



# RIVIERA REVIVAL

KNOWN FOR ITS OLD-WORLD GLAMOUR, BOUNDARY-PUSHING OPENINGS AND SHINY REFURBISHMENTS ARE BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO MONACO AND ITS ONCE-SLEEPY NEIGHBOURS

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**M**onaco. The name conjures up images of timeless glamour, beauty, hedonism and wealth. Think of Monaco, and think of Princess Grace Kelly, of old-world hotels which have graced the silver screen, the Grand Prix and high society balls. To the east of Monaco lies Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, the once a sleepy village turned rendezvous spot for some of history's most avant-garde figures. Nearly a century ago, Irish architect and designer Eileen Grey crafted her visionary stilted home Villa E-1027 here – refurbished and re-opened to the public in 2021 – and not long after Coco Chanel built her own Villa Pausa, hosting fabulous soirees for the likes of Picasso, Dalí, Churchill and Cocteau. Though undeniably glamorous, this glossy enclave of the Riviera has remained relatively set in its old ways, that is, until the past year, when boundary-pushing new openings and a slew of new refurbishments are changing up its tourism landscape. For summer 2022, there's nowhere more exciting on the Riviera than this charming little corner.

## STYLISH STAYS

Most people, at some time or another, sitting in Monaco or its nearby villages will find themselves staring at The Maybourne Riviera. It's almost impossible not to. Most people know it, or if they don't know what it is, they've wondered it. During the day, it appears as an imposing modernist façade of crisscrossed white blocks on the cliffside, and come night, its brilliant illumination could be seen from space. French architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte's ambitious ode to nouveau luxe design is the latest opening from Maybourne Hotel Group (of London's Claridge's, The Berkeley and Connaught hotels) and the second outside of the UK. The hotel lords above Monaco cantilevered on a rocky Roquebrune-Cap-Martin outcrop and heralds a new look for this corner of the Côte d'Azur with its futuristic yet sleek design.

Before its glossy transformation, the arresting shell spent eight long years as a local eyesore, boarded up after the closure of the Vista Palace, as it was once called,



Previous page: Monte-Carlo Beach at Roquebrune-Cap-Martin  
This page: Monaco's Port Hercules Facing page: The Maybourne Riviera's swimming pool

before being snapped up by Paddy McKillen of the Maybourne Group for the brand's long-awaited expansion into Europe. The position is second-to-none – overlooking the twinkling lights of Monte-Carlo and down to the beaches of Roquebrune on one side, and on the other, to the Italian border city of Menton. Five of the biggest names in interior design were hired for the project: André Fu, Bryan O'Sullivan, Pierre Yovanovitch and Michelle Yu, along with uber-luxury London-based firm Rigby & Rigby. Five unique designers may seem cacophonous, but the result is harmonious.

What hits you when entering the soaring lobby is light, pouring in from the floor-to-ceiling windows leading to ocean-view terraces. Eyes are instantly drawn to a vast sculpture of an intertwined couple by French-American artist Louise Bourgeois hanging from the ceiling, then to the iconic Bibendum chairs, designed by Eileen Gray and Le Corbusier stained glass. From the lobby, it's an easy glide out to Italian-Argentine chef Mauro Colagreco's new Riviera Restaurant and out onto the terrace which is perennially bathed in Mediterranean sunshine. Renowned architect André Fu was brought in to craft the hotel's holistic two-storey wellness space.

Contrasting the blues and whites sweeping the hotel, Fu's spa is full of solid oak, French limestone, polished rose gold and earthy neutral tones which adorn the curved sculptured walls. Behind the walls are seven treatment rooms, a hair and beauty salon, a boutique stocked with stylish local brands and a wellness suite.

Rooms are just as soothing and sunlit, and ultra-modern meets retro-modernist with plenty of marble, soft powdery pastel pinks and blues. Terraces look onto the sea with baby blue loungers and charming dining sets or are shaded by pines with the occasional private pool. The view itself is superlative – out onto the endless blue Mediterranean and down onto the pool framed by bright orange umbrellas and the brilliant green lawns, which recently played host to the global launch of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars' Phantom Series II. In 69 rooms – including 29 suites – bathrooms have Japanese Toto toilets and are stocked with Dyson hairdryers and crystal glassware for fixing drinks – after all, there are few better spots on the entire coastline to enjoy a sundowner than your panoramic terrace.

What might grab your attention when nursing an aperitif is a sweeping terracotta-



PHOTOGRAPHS, FACING PAGE: VIA TOLLILA FOLLOWING PAGE: MELODIE MCDANIEL FOR CHANEL





coloured structure and silvery pebble beach below, which, in fact, is the original trailblazer with a slew of new additions. Amid Monaco's glitzy grande dames, Monte-Carlo Beach is the stylishly understated sister. Lying on a peaceful bend just outside of Monaco, technically, its address too is Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, but as the name suggests, the vibe is unequivocally Monégasque.

Designed by the legendary architect Roger Séassal, Monte-Carlo Beach itself has been here since the 1930s, when it opened to a huge fanfare giving the people of Monaco what they'd been missing – an exclusive beach and pool club. While a true institution, it's not in the least bit stuffy, instead, facing the future with vigour and originality. Last year the hotel unveiled its new beach, refurbished and reimagined in the image of its original 1930s beachfront. This year, the hotel unveiled a new 200-metre strip of fine, pale sand, completely refreshed its 180 private beach club tents and erected an ultra-chic pontoon. Jutting out into the ocean and branded with its moniker, the wooden decking is filled with oily-limbed jet-set who swim lengths in the inky blue. Of course, the Olympic-sized swimming pool with a diving board is a safe bet for those who prefer not to take on the tides. Both beach and pool set the scene for Chanel's 2022/23 Cruise Collection – where the world's style set descended on Monte-Carlo Beach to celebrate the eternal allure of the French Riviera. The hotel itself sits in the shadow of Karl Lagerfeld's former villa, Villa La Vigie, now

operated as a private stay villa by Monaco's Société des Bains de Mer (SBM).

