

French Ports

The Mediterranean Coast of France:

The Mediterranean Coast of France is synonymous with luxury and glamour – Cannes with its film festival and hoards of movie stars and Monaco with its Grand Prix just scratches the surface. St Tropez is a major tourist magnet. Known as the village of the stars and artists, the pace of life allows visitors to unwind and feel like vacationing Valentinos themselves. Nice is a great place to walk and has an impressive 300 hectares of green space. The Côte d'Azur is known for its intoxicating cocktail of glitzy Riviera towns, charming fishing ports, exciting Corniche roads and the scent of the maquis and lavender. The area hums with beautiful people at play. The sophistication of Cannes and St Tropez with its palm lined boulevards and luxury yachts contrasts with the timeless charm of hilltop villages with views through the purple haze of distant mountains and landscapes of lavender and cypresses which inspired Van Gogh, Cezanne Renoir and Matisse. The Côte d'Azur's reputation for the endless variety of wonderful restaurants is richly deserved. Between Nice and Monaco lie Villefranche and St. Jean Cap Ferrat, two idyllic seaside villages hiding superb restaurants, secret bays and excellent anchorages. This area typifies the French Riviera or Côte d'Azur, a tiny stretch of cosmopolitan coastline offering everything under the sun, from shopping in glamorous boutiques, to dancing all night in discos, to diving and enjoying every imaginable water sport.

The Côte d'Azur (Blue Coast,) is situated on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea in the south of France to the east of St Tropez. This yachting Mecca of the Mediterranean is approximately 70 miles long and runs westwards to the Italian border in the east. Major ports along the way include Cannes, Antibes, Nice, Monaco and Menton. The yachting facilities and services along the French Riviera are some of the best in the world. The climate is balmy, with long, dry summers, moderate breezes, mild winters and plenty of sunshine. The landscape is charming and varied, with many towns, villages and islands along the way. There are so many anchorages along this stretch of coastline and although it is also possible to simply cruise from one marina to another and another. The main highlights of the Côte d'Azur include the splendid beaches, excellent cuisine, fine wine, world class resorts, museums and cathedrals. The French Riviera has always been known as the playground for the rich and famous, but anyone can enjoy the abundance of beauty and charm this impressive area has to offer.

The Golfe de Lion:

The French Pilot-book includes a statement to the effect that the Golfe de Lion is notorious for bad weather and sudden changes. Strong NW winds, known as the Mistral, may frequently blow for a week and may even persist for a month in winter. The prevailing currents along this coast set W and SW, but they are generally weak and overridden by local surface currents caused by the winds. (To be completed)

Port Leucate:

We arrived in Port Leucate having sailed the 30 miles from Cap d'Agde in heavy winds and seas. Port Leucate was an excellent place to arrive, as it is well protected from the sea and has plenty of berths for visitors. In the summer there are also a large number of berths left vacant by residents who have sailed away for their vacations looking for calmer waters in which to sail. Port Leucate is located at the entrance to a large inland lake (Étang de Leucate), which is a major centre for water-sports and tourists in general. It might be a good place to remain longer than a day or two stopover, because there is quite a lot to see including some history in Leucate Village. The beaches either side of Port Leucate are very long and there is a "Villages de Naturistes" quite close to the marina for those interested. Most yacht services are centred around the first large basin after entering port and include a couple of chandleries and several other organisations providing marine services. The Tourist Information Office / Internet Point and restaurants and cafes are centred around the second basin. There is a "Lidl" supermarket in the vicinity of the Tourist Information Office in the second yacht basin and a "Spar" supermarket near the vehicular entrance to the first yacht basin.

On arrival at Port Leucate it should be noted that the finger and piled berths are assigned to long term residents, whilst the long alongside berth pontoons are available for visitors. Apart from collecting money, the staff at the Capitainerie take no interest in berthing matters and it is for the arriving yachtsman to find a location on one of the long pontoon piers and berth alongside. Note that not all positions on the pontoons are provided with cleats so improvisation is the key to a successful alongside here at Port Leucate! It would be possible to arrive in Port Leucate, remain for some days and depart again without even being noticed!

Cap d'Agde:

A dreadful, dreadful place ashore, but a place that is totally protected from the ravages of the sea and which has almost 2500 marina berths. I find it very difficult to express my feelings about this place - it is a cross between all the most dreadful fish & chip / candyfloss & ice cream promenades of Britain and Spain put together onto this coast of France! To be fair the whole complex is quite well set out and probably delivers

what its clientele wants. On the plus side, I understand that the beaches to the north and south of Cap d'Agde are the most popular nudist areas in France. Maybe we should have remained longer than 24hrs on our first visit to investigate! On my second visit in JULY2006 I anchored just inside the first breakwaters for the night before continuing my passage up the coast towards Port Camargue. The night I was there was windless - I'm not sure what the anchorage would be like in a Mistral?

Port Camargue:

Port Camargue is an extensive yacht harbour, which lies 1 mile SSW of Le Grau du Roi in the Golfe d'Aigues-Mortes and is protected by two breakwaters. Two jetties, situated 0.7 mile S of the entrance to the harbour extend seaward and form the entrance to a shallow canal. Port Camargue was created by dredging and reclaiming former salt marshes on the western edge of the Rhône delta. It is one of the largest marinas in the world with over 4000 berths in the 70 hectares of enclosed water site. Tradewinds arrived in the port on 5th August 2005 having sailed the coast from Sanary-Sur-Mer and again on 11th July 2006 from Cap D'Agde. Port Camargue has everything a visiting yachtsman might ever require - there are plenty of sheltered visitors' berths, a commercial shopping area, a launderette, lots of cafes and restaurants and the greatest selection of marine services that anyone could possibly want. This includes a 100m long fuel dock, 4 large chandleries, marine electrical and engine companies and yards offering lift-out and repair services. The commercial centre (shopping district) consists of a number of small outlets including supermarket, fruit and veg shops, boulangeries and so on.

Port Camargue is a vast and modern marina with 2-3 storey apartment blocks surrounding the pontoon and jetty areas. To get around it is preferable to have a bike. It can loosely be compared with Port Solent in UK, but is about 4 or 5 times bigger, but nowhere near as attractive. It is the perfect pit-stop whilst travelling along this coast, as it provides the most comprehensive range of facilities that I have seen anywhere in the Western Mediterranean. On arrival in Port Camargue the Capitainerie can be found shortly after entering on the port side. There is a long welcome jetty to use whilst the arrival procedures are followed. This includes logging ship's papers (SSR Certificate and Insurance details), which are retained until payment has been made. As always when visiting a French port for the first time, the logging in process at the Capitainerie is slow and bureaucratic, but the staff are friendly so the wait can be tolerated, although not hastened! There are two main ingredients that Port Camargue lacks - a large supermarket and an Internet Cafe.

