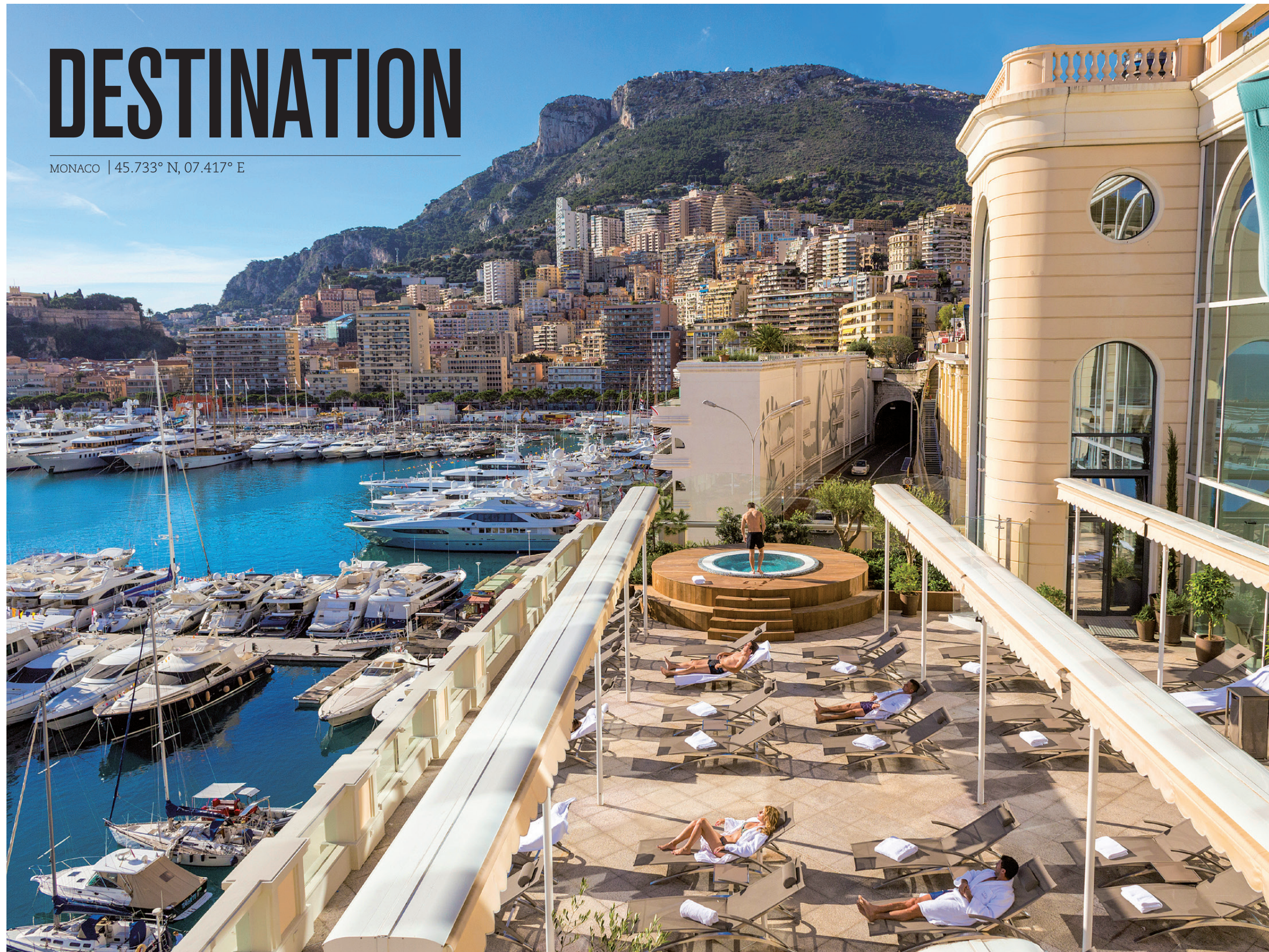


DESTINATION

MONACO | 45.733° N, 07.417° E



LEFT: The Thermes Marins Monte-Carlo is one of the world's most famous – and pricey – spas. ABOVE: The Hermès Kelly bag, named after Princess Grace.

streets like any other resident, it's fitting that you can easily retrace her favourite walks.