Despite its new additions and shiny refurbishment, everything at the hotel evokes a sense of glamour and nostalgia, to a time when Princess Grace, Marlene Dietrich and Coco Chanel would come calling. Black and white photographs hang around the interiors and in-room televisions play the same evocative montage. Illustrious history aside, the curved terracotta-hued hotel is all about understated elegance. The bright, Art Deco-inspired interiors are by Parisian designer India Mahdavi and rooms a sea of stripes and motifs inspired by Matisse. Each comes with a loggia which looks onto a rocky private beach below and the twinkly lights of Monaco. There's no need to request a sea view, as all of them are ocean-facing. What's groundbreaking here is the hotel, and SBM's, dedication to the environment. Surprisingly, in-room toiletries are biologically friendly and all food served is organic – a key draw to its chic restaurants like seafood restaurant La Vigie, poolside Le Deck and innovative Elsa.

While SBM's other Monaco properties are serviced by the mega wellness hub that is Thermes Marins Monte-Carlo Monaco, Monte-Carlo Beach once again proves its exclusivity with its own spa hut steps away from the sand. Luxury, ethical, organic and biological French skincare brand PAOMA has been introduced this season, in line with the hotel, and SBM in its entirety's, passion to protect the planet.

*Previous page:* Chanel debuted its Cruise 2022/23 collection at Monte-Carlo Beach  
*This page:* Elsa restaurant at Monte-Carlo Beach



## GRAND GASTRONOMY

Monaco has long been a spot for gastronomic excellence. Auguste Escoffier, the man who pioneered French Grande Cuisine, cooked in Monte-Carlo in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a Monaco dining guide reads like a roll call of the world's finest culinary artists. But a refreshing new wave of culinary talent is injecting some fun into the otherwise grandiose dining scene. This year, in a pioneering move, Monte-Carlo Beach invited chef Mélanie Serre to take the helm of its sweeping waterfront terrace restaurant, the chef now serving 100 per cent organic food and wild-caught fish. Much produce comes from the organic vegetable garden to create dishes like French beans in spicy broth, carrot with cumin and carrot top pesto and showstoppers like Mediterranean red mullet with potato gnocchi.



In the glitzy centre of Monte-Carlo, triple-Michelin starred Chef Yannick Alléno has also landed at Hôtel Hermitage with Pavillon Monte-Carlo. The superstar chef's – who also helms a restaurant at Dubai's One&Only The Palm – new concept serves his classic elevated French cuisine but also redefines fine dining. The garden-inspired seafront terrace sees magnums of rosé grape float between tables while guests seated inside have a front-row seat to the open kitchen. What's more interesting, however, is the culinary journey of Monaco's oldest, and arguably most opulent hotel, Hôtel de Paris. The landmark has resided on the fabled Casino Square since 1864 and is a true ode to Monégasque splendour. Muscling in next to chefs like Alain Ducasse and Franck Cerutti is 26-year-old Lebanese chef Yasmina Hayek who opened the third iteration of her family's beloved Lebanese restaurant Em Sherif this April. As the daughter of founder Mireille, Yasmina was tasked with bringing Lebanon's authentic and beloved cuisine to the Principality while adding a local twist. You'll find Em Sherif classics like hummus, mutabbal and fattoush tabbouleh, but with dishes inspired by the locale like steamed

whole sea bass stuffed with fragrant caramelised rice. Levant-meets-Riviera too in the al fresco setting: a luscious green garden and terrace overlooking the endless blue sky and Mediterranean.

As far as dining destinations go, The Maybourne Riviera is cementing itself as the shiniest new spot to visit. Much like its coterie of designers, heavyweights in the culinary world have stepped in to lead its six outlets. Chef Mauro Colagreco's new Riviera Restaurant, championing the coast from Liguria to Nice is, and one of the most sought-after reservation spots this season. Multi-starred Jean-Georges Vongerichten's pool bar serves lobster rolls, crispy French fries and truffle pizza and pastry prodigy Benoît Dutreige whips up zingy Menton lemon tart and fluffy Madeleines. Many well-heeled visitors are heading to Colagreco's rooftop restaurant Ceto, an 'ode to the sea' and culinary dive into the Mediterranean. Exciting things are happening in this corner of the Riviera, and with Cote d'Azur's long summers stretching into November, there's much life to be had in the season yet. 

*This page:* dishes at Elsa  
*Facing page, clockwise from top left:* dining at Yannick Alléno's Pavillon Monte-Carlo; Mauro Colagreco's Riviera Restaurant; dishes, and terrace at Pavillon Monte-Carlo



PHOTOGRAPHS: MATTEO CARASSALE, MONTE-CARLO SOCIÉTÉ DES BAINS DE MER

## GETTING THERE

New for summer 2022, Etihad Airways ([etihad.com](http://etihad.com)) has added twice-weekly direct flights between Abu Dhabi and Nice Côte d'Azur until 30 September 2022. Gulf Air and Emirates also fly direct to Nice from Bahrain and Dubai, respectively