The nearest airport to Port Camargue is Montpellier, which is about 1:30hr by bus via the city of Montpellier. The port is poorly served by public transport - there is a bus only at 2 hour intervals, although the bus service to Le Grau du Roi from Montpellier is more frequent. The distance from the bus station in Le Grau du Roi to the Capitainerie area in Port Camargue is about 2km, and probably about a 1 hour walk if struggling with baggage if the 2 hourly bus cannot be used. Marseille airport is a little further from Port Camargue but can be reached by taking an airport bus into the city of Marseille and then a train to Le Grau du Roi. If using Montpellier airport it is best to time arrival at the airport earlier rather than later, as the last bus to Le Grau du Roi from Montpellier is surprisingly early in the evening (1930).

Le Grau du Roi:

This is the main town associated with Port Camargue, and is where the larger supermarkets and Internet Points can be found. There is also a medium sized Bricolage, located close to the basin. Le Grau du Roi is about 2km from Port Camargue - the best way to get there is by walking or cycling along the promenade, which skirts the beach that interconnects both places. The town is home for a large number of fishing boats that berth either along the sides of the canal or in the basin just beyond the swing bridge. Apart from a very active fishing industry, the town is given over almost entirely to the tourism industry - there are a large number of bars, cafes and restaurants, and all the types of shops one would expect to find where there are thousands of tourists and a big beach. There is no marina in Le Grau du Roi, but some yachts do berth alongside the canal, but I guess that they have to vie with the fishing fleet to get a berth. Le Grau du Roi is a place to be avoided unless wanting to do some serious shopping in the supermarkets, spend time in the Internet point or browse in the Bricolage!

Marseille:

Tradewinds berthed alongside in the Vieux Port (Old Port) area both in 2004 and 2006. The Vieux Port is the focus of the town and is guarded at its entrance by the forts of Saint-Jean (1447) and Saint-Nicolas (1665). High above the Vieux Port and dominating the skyline is the Notra Dame de la Garde Church with its golden stature of the Madonna on top of the bell tower. To the starboard side of the harbour entrance is the impressive Palais du Pharo and on the port side is the huge Cathédral de la Major, built in 1893. Once inside the port it is sheltered and a different world from outside - the massive harbour is surrounded by the quay, which was built in 1512 and enlarged in 1855, tall 18th Century buildings and an abundance of bars, cafes and restaurants. Marseille, the France's second-most-populous city (pop. 809,000), is set on the Mediterranean coast. Founded by the Greeks 2,500 years ago, this picturesque (though somewhat rundown)

industrial port city has laudable examples of ancient and modern architecture. Visit the Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde Cathedral, the Museum of the Roman Docks, the town hall and the 5th-century St. Victor Basilica. The nearby Chateau d'If is mentioned in The Count of Monte Cristo. Be sure to sample the city's famous bouillabaisse. Marseille is France's largest commercial and naval port and its oldest major city - it was originally founded by the Greeks in 600BC!

Marseille is the oldest port on the French Riviera, one of the oldest cities in France, inhabited by Ligurian tribes from at least 1,000 B.C. and settled (as Massalia) by Greek sailor-merchant [Protis](#) in 600 B.C. Massalia became a Roman ally and was defended against pirates and invaders by Roman power more than once, but the prosperous port fell to Roman authority in 59 B.C. Rome's eventual fall allowed a succession of Barbarian and Moorish invasions, initiating a steady decline in Marseille's quality of life that was the first of many in a boom and bust cycle that continues through to today. Like Paris, Marseille has survived plague and pestilence as well as occupation and attack. As a southern port, the city's greatest period of growth came during France's colonial expansion. Its greatest decline occurred during World War II bombing. During the war, Marseille was a mecca for destitute exiles seeking to escape from a hellish Europe. A small metro system and an extensive bus network make for easy travel even without a rental, and the city has a long tradition of arts, including many museums, theatres, and an opera house. The Old Port is fronted by [La Canabière](#), the main boulevard in town populated by cafes, restaurants and night clubs.

Aix en Provence:

We took a day trip by bus to Aix (pronounced like the letter X), which was once a Roman spa and later the capital of the region of Provence. Today, the city of 136,000 is known for romantic streets, stately houses - and Art with a capital A. Impressionist painter Cezanne was born there, and artists still fall in love with the place and never leave. It is also a university town, and this combination gives Aix a young, upbeat, energetic feel. One of the highlights of Aix is a "Cezanne Walk," which takes you by the painter's atelier (studio), which has been renovated to look the way it did when the artist was alive, and the Maurel de Ponteves mansion, where he grew up. Other sights include the Town Hall, with its 17th-century balcony; the 5th-century Cathedral; the Tapestry Museum (housing some Beauvais tapestries); and the Granet Museum. The Vasarely Foundation exhibits works by contemporary artists. Aix's jazz festival in August is internationally renowned; other festivals celebrate orchestral music, drama and opera (mid July to early August). Aix-en-Provence can be seen as a day trip from Marseille or a stopover en route from Paris to the Riviera. 20 mi/30 km north of Marseilles.

This is a deeply historic town about 30km from Marseille - we took the bus from Marseille (20 minutes and only €3.20 and €1 each way for the elderly!)! The town dates back to the 4th Century BC when western Lower Provence was occupied by a Celtic-Ligurian confederation - at least this is what the guide book told us! From a more practical perspective, walking the streets and visiting the churches is a pleasant experience, albeit that we are now having feelings of *deja-vu* as many of the historical towns of France resemble each other. There is no doubt that Aix En Provence is ancient, but the real pleasure for us of visiting such a place is the beauty of the narrow streets, the Places full of open air cafes, the ancient churches and cathedrals and the sun-bleached albeit slightly crumbling Mediterranean architecture around every corner. The town has great character, although this is unfortunately spoilt by the large numbers of tourists and the French obsession with motorcars and motorcycles, which permits them to intrude into all areas of the town regardless of how narrow the streets or picturesque the background. The graffiti, present in all French towns, it particularly bad in Aix En Provence, with many of the most historical buildings badly disfigured - why do the authorities not do something about the problem and clean it up? Of course the Cathedral of Saint Sauveur (c.1285) together with its cloisters and unique Baptistry were stunning, but we have now seen so many cathedrals and churches that we have become punch-drunk with them! Aix En Provence's most famous son was the painter Cézanne - he lived and worked most of his life (he died in 1906) close to a council housing estate on the northern fringes of the town. We took the bus to visit and saw his Lauves Workshop where he did much of his work, which consisted of a small first-floor room in a house located in an overgrown garden - when he lived there he had good views of the surrounding area, but he would not want them now! The workshop had many of his original tools on display - easels and such equipment needed by a painter of his reputation, and the props that often appeared in his paintings such as bottles, fruit and so on. There were none of his paintings, which was somewhat of a surprise and disappointment considering the high cost of entry into the museum!