REGAL FOOTSTEPS

If walking her children (Caroline, Albert and Stephanie) to school was a daily ritual for Princess Grace, so too was shopping for seasonal produce at La Condamine Market, established in 1880 and still open daily. Madame Catherine Fautrier, Monaco's ambassador to Australia, recalls as a child seeing Princess Grace in the famous market, where the display of local produce includes ambrosial strawberries, giant oranges and fresh-cut flowers.

The easiest way to soak up Grace's Monaco is also the most cost-effective: simply grab the *Parcours Princesse Grace* guide from the Monaco tourism office at 2a Boulevard des Moulins – just a few minutes' walk from Casino Square – and take the self-guided walk, which includes the Japanese Garden and Princess Grace Theatre on Avenue d'Ostende.

There are 25 large outdoor posters along the walking route, depicting her most famous local appearances over the decades.

It also takes in the royal home – the Prince's Palace of Monaco – surrounded by the old town. Entering this area, a touching poster shows Grace leading a very young Princess Stephanie to school along the same street.

The walk gives you a sense of how Grace wanted her children to have a normal upbringing – or as normal as being royal allows. Fatou tells us Grace encouraged them never to forget that her father and



LEFT: Grace and her youngest daughter Stephanie watch swimming races in 1969.

LIVE THE RIVIERA HIGH LIFE

WHEN IN MONACO, MAKE LIKE ROYALTY.

Arrive in style Most day trippers take the train from Nice – go the rock-star option, and book the seven-minute helicopter transfer from Nice to Monaco with Monacair. Choppers leave every 15 minutes daily, with minibus shuttle to deliver you to the door of your Monte Carlo accommodation. Priced from €160 (\$239) one way.

Find your feet Take a walk through the four hectares of Fontvieille Park and the Princess Grace Rose Garden, off Avenue des Guelfes. Fontvieille has a wonderful sculpture trail of notable works, including a clenched fist by French sculptor César.

Fishy business Visit the spectacular Oceanographic Museum of Monaco. Built in the baroque revival style, it sits on a sheer cliff face 85 metres above the sea. **Shop like Grace** Head to La Boutique du Rocher, run by the Grace Foundation, for a little something special. Or take the haute couture high road. After all, Princess Grace did love labels such as Dior – and the Hermès Kelly bag was of course named in her honour.

Keep it private Fair & Fairy tour guides specialise in private half- to whole-day cultural and historic tours. Their "chain of solidarity" ethos supports education for children in Mali using funds generated from guiding activities.



ABOVE: Aussie Home Loans founder John Symond is a Monaco regular – his new \$100 million superyacht is typical of the vessels that grace the city state's shores.

their grandfather (John B. Kelly) started out as a bricklayer.

The winding lanes she loved haven't changed much over the years and are home to yet another of her many pet projects – the Irish Library she set up to celebrate the Kelly family's heritage.

SPOT THE PRINCE

Waiting for the changing of the guard in front of the palace, we meet Prince Albert's personal



RIGHT: Monacair will chopper you from Nice to Monaco in style.

GOING TO GRACELAND

Monaco is still filled with the magic of its fairy-tale princess, writes **Catherine Fox**.

You're never far from anyone in the two-square-kilometre principality of Monaco, including the odd sports champion, film star, Australian business identity – and members of the Grimaldi royal family, as it turns out.

As our guide Fatoumata Froissart Diallo ("Fatou is fine") tells us, you can't really miss Prince Albert or his sister Princess Caroline if you live here. Caroline was spotted by

one of our group shopping with her daughter Charlotte in the chain store Zara the day before, while Albert is an "out and about" regular in his tiny kingdom (although his wife, shy Princess Charlene, is a less likely sighting).

