a