Cassis:

Cassis is a charming little Mediterranean port situated at the mouth of a small gorge. Everything is focussed on the old harbour and the shops, restaurants and cafes that surround it. There are great similarities between Cassis and St Tropez - Cassis is not exactly a pretender because it does not possess the affluence, the smart set of people or super-yachts to even draw close to being a likeness of its famous neighbour 50 Nautical Miles eastwards along the coast. However it is the façade and character of Cassis that is quite

similar to St Tropez, with its range of cafes and restaurant strung around the end of the old port, the artists that come out to exhibit and sell their masterpieces at night and the general ambience of the place especially at night. The shopping is not particularly useful to the cruising yachtsman because it is directed purely at tourists, but nevertheless there is a 'Petit Casino' near the end of the port area. The town beach is also close to the port area, but was packed with people from early in the morning - there are a couple of drinking and eating holes by the beach. We recommend the 'La Bistro des Arts', which is perfectly located overlooking the harbour entrance with views of the sea, the whole harbour area and the dramatic hillsides that surround the town. We watched the sun go down from here whilst enjoying first-class food in a gorgeous setting. Berthing here is €37 per night.

Cassis was a very ancient fishing port and is an interesting village to visit. The village was rebuilt on the old ruins in the 18th century, resulting in a more regular layout than most other medieval villages. Some of the buildings, however, date . A walk through the old village streets will reveal some nice old buildings, some dating back to the 16th century, and some restored with the colourful pastels of Provence. Other sites in the village are old fountains [photo-6] and an open-air artists market (where we bought a few small paintings of Provence). The harbour area is really the prettiest part of Cassis. Cassis is still a small fishing port, but the little fishing boats now share the harbour with yachts and a collection of tourist boats for visiting the calanques -- a trip you shouldn't miss. Our [photo-2] shows the stern of the double-ended pointus; on the opposite ends, note the high bow post that's been a feature of the pointus for the past 2000 years. Cassis has a fine sandy beach just outside the port, the Plage de la Grande mer. The beaches Plage du Corton and Plage de l'Arène are on the coast just to the south of the village. Just west of the port are the beaches La Plage du Bestouan and La Plage Bleue; in between are is the huge sloping stone shelf popular as a nudist beach.

Sanary-Sur-Mer:

Port Sanary-Sur-Mer, a small harbour located on the N side of Baie de Sanary, 1.5 miles E of Pointe de la Cride. It is protected by two moles and mainly used by small craft and yachts. Baie de Sanary affords good shelter against winds from the NW through NE to SE, but W or SW winds, if strong, send in a heavy sea. Sanary-Sur-Mer is a charming town with a reasonably sized old-port area in the centre. Almost every day in Sanary is Market Day in the summer months - this was probably the largest market we had seen since arriving in France (even bigger than those in Paris-Bastille, Meaux and Macon) and certainly the best because of its large number of stalls and the balance between fresh produce and other goods (Normally in France the balance is about 80% foodstuffs, and 20% the rest, but here at Sanary it was probably about 50 / 50). We had enjoyed the ambience of Cassis but here in Sanary we fell in love with the place. This was because it had genuine character and was much more than just a façade - there was a lot more to the place and exploring the narrow back streets was an absolute delight. Around every corner there were pretty sights to see and interesting little shops, cafes and restaurants in abundance. But it was at night that Sanary really came into its own - the restaurants expanded well onto the streets and the market was replaced by street performers, a variety of bands playing different types of ethnic music and street vendors selling all manner of knick-knacks. Thousands of people thronged the streets well into the early hours giving the place a party atmosphere - people enjoying an evening out in lovely surroundings, in a hassle free environment with no drunkenness or rowdy behaviour, and not a car or scooter in sight! To cap it all the berthing was low cost - only €23 for the night (€24 in 2006) rather than the €37 we had paid in Cassis in 2004. Sanary is highly recommended for a night alongside.

There is a particularly good Chandlery in Sanary, which can be found on the main road by the beach to the east of the main town in the Six-Fours area. "Auto Fournitures & Marine" (Tel: 04 94 74 12 82, e-mail: autofournitures@wanadoo.fr) has a very wide range of stock (mostly mechanical and electrical spare parts) but can obtain most items within 24 hours and often less. The staff speak fairly good English and they are extremely helpful and pleasant.

Toulon:

The outer roadstead of the port, is entered between Cap Cepet and Pointe de Carqueirane. The SW side of this roadstead is formed by the NE side of Presqu'île de Saint Mandrier. The N shore of Presqu'île de Saint Mandrier is fronted by naval installations. These include several small craft basins and areas which have been dredged to depths of 4.5 to 7.5m. Pointe Sainte Marguerite, located 1.7 miles NW of Pointe de Carqueirane, is formed by a steep, grey cliff which rises to a height of 65m. Cap Brun, located 1 mile W of Pointe Sainte Marguerite, is surmounted by a prominent fort. Port de Saint Louis du Mourillon, a small harbor, lies 1.5 miles W of Cap Brun. It is protected by a breakwater and used by yachts and fishing craft. Presqu'île du Mourillon extends 0.5 mile W from Port de Saint Louis du Mourillon to its SW extremity, which is surmounted by Fort de la Grosse Tour. A prominent seven storied tower building stands 0.6 mile NE of the fort. Grande Jetee, a main breakwater, extends 0.7 mile S from the SW extremity of Presqu'île du Mourillon and forms the W side of Grande Rade. There is a gap in this breakwater, 45m wide, situated 135m S of the

root. Grande Pass, the principal entrance to the port, leads between the S end of Grande Jetee and the N side of Presqu'île de Saint Mandrier.

The main marina for visiting yachts at Toulon is the Darse Vieille, which is closer to town than the alternative marina Darse du Mourillon. On entry turn immediately right and berth on the fuel dock and visit the Capitainerie for a berth. As of October 2006 (confirmed in April / May 2007) there is no water or electricity available on the quai d'Accueil, the services having been condemned by some health & safety inspector. The local Chambre de Commerce who own the facilities are probably reluctant to invest in any refurbishment as they have plans to completely renovate the marina sometime over 2007 or 2008. This work will remove the existing reinforced concrete quays and replace them with modern floating pontoons.

Toulon has the largest natural harbour on the French Mediterranean coast. It is also the largest French military port on the Mediterranean coast of France. The port consists of a large outer roadstead and a spacious inner harbour, protected by an extensive breakwater. The principal facilities of the naval base and the commercial port occupy the entire North side of the inner harbour. Minor naval and commercial installations are scattered elsewhere about the port area.

