

diversions

first class ❖ ROYAL SUMMER

Monaco is the perfect vacation destination for jet-setters and families alike.

BY KIMBERLEY LOVATO

It's hard to think of Monaco without accompanying images of megayachts and racecars, dashing tuxedo-clad gents and real-life princesses. In reality, this vision is not far off. Every year, thousands of visitors from around the world fly, sail or drive their Ferraris to the fairytale principality on France's southern coast to soak up the sublime Mediterranean climate and enjoy scenes plucked straight out of a James Bond (or Grace Kelly) flick. But visitors will be surprised to find Monaco is accessible to mere mortals too, with a familial appeal and an overflowing calen-



MICHAELA HART



The Casino de Monte-Carlo is one of the world's most famous casinos.

Previous page: the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco

dar of summer events that make this diamond-encrusted enclave fun for everyone.

MUSICAL MONACO

The Royal Courtyard of the Prince's Palace of Monaco is the enchanted location for a series of outdoor performances in July and August by the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra and is a must for classical music lovers. Traditionally, the courtyard was used for official occasions and rarely opened to the public. It was Prince Rainier III who decided to renew the tradition of the palace concerts in August 1959. *opmc.mc*

For a livelier scene, the Monte-Carlo Sporting Summer Festival is tops. All summer long, the Sporting Monte-Carlo rocks with the music from international artists. Past headliners have included Andrea Bocelli, the Beach Boys and Lionel Richie, and 2009 welcomed Lenny Kravitz, Moby and Steely Dan among others who enchanted revelers throughout July and August evenings. The full schedule has



Black Legend is a one-stop place for nighttime fun in Monaco.

not been released, but Sir Elton John will be one of the headliners this year. *sportingmontecarlo.com*

NIGHT LIGHTS

July and August (as of press time, exact dates had not been announced) means explosive summer nights as the Monte-Carlo International Fireworks Festival and Competition entertains young and old who flock by the thousands to view the amazing celestial displays. The competition has been held since 1966 and attracts pyrotechnic devotees from around the globe. The sky art can be seen from just about anywhere in Monte Carlo. The Old City above the port and the Casino de Monte-Carlo terrace overlooking the sea are ideal perches. The competition runs through August, and the winner is invited back on November 18 to create a celebratory display on the eve of Monaco's National Day. *visitmonaco.com*

Groupe Floirat, the brains behind many exclusive Riviera hotels, and the star-studded St. Tropez boîte Les Caves du Roy, has done it again with the recently opened Black Legend. A restaurant, nightclub, live music venue and lounge bar rolled into one, Black Legend brings the vibe of Motown to Monaco's port. Night owls hit the club from Thursday to Sunday, when a DJ spins until 5 a.m. *black-legend.com*

LITTLE PRINCE

All aboard! The Azur Express Tourist Train makes a daily 30-minute journey around Port of Monaco, the Casino de Monte-Carlo and gardens, Old Town and Saint Nicholas Cathedral, and the Prince's Palace. *visitmonaco.com*

Catch the train in front of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco. This mecca of marine sciences is an impressive architectural masterpiece hewn into the cliff and rising to 279 feet above the Mediterranean.



Miami Plage Restaurant on Larvotto Beach; Monaco Cathedral (right)

Kids especially love the basement-level aquarium that showcases 4,000 species of fish. *oceano.mc*

Relax on Larvotto Beach where children's activities abound, from trampolines and bouncy playgrounds to water sports and even a child-care facility. Reserve a table on the sand at Miami Plage Restaurant, and enjoy top-notch cuisine while the kids play only a few feet away. *miami-plage-monaco.com*

Le Méridien Monte Carlo hotel is adjacent to the Sporting concert venue (listen closely from your balcony), and minutes from Larvotto Beach. The hotel's private beach and pool provide lounge chairs, towels and parasols, and are adored by young families. *lemeridienmontecarlo.com*

SAVOR SUMMER

Open May 14 to September 18, the Bar Boeuf & Co. restaurant is the fine food outlet of noted chef Alain



Ducasse and the reservation to secure for summer. *alain-ducasse.com*

No trip to Monaco would be complete without a visit to Le Café de Paris, one of the oldest and most stylish brasseries in Monte Carlo overlooking the casino and the fabled Hotel de Paris. It's the epitome of luxe life on the Riviera and the perfect place to watch the movie reel that is Monaco roll by. ♦