Regardless of the everyday presence of Monaco's current royals, for most travellers this principality remains linked most powerfully to the aura of royalty past. Specifically, Princess Grace.

BETTMANN, FEADSHIP

The American actress became a real-life fairy-tale princess after she married Prince Rainier III in 1956, but died aged 52 in a car accident in 1982. Her legacy is everywhere – be it at the ballet, which she frequented; in the rose garden named after her, now with 8000 roses and counting; or strolling her daily haunts around the old city.

Because Grace was known for her love of wandering Monaco's

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trainer of 25 years. He informs us the prince runs up to 10 kilometres twice a week.

As we chat, a cavalcade of cars, one carrying Albert, glides past. No wonder the locals are blasé about their famous neighbours: almost no degrees of separation here.

ORGANIC SEASIDE DINING

Naturally, the royal offspring learnt to swim at the private beach of the Monte-Carlo Beach hotel, which these days houses Elsa – one of the nine Michelin-starred restaurants found in the principality.

Running the kitchen is Italian Paolo Sari, billed as the world's first all-organic Michelin-starred chef. Sari turns out finely balanced tasting menus using local ingredients, priced from €120 (\$180).

LUXURY TURN-DOWN

To sample all those Michelin eateries, you might need a night or three. Consider the five-star Hôtel Hermitage, which is gloriously pretty with *belle époque* décor and views over the Mediterranean. Prices at the 278-room hotel start from €330 (\$490) and it's a favourite with well-heeled Australians, including Aussie Home Loans boss John Symond and his wife Amber, who are at breakfast the morning we stay.

Hermitage's neighbour, Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo, is just as famous. But it's in the middle of a major and somewhat controversial renovation (due to finish in September 2018), which affects

some original features. Dating back to 1864, Hôtel de Paris's Le Bar Américain remains open and is perfect for people-watching and a nightcap, while the restaurant Le Grill is run by famed French chef Alain Ducasse. On the way out, make a detour through the ballroom, which defines *fin de siècle* glamour.

Both hotels share the magnificent Thermes Marins Monte-Carlo spa, with undercover access from each. One of the world's most famous – and pricey – day spas, bundled “stay and spa” deals are on offer, such as the Hôtel Hermitage's

BELOW: La Condamine Market, where Grace was often seen shopping.



ABOVE: the Princess Grace Rose Garden features a sculpture of its famous namesake.

four-night wellness package from €1950 (\$2910) a person, including 90 minutes of treatments each day and four lunches at Thermes Marins' L'Hirondelle restaurant.

HIT THE JACKPOT

There are four main casinos in Monaco, of which the Casino de Monte-Carlo is the most famous. It's intriguing how Monte-Carlo manages to avoid the tawdriness often associated with casinos: something the Monégasques just know how to pull off.

Grace was a major fan of and benefactor to the opera and ballet

ABOVE: Mediterranean views abound in Monaco. ABOVE LEFT: Grace and Prince Albert walk Princess Stephanie to her first day of school in 1971.

(held inside Casino de Monte-Carlo), and set up La Fondation Princesse Grace for the arts in 1964. She often visited the casino for functions, but not to gamble.

STAR GAZING

Investing extra time in Monaco, rather than taking the usual day trip from Nice, reveals a different flavour to this glamorous destination. As the streets empty of day trippers, the Euro jet set emerge. Even a quiet dinner can leave you sitting next to gluten-free Serbian tennis star Novak Djokovic, who is based in Monte Carlo, and opened his vegan restaurant Eqvita at 7 Rue du Portier (near the port) in 2016.

Gawking is not the done thing. However, ambassador Madame Fautrier does confess her most recent celebrity sighting this year was actor Hugh Grant, who was hosting the Laureus World Sports Awards at the Salles des Etoiles. But she points out few locals would take a second glance – and nor should you.

The writer travelled as a guest of Visit Monaco and stayed at the Hôtel Hermitage.

KARAWYSH, HEMIS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, BETTMANN