The city of Toulon nestles in one of Europe's largest bays, and is bordered by wooded hills topped with ancient forts (there are 24 forts, towers and batteries around the harbour), pretty creeks shaded by pines, high ochre-red cliffs, little fjords known as calanques, golden sandy beaches and picturesque fishing harbours. Toulon is however principally a maritime city and has had a naval base since the 16th Century - it is now the largest military port in the Mediterranean and has 10 Kms of quayside, is home base to 30 ships and has a workforce of 12,000. In 1793 the city was captured by an Anglo-Spanish fleet, but was boldly retaken by the then-unknown young commander Napoleon Bonaparte! Nearly 150 years later Nazi troops took Toulon trapping the French fleet in harbour - the French themselves scuppered its own ships to prevent the enemy from capturing them. The naval base however does not dominate the city, as despite its bland 60's looking façade of blocks of flats around the harbour area, behind there lies a town centre with plenty of character and a number of historic buildings from the 16th Century and before. There are a number of laundrettes (the closest is at Bd Bazeilles about 15 minutes from the marina) and a very large Carrefour supermarket in the Commercial Centre also very close to the marina. The northern side of the Darse Vieille Du Mourillon marina area is festooned by restaurants and cafes, mostly offering local seafood dishes at very reasonable prices. Berthing at the main Darse Ville marina costs €25.75 per night for a 10.5m boat, including electricity, water and the use of shore heads and showers.

Within the Toulon area there are a number of marinas (listed clockwise from the Grande Pass entrance):

Saint Mandrier - just through the Grande Passe and turn left.

Pin Rolland - In the Baie Du Lazaret on the south side of the Bay of Toulon (This is where Tradewinds spent winter 2006 - 2007).

La Seyne Sur Mer - In the western part of the Bay of Toulon.

Toulon Darse Ville - To the north of the Bay.

Darse Nord Du Mourillon - next eastwards to the Toulon Darse Ville.

Saint Louis - In the Rade Des Vignettes outside the Grande Passe in the Grande Rade.

Saint Mandrier-Sur-Mer:

St. Mandrier is a charming little fishing and boating port set right on the peninsula that encloses the Port of Toulon. The rough coastline is made of many steep inlets and creeks well appreciated by fishermen, scuba divers, and swimmers. This small marina port is located within Toulon Grande Rade to port of the Grande Passe on entry past the breakwater at the entrance to the Bay. There is an excellent anchorage just outside the port entrance, which is sheltered from most wind directions and is generally calm, except that the constant daytime ferry traffic causes some rocking & rolling. The holding at the anchorage is excellent. The port itself is mainly turned over to the leisure industry with a large number of marina berths. Around the edge of the marina is a quayside with a wide variety of small shops including restaurants and cafes, small supermarkets, fruit & vegetable shops, a couple of Boulangeries and so on. There is a chandlery, launderette and an excellent Internet Shop close to the quayside. A Saturday morning Market takes place on the quayside at the southern end of the port every week. The anchorage off Saint-Mandrier is a good place to remain at anchor for longer periods, as the holding is good, the anchorage is sheltered and the port facilities are close to hand. On the shore close to the anchorage is a fairly large 'Spar' Supermarket but further into the port there is a "Petit Casino" supermarket and several other general food shops.

Les Iles D'Hyères:

Les Iles D'Hyères consist of three islands, Ile de Porquerolles, Ile de Port-Cros and Ile du Lavant. The first two of these are private islands, but all are beautiful and preserved as nature reserves with tended vines, pines, heather, eucalyptus and other vegetation unknown to me! There are very few inhabitants on the

islands, but on Ile de Porquerolles there is a small village, which was built by the army in the 19th Century and has a few cottages, a main square and a tiny church. The village resembles a North African colonial settlement more than a Provençal village. All three islands are popular destinations for tourists who arrive by ferry or pleasure boat. Whilst out walking Tony noted the large number of mountain bikers on the tracks leading to Fort Langoustier on Ile de Porquerolles and the nearby headland, and also around the beach at the bay where we anchored. The village was quite crowded - there are regular ferries arriving from the mainland all day long. The widest island of the archipelago is Ile de Porquerelles, which is situated to the west and covers an area of 1254 hectares. The signal station stands on the highest peak, 142 metres above sea level. Five ranges of north-south hills open in the north to long beaches of fine sand - Notre-Dame, La Courtade and La Plage d'Argent. The smallest, but the most mountainous and wildest of the three islands, Port-Cros is situated 15 kilometres off the mainland. Mount Vinaigre rises to 194 metres at its peak. Steep cliffs are a feature of the southern coast. The island has only a few beaches - Port Man and Plage du Sud being the main ones.

Ile de Porquerolles:

The island lies centred 3 miles SE of Ponte de l'Estrel. The summit of the island, located 1 mile from its E end, is 142m high and surmounted by a signal station.

Cap d'Armes, the S extremity of the island, is located in the middle of the cliffy S coast. A main light is shown from a structure, 16m high, standing on this cape. A radio beacon is located at the light. A prominent mast stands 1 mile NE of the light. An islet lies close N of the NW extremity of Ile de Porquerolles and a fort is situated on its N part. A shoal extends up to 0.3 mile N of this islet and is marked by a lighted beacon. A dangerous wreck lies about 0.2 mile NE of the beacon. There is a small village by the port, which was built by the army in the 19th Century and has a few cottages, a main square and a tiny church. The village resembles a North African colonial settlement more than a Provençal village. There are miles of walks to be had on the island and four excellent anchorages for the visiting yachtsman - Baie de Langoustier (west), Anse du bon Renaud (near the port), Du Lequin (to the east of the port) and Baie de Alicastr (to the east).

Hyères:

I visited the marina at Hyères Plage towards the end of the 2006 season and remained alongside for just an hour. For the yachtsman there is nothing in the marina other than shelter and a small supermarket! However there is some rich history and a lot more to see outside the marina - Hyères claims to be the first holiday resort of the Cote d'Azur and attracted such names as Queen Victoria, Robert Louis Stevenson and Catherine de Medici to its shores. It has a mild climate and lush gardens, which has contributed to its development as a health resort and popular centre for aquatic sports. Hyeres' main source of wealth comes from the salt pans that are situated on the peninsula and the nurseries of date palms which are exported to Saudi Arabia and the Arab emirates. The commune of Hyères includes the town, its seaside peninsula (where lies the massive marina of Hyères Plage) and the Ile de Hyères Islands. As of the third century, the Phocaeans founded the town of Olbia after having landed on the Almanarre beach. Under Roman rule, Pomponiana soon became an important stop for coastal trade. After the fall of the empire, the area became infested with bandits and Saracens forcing the local population to move to the nearby coastline. Sea trade was redeveloped during the 9th century. In 1254, Saint Louis returned from his seventh trip to Hyères. In 1620, Louis XIII destroyed the castle that defended the town and then went into hiding in Toulon.

As history would like it, Hyères-les-palmiers, as it was called then, was one of the first seaside resorts on the Côte d'Azur and during the 18th century, some important families already frequented the area. In 1564, Catherine de Médicis spent a few days here. During the 19th century its winter tourism took off with many prestigious visitors such as Talleyrand, Lamartine, the Queen of Spain, Queen Victoria, R.L Stevenson and Tolstoï. Not to mention the many English Lords and their families. What would have become of the Côte d'Azur without them? From about 1930 more and more holidaymakers came to Hyères and the tourism industry grew, but with the number of new resorts popping up along the coast, Hyères was no longer that unique. Hyères actually owes its success to its location. Protected from the Mistral by the Castéou Hill to its south and the presqu'île of Giens and Cape Bénat it is a true paradise for tropical plants of which many can be found in the gardens of its numerous villas.

The old town is quickly visited and all its streets have a special charm. The 12th century tower of Saint Blaise, which used to be the commandary of the Templar Knights, is found on the Place Massillon. The Collégiale Church can be found on the Place Saint Paul. A narrow stepped street leads to the entrance of a medieval portal. At the top, a Roman tower is found with lots to see on the inside. The "Roche à Cupule", rue du puits Saint Pierre, is worth having a look at. It is a 14 meter schist rock with 200 cavities. Surrounding the old town, the new quarter with its beautiful dwellings in ancient, empire and art deco styles can be found.

Port Cavaliere sur Mer:

Port Cavalaire does not pretend to be anything more than it is - it is a large modern marina with a large number of cafes, surrounded by a relatively modern town with a reasonable number and range of shops, and a long beach stretching about 3km to the east from the marina. If a berth is not available alongside, the area off the beach offers a good alternative - it appears to be a good anchorage in about 3-5m of water with a sandy bottom. At night the place comes to life with crowds of people promenading the port area and thronging the cafes, and music from the cafes and live band. Port Cavalaire was originally a small fishing village centred around the beach, but none of the old town now exists as it has been given totally over to the expanding tourist industry, both ashore and afloat. It is however an excellent pit-stop as it provides everything for the passing cruising sailor - a reasonable selection of shops including a medium sized supermarket (a 'Champion located about 500m from the post along the Avenue des Alliés), a big range of cafes and restaurants and a safe parking place for a peaceful night's sleep alongside, rather than being at anchor!

St Tropez:

St Tropez is an absolutely fabulous place with a long history - it was once a fishing port but reached the height of its international fame in the 60s when it became a playground for the rich, most famously Bridget Bardot. It is still popular with the stars - Elton John has a home here and Kylie Monogue, Mohamed Fayed, Rod Stewart, Chelsea Clinton, Elle MacPherson, Johnny Hallyday, Naomi Campbell, Jack Nicholson, Joan Collins, Ivana Trump, Flavio Briatore (Head of Renault Formula 1) and Sarah Ferguson are but examples of other famous names who enjoy this unique place! The waterfront cafés look out onto quaysides adorned with superyachts, with crews in their smart uniforms and superior attitude that seems to say "Don't you dare to even mount our gangplank - this boat is for multi-millionaires only"!

The entrance to the port is marked by Le Phare Rouge (the Red Lighthouse), the original of which was destroyed by the Nazis during WW2. A replica of the original was built as part of harbour renovations about 10 years ago - its sectored light guiding sailors to a perfect landfall at St Tropez is visible for at least 13 Nautical Miles. On the quaysides there are a wide range of cafés and restaurants, and a large number of shops of the famous design house variety. Above the shops and cafés the buildings are painted pastel coloured pink and yellow - behind the quayside façade there is a maze of small narrow streets with more shops and cafés. Overlooking St Tropez is the Citadelle, which overlooks and has protected St Tropez since the 17th Century, but also has stunning views of the Golfe De Saint-Tropez eastwards towards St Raphael.

Below the Citadelle on the shoreline is the Sailors' Cemetery and also overlooking the Golfe De Saint-Tropez to the east, marking the last resting place of St Tropez mariners for hundreds of years. It is a delight to stroll around St Tropez and explore the parts that the tourists do not necessarily find - see the 17th Century Chapelle de la Miséricorde with its quaint bell tower, the 15th Century Porche de la Ponche Archway and the old fishing district overlooking the unspoilt fishing port and tiny pebble beach. This is indeed a tourist's paradise, although St Tropez is much more than that - the town has long been a popular meeting place for artists and towards one end of the quayside there are open air galleries with the artists in attendance there selling their works. St Tropez is extravagant, decadent and excessive, and a wonderful place to spend a couple of days. The marina is relatively large but divided into two harbours - the Vieux Port for the large superyachts and the new marina area for the remainder! Berthing overnight is however much cheaper than most of the Solent Marinas - Tradewinds at 10.5m was charged only €35 for the night, inclusive of electricity and water, although showers if used are charged at €2 a time if needed! In the height of summer only about 20 visiting boats can be accommodated each day - make sure to arrive at about 1000 - 1030 to get a berth. Reservations are not possible unless you are a multi - millionaire in a superyacht! Being a mere lottery winner would get you nowhere! There are three supermarkets close to the marina (a Monoprix and two Petit Casinos) and a boulangerie and launderette only minutes walk away. Take care with the Petit Casinos as (as usual) they are about 15% more expensive than the Monoprix!

St Raphael:

We berthed in the St Raphael Port de Santa Lucia marina (north side) because the Vieux Port was full (as it always is). The centre of the Ville is only a short walk along the promenade from the marina. There is not a great deal to do in the town, but a walk there is worthwhile to visit the cathedral and the Monoprix supermarket. It is a fairly attractive town, although the railway line seems to run almost through the town centre. Back in the marina there is everything needed for a day or two stop. Along the central quayside there are plenty of restaurants catering for all tastes and budgets, and also a fairly wide range of shops including a small Spar supermarket, a couple of boulangeries, a chandlery, various clothes and souvenir shops, a ladies hairdressers and a launderette. The Capitainerie is conveniently located midway between each of the two main marina areas, but the heads and bathroom facilities are rather remote located half way along each of the marina main pontoon areas. There were small garbage skips spread frequently along the quayside. The berth we were given was on the outer wall close to the Capitainerie - a very convenient and calm place to be. The Capitainerie staff were very pleasant - the induction procedure was quick with only one form to

complete. They did not wish to see ship's papers. On the day we were in the port (Thursday) there was an antiques market in the central area by the shops and restaurants. Berthing at St Raphael Port de Santa Lucia was €29.55 per night all inclusive of water, electricity and the use of shore facilities.

Vieux Port - Cannes:

The Old-port of Cannes is centrally located and a great position to be, surrounded by cafes, bars, shops and all the glitz and glamour that go to make up this most chic of resorts. To the west side of the old-port, once a small fishing port, is the old Roman hilltop town of le Suquet (worth visiting) and on the other side is the modern part of the town built around La Croisette (definitely worth a stroll). The Boulevard de la Croisette is Europe's most elegant seaside promenade and is lined with palm trees, grand hotels such as the Carlton and of course the beaches, including those belonging to the hotels with their private sunbathing and swimming areas, restaurants, bars and immaculate rows of coloured parasols and plush mattresses! The marina has all the services that you would expect - Shore heads and bathrooms (high standard but token for a shower costs €1.50), a launderette (short wash time leaves clothes too wet and therefore unlikely to be fully dried in the drier - however the cost is only €5 for the complete wash and dry), a fuelling quay (open 0800 to 2000 daily), plenty of waste skips and an efficient Capitainerie who supplies printed weather forecasts and other local information. Electricity (up to 10A) and potable water are of course provided free (except on the 700 berths where metre readings before and after are required) as part of the very reasonable berthing fee of €28 per night for a 10.5m boat in August 2004 (This reduced to €23.89 in June 2005! - in 2007 it was €25). Mail can be sent to the Marina for your collection - address it to the Port of Cannes, Boat name, Gare Maritime, 06400 Cannes, France. There is a reasonably sized Monoprix and small Champion supermarket close to the marina. The only problem here is that the Capitainerie building cannot easily be spotted on entry into the port (it is actually far to the right as you enter the port) - far better to use Ch 12 on the VHF (callsign "Cannes Port") to obtain your berth. However, it may not be clear where the berth is after it has been assigned - a bit of searching may be needed! Cannes is an excellent stop for cruising yachtsmen and will not break the bank.

Lerins Islands:

The "Iles de Lérins" is a small archipelago just off the coast of Cannes and part of the commune of Cannes. The archipelago has the two main islands of Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Honorat and the two micro-islands of Tradelière and St-Féréol.

The Iles de Lerins (43°31'N., 7°03'E.) lie on a rocky bank, with depths of less than 5m, which extends up to 2.5 miles S from Cap de la Croisette. They consist principally of Ile Sainte-Marguerite and Ile Saint-Honorat. Ile Saint-Marguerite lies centered 1 mile SSE of Cap de la Croisette and is very wooded. A conspicuous citadel, in which there is a disused signal station, stands near the middle of the N coast of the island. A small shipyard is situated close W of this citadel. The NW extremity of the island is surmounted by a ruined tower. It is fronted by a shoal, with depths of less than 2m, which extends up to 0.3 mile N and is marked by a lighted beacon. A shoal, with a depth of 8.6m, lies about 0.3 mile NW of the beacon and the sea breaks on it during S winds. The E extremity of the island has the ruins of a battery standing close WSW of it. A low islet lies close E of this point and is connected to it by a ridge of rocks. Ile Saint-Honorat lies centered 1.8 miles SSE of Cap de la Croisette. A conspicuous chateau stands on a projection on the S coast of the island. The belfry of an abbey, which emerges from the surrounding trees close N of the chateau, is prominent. The E extremity of the island is surrounded by small islets and rocks which extend up to 0.3 mile from it. This point is surmounted by a prominent ruined chapel. The rocky bank, on which these islands lie, extends 0.5 mile S of Ile Saint-Honorat and is marked at its S end by a lighted beacon. Anchorage, sheltered from N and S winds, can be taken on a bottom of muddy sand and weed, good holding ground, between Ile Sainte-Marguerite and Ile Saint-Honorat. Yachts should anchor E or W of the rocky bank lying between these islands. There is also good anchorage for small vessels to the N of Ile Sainte-Marguerite and to the E of the citadel. With Mistral winds, a sheltered anchorage is available to the E of Cap de la Croisette, but care must be taken to avoid the dangers in this vicinity.

Ile Sainte-Marguerite is the larger and nearer island to the mainland. The island is covered by a lovely forest of Aleppo pine and eucalyptus, with wide paths criss-crossing the length and breadth. The port area, where the ferry lands, has cafés and restaurants, and it's a short walk to the Fort Royal where you can see the now-bare little cell where the Man in the Iron Mask was incarcerated. The mysterious "Man in the Iron Mask" was held prisoner here in Fort Royal (built by Vauban) from 1687 to 1698. He was then deported to the Bastille. If you want to know the historical truth, the man never wore an iron mask but a silk one and the way he was held prisoner is beyond any human comprehension, even for the 17th century. Nobody ever knew who was hidden under that mask: a brother, or even a twin brother of Louis XIV who could have been a forefather of the Bonaparte's? Others speak of the Italian count Matteoli who knew too much about stately affairs.

Ile Saint-Honorat is the smaller island - further from the mainland. Although small, the walks are still nice, and there's the Cisterian abbey to visit, which includes a gift shop of locally produced products. Between the islands is a shallow, protected passage, the "Plateau du Mileu", which is a popular anchorage for visiting yachtsmen. Saint-Honorat abbey, founded early in the 5th century by Honoratus following the collapse of Roman power in the north of Gaul is one of the oldest in France. Both Greek and Roman architectural elements are used in the construction, including a Constantinian milestone from the mainland that was used as a column in the cloister of the chateau. The abbey adapted the Benedictine rules early-on, and had many illustrious Bishops and Saints. Honoratus himself was the Bishop of Arles for the last two years of his life (429-430). The abbey was destroyed in 730 by the Saracens. The castle-fort was built on the southern point of Saint-Honorat in the 11th century. In the 15th century, this became the monastery. For several centuries St.Honorat was the centre of religious life for the whole southern Europe, and was so powerful that it owned much of the land along the coast, including Cannes. Imagine that one about 3,700 monks lived on the island and the monastery delivered quite a few bishops, like the best known in Ireland and America - St.Patrick. But the constant raids from pirates as well as papal corruption made its decline inevitable. The museum and church that the Cistercian monks keep open for visitors is mainly a private domain where they grow lavender, grapes and oranges and are pleased to sell their own honey and Lérina liquor to the visitors. The most beautiful spot on the island is in the eastern point, called the "chapelle de laTrinité", hidden between the trees. Around the island there used to be seven of those chapels - most have now disappeared but others were "restored" in a very indelicate way. The only authentic one, finally, is this "chapelle de le Trinité". Under the altar of the Trinité a small cellar with the skeleton and a skull was found in 1850, supposed to be the remains of Saint-Ferreol. Its is deceiving that the chapel is closed nowadays, hiding its interior. The fortress-monastery is best seen from the boat - built in 1073 it is fortified on three sides with the fourth side skirting the sea. Vauban, master in those kind of defensive constructions was flabbergasted: "This is a real masterwork, nothing should be changed here!"

Antibes:

Antibes (Port Vauban) is an ancient town standing on a promontory which separates the harbour from a small bay to the South. The harbour has extensive facilities for pleasure craft, yachts, and fishing boats. The town of Antibes is located half way between Cannes and Nice and is an excellent place for a day or two break if cruising the Cote d'Azur. For a long time Antibes was the only large town between Marseille and Italy. It was the only town on the coast to be protected by ramparts, and thus it has managed to conserve historic monuments from each period in its heritage. The Chateau, bastion and towers have today been transformed into a magnificent Modern Art Museum, History and Archaeology Museum and museum of traditional crafts and local culture. Most of the treasures can be found in the historic town centre. It's better to visit this part on foot taking in it's particular atmosphere, meander between pretty squares and it's narrow streets... Let yourself be guided by the charm of the craft workshops where crafts persons work, often leaving the doors of their workshops open for all to see, or by the boutiques with their sun-faded façades or by the beautiful odours of simmering dishes wafting from the open windows. The marina at Antibes is large, but has an old part and new area. It is best to get a berth in the Old Harbour if possible, because this is closest to the old part of town. On arrival it is necessary to visit the Capitainerie to be assigned a berth. The old Town of Antibes is indeed charming and well worth a day or two in the marina to visit. There are a large number of unique shops and restaurants, and an English book shop with a large range of 2nd hand paperbacks. There are 3 - 4 chandleries and a number of other marine related shops catering for rigging, electrical and electronics equipment. Antibes is at the centre of the superyacht business on the French Riviera and many potential crew members reside in the area hoping for jobs.

Nice:

Nice is the capital of the Côte d'Azur, France's fifth largest city and its most visited city after Paris. However, despite it being a major tourist attraction, the place seems unaffected and remains quite natural and full of Mediterranean character. Nice was originally founded by the Greeks in the 4th Century BC, but colonized the Romans who settled nearby. It thrived through the Middle Ages and only became part of France in 1860 - before it was Italian. Still with much of its Italian character, Nice became a fashionable retreat for the wealthy English in the 1860s, who enjoyed the Italian lifestyle and beautiful climate - fronting onto the "Baie des Angles", the main waterfront (built in 1830 with funds from the English colony) was aptly named the "Promenade des Anglais". Nearby the narrow streets and markets of the Old-Town have a totally different appearance to the main city with its wide boulevards and stylish shopping areas. Behind Nice are the foothills of the Alps, which give a most dramatic backdrop to this most attractive of cities. Port Lympia where Tradewinds was berthed is immediately to the east of the Colline du Château (this is the site where the Greeks originally founded Nice, but there is no longer a fortress here - there are instead cool shady gardens with stunning views over the port area), which is adjacent and surrounded on one side by the Old-Town area. The "Vieille Ville" is absolutely lovely and it is a delight to stroll around its narrow streets and the flower market. The buildings that line the narrow streets all date back to the 17th or 18th Centuries and have a great resemblance to those in Venice, not only because of the same style of little squares, the paved

alleyways, the flower pots in the windows and so on, but because of the fact that Nice used to be part of Italy and this is reflected in the style of architecture found everywhere we looked. As might be expected the old town also has a large selection of cafes and restaurants. The main part of the more modern city lies close by and is itself diverse with many interesting areas. The Capitainerie is located on the left hand side on entering the port and supplies a substantial package of local tourist information as part of the check in. For a 10m boat the berthing fee was €27 per day, including electricity and water (and shore facilities if required). Additionally, bikes are available from the Capitainerie free to visiting yachtsmen. The ship's documents will need to be presented as a guarantee. Washing machines and a dryer are also available at the Capitainerie, at the cost of €4 per bundle, including washing powder. There is a large Carrefour supermarket located within a shopping centre not far from the port area (straight along the main road to the left of the large church at the top end of the port). There are no designated 'Visitors' berths in the port of Nice, although visiting yachts can be accommodated into vacant berths of local boats away cruising. The number of berths available for use by Visiting Yachts varies during the year, but most are available during July and August. The most difficult months are May, June, September and October.

Fréjus:

Fréjus is a large, sprawling town with some famous Roman ruins. It's also a very popular summertime tourist town, although the center of town is a couple of km from the beaches, which are 2 km long and 100 m wide of fine sand, between Fréjus and St. Raphaël. The center of town is compact, with lots of shops, pedestrian streets and, in the summer, lots and lots of people. The Cathedral (photo), in the very center, is built of lovely old stone and is set in a pretty square. The entrance to the cloisters is inside the Cathedral entrance. Roman: Fréjus was founded in the first century BC. It was an important stop on the Aurelian way. Around 30 BC, at the beginning of the Early Empire, Forum Julii became a colony for veterans of the 8th Legion. About the same time, Octavian brought here the ships he captured from Sextus Pompey at Actium, and began constructing the port. Fréjus became the second largest Roman port after Ostia, and remained a significant naval base until after the fall of Nero, around 69 AD. Medieval: Fréjus declined gradually until the 10th century, when it came under control of Bishop Riculphe, who founded the beginning of the "modern" town. The town was victim of continuous barbarian raids. In 1536, Charles-Quint invaded. Later in the 16th century, under King Henri II, Fréjus became the seat of the admiralty. Prince Eugène invaded in 1707. The town declined when the port began silting up, with population dropping from 6000 in the 17th century to 2000 in 1800. Napoleon Bonaparte debarked here in 1799 on his return from Egypt. Fifteen years later, in 1814, he passed through again, on his way to exile at Elba.

Rade d'Agay:

Rade d'Agay (43°26'N., 6°52'E.) is entered between Cap de Dramont and Pointe de la Baumette and has a sandy beach at its head. Mornes Rouges d'Agay, 213m - 288m high, is a range of reddish hills which stand 0.5 mile inland at the head of the bay. The bay is located conveniently between the Golfe de St Tropez and Cannes, and is a good pit-stop (or bolt-hole) for a night or two. It gives limited shelter from most directions except from the South and South East. It is not a particularly attractive bay and is plagued with water skiers and jet-skis, which buzz around the anchorage causing rocking & rolling and excessive noise without consideration on most summer days. There are a large number of (white) buoys, which can be used for overnight mooring (€14 per night I believe) if not wanting to risk anchoring in higher winds. The main anchorage in the centre of the bay clear of all the yellow buoys (as always along this coast there are many of these defining where you can or cannot anchor), has water 9m - 12m deep and is quite good holding. There is quite often a swell reaching into the bay, which makes anchoring buoy-mooring uncomfortable at times. The whole bay area is given over to tourism and there is quite a long beach at the head of the bay. Landing by dinghy is no problem (on a piece of beach by the yacht club in the north east corner of the bay) and there is a well-stocked and reasonably priced supermarket on the road by the beach not far from the yacht club.

Rade de Villefranche:

The Rade de Villefranche (43°42'N, 07°19'E.) is entered between Pointe des Sans Culottes, the SE extremity of the Mont Boron promontory, and Pointe Malalongue, the SW extremity of Cap Ferrat, 1 mile SE. The bay extends N for 1.5 miles and offers sheltered anchorage to vessels of any size. It is used by vessels that cannot enter Nice. The W coast of the bay is dominated by the promontory of Mont Boron. The E coast is formed by the rugged and moderately-elevated promontory of Cap Ferrat. Anse de l'Espalmador, at the E side of the bay, offers shelter from E winds. Within the bay, sailing vessels do not have the right of way over vessels under power. Larger vessels generally anchor on the W side of the bay from abreast the South harbour breakwater to abreast the Northern end of the town - the bottom is soft mud and weed. Yachts and other smaller pleasure craft tend to favour the north eastern corner of the bay, where there is shallower water and more shelter. This area is extremely popular at weekends and becomes a very crowded anchorage. Rade de Villefranche is a convenient place to spend extended periods at anchor because there are a wide variety of shops available in Villefranche itself, and also in St Jean Cap Ferrat and Beaulieu-Sur-Mer, both of which are within easy walking distance of dinghy landing places on the east coast of the bay.

There are post offices in all three localities and a convenient launderette in Villefranche. The 'Australian Bar' Internet cafe is close to the main quay in Villefranche. Note that within the bay, sailing vessels do not have the right of way over vessels under power. Also note that the Rade de Villefranche is a poor reception area for Navtex, RTTY and even normal radio.

Villefranche:

One of the most perfectly located towns on the French coast, Villefranche lies at the foot of hills that separate it from Nice. Beyond the waterfront, the streets of Villefranche are narrow, winding and often stepped or enclosed by overhanging buildings. Within the streets is the Chappelle St-Pierre, which until 1957 when it was restored was a store for fishing nets! The citadelle St-Elme is worth a visit and has some (free to enter) museums within its walls. The citadelle is located close to the waterfront between the old and new ports and has some lovely gardens with its perimeter, as well as views over the Rade de Villefranche where Tradewinds was anchored. Overlooking Villefranche is the fort on Mont Boron, which takes about an hour to walk to. The views from there are extensive in both coastal directions, but the fort itself is derelict and not open to the public. On the waterfront at Villefranche and in the backstreets there is a wide choice of restaurants - those on the waterfront are in Italian style, although the cuisine is both from France and Italy.

Cap Ferrat:

The peninsula of Cap Ferrat has a rocky coastal path on the Rade de Villefranche side and on the other a less demanding concrete path leading through the small town of St Jean Cap Ferrat on the eastern side. The scenery is stunning particularly along the cliff sides of the western path, but also inland where are situated some of the most sumptuous villas to be found on the French Riviera. It was on the Cap Ferrat peninsula that from 1926 until his death, the well-known author Somerset Maugham lived in his villa "Mauresque". There he received celebrities such as Noel Coward, Winston Churchill and the Duke of Windsor.

Whilst at Cap Ferrat a visit to the Villa and gardens of "Ephrussi de Rothschild" is highly recommended. It was just a short walk from the "Plage Passable" where we always landed by dinghy. The house was built by Béatrice Ephrussi, formally a Rothschild, one of the famous French banking families. She already had a sumptuous villa in Monaco, but fell in love with the natural beauty of seven acres of land on the narrowest part of the Cap Ferrat peninsula and bought it in 1905. She then set about building the house of her dreams - it took 5 years to construct the palace, which was built in the style of the great Renaissance residences of Venice and Florence. The main garden was modelled after the deck of a ship, adorned with waterfalls and ponds with the Temple of Love at the prow - surrounded by sea as the villa is, Béatrice could thus imagine herself aboard the famous French liner "Ile de France" cruising worldwide as she did. There are also nine themed gardens created as well as a Rose garden. Béatrice Ephrussi de Rothschild personally designed the villa, which has 12 state rooms, galleries, studies, bedrooms and boudoirs having a recurring theme - the rose and the colour pink. When Béatrice died in 1934 she bequeathed the property and 5000 works of art to the Academy of Arts in France, in order that the house be turned into a museum.

Monaco:

The Principality of Monaco consists of three towns and three harbour basins. Monaco, the capital, is built on a promontory which stands on the South side of the main harbour, 1 mile NE of Cap d'Ail. La Condamine, the commercial town, is situated close W of the main harbour and Monte Carlo, the residential town, is situated close North of it. The Principality of Monaco can be easily identified from seaward by its numerous buildings. These buildings give it the appearance of a whitish patch on the coast, and enable vessels, approaching from the S, to identify this part of the coast although the nearby peaks may be covered by fog. Conspicuous landmarks include the Sports Complex standing on the reclaimed land, close NE of Port Cap d'Ail; the Oceanographic Museum, a large white building, standing on the SE side of Monaco; and the Casino of Monte Carlo, with its green cupolas and two bell towers, standing close N of the main harbour.

Menton:

We both enjoyed and were impressed by Menton, which has a long history dating back to 1261 - since then the town has alternated between being in France and Italy, finally being sold by Charles III of Monaco to Napoleon III for the sum of four million Gold Brune in 1861. Lord Byron proclaimed that "I wish I lived in this land which so resembles paradise". It is now a popular holiday resort with a good sandy beach, a wide range of cafes and restaurants spread along and below its promenade and ranged on the hillside overlooking the more modern holiday resort - it is one of the loveliest places to wander about, with charming views around every corner and at every level as you climb upwards towards the church of Saint-Michel (consecrated in 1675) and beyond. We berthed in Menton-Garavan, which is to the east of the town and is a relatively modern marina. The older town marina is mostly for smaller boats and was unavailable to us on the occasion we tried to obtain a berth. There are a full range of marine services available in Garavan including three chandlers - between them they hold a good stock of equipment and generally are slightly cheaper than the

other chandlers seen along the Cote d'Azur and Riviera. There are shore heads and bathrooms close to the pntoons and a laundry (not coin operated).

Menton is just inside France but once belonged to Genoa. Menton is still Italian in character and is apparently as warm in winter as Capri. The Cote d'Azur resort is used to tourists and has had a resident English Colony since the 1880s. Among assorted European nobility in Menton's beautiful hilltop cemetery lie the inventor of Rugby football and Aubrey Beardsley, Oscar Wilde's friend and illustrator. Above the post yachts and fishing boats, Menton's old town rises in a tangle of stepped lanes, pink / green / ochre houses and tall Italianate churches. Menton is big enough to have most of what the tourist needs, both in season and out - plenty of shops, gardens, museums (including one to Jean Cocteau housed in the old fort) and plenty going on. Menton boasts a famous Lemon Festival in February each year. Westward there is a curious 1930s Moorish style Casino and a long promenade with a clean if rather pebbly beach. Behind the town stands a sheltered line of mountains and several ancient villages on high ledges, connected by little lanes and footpaths. Surprisingly for the Riviera, there is a network of such routes, including parts of two 'GRs' - Grande Randonnees (French long-distance footpaths).

The border between France and Italy lies about 1 nautical mile east of menton Garavan in the vicinity of the Ruisseau Saint-Louis headland. It is indicated to seaward by the alignment of two beacons, but they are difficult to spot. The front beacon stands on the beach and the rear beacon stands close west of a bridge, which spans the river.