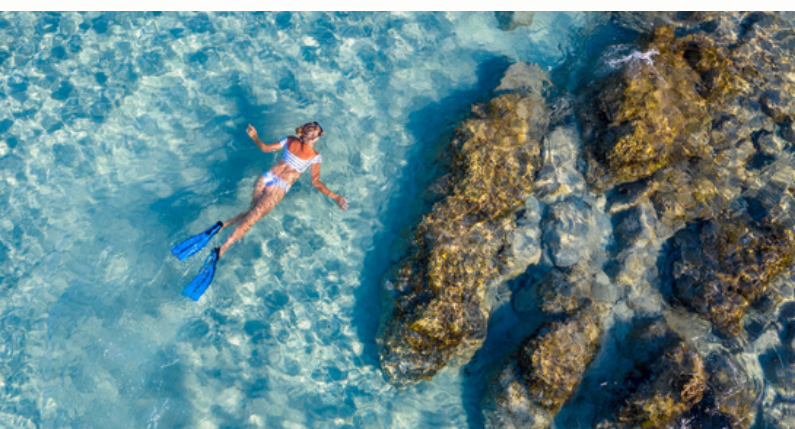
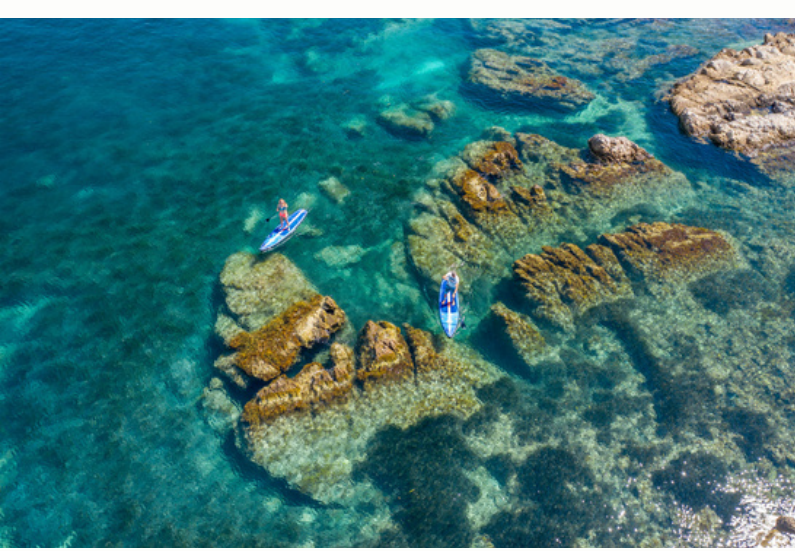


PRESS RELEASE

CANNES: THE LÉRINS ISLANDS





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THE LÉRINS ISLANDS: JEWELS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Opposite the legendary Croisette and surrounded by the turquoise waters of the Bay of Cannes, the Lérins Islands offer their visitors a peaceful setting in which to enjoy a perfect blend of heritage discoveries and leisure activities, in the very heart of a wild and preserved nature.

Located 1,300 metres from the tip of Palm Beach, this little archipelago made up of two islands – Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Honorat – and surrounded by islets, is separated by a narrow channel, the Frioul: an idyllic anchorage which has long been very popular with sailors.

Easily accessible from Cannes, the Lérins Islands welcome some 400,000 visitors from around the world each year (300,000 on Sainte-Marguerite and 100,000 on Saint-Honorat)

Their name, the 'Lérins Archipelago', comes from the ancient names of the two islands, Lero and Lerina, cited by several authors including Pliny the Elder in the 1st century. These names, engraved in Greek on an ivory lid found during archaeological excavations, likely referred to a pair of deities who protected the site before the Roman era.



PROTECTED ISLANDS, MEMBERS OF SMILO



The SMILO (Small Islands Organisation), which operates mainly on small islands (<150 km²) in France and further afield (particularly in the Euro-Mediterranean region and in Africa), accompanies and supports integrated territorial projects, coordinated between all partners, on the following themes: water, energy, waste, terrestrial and marine ecosystems, biodiversity, landscapes and spatial planning.

To achieve these objectives, a range of tools is made available to member islands: support for the implementation of management operations, promotion of good practices and innovative solutions, networking and cooperation between peers, technical and institutional support, investment and certification which has allowed the Lérins Town Hall and Abbey to be supported in Saint-Honorat Island's candidacy for UNESCO World Heritage status.

In the summer of 2018, the City of Cannes created and convened an island committee for Sainte-Marguerite Island to reflect on the archipelago's concerted and sustainable management. This committee addressed the fields of water and sanitation, energy, waste, ecosystems and biodiversity, landscapes and sustainable tourism. Lérins Abbey also hosts an island committee for Saint-Honorat Island.

At the third annual international SMILO meeting in Porquerolles in October 2019, the Saint Marguerite and Saint-Honorat islands were awarded 'Label in Progress' status and two sectoral awards (Landscapes and Waste for Saint-Honorat Island; Landscapes and Ecosystems for Sainte-Marguerite Island). In order to obtain the 'sustainable island' label for the two islands, it is essential that island committee meetings continue, coordinating the actions scheduled as part of the strategic plan.



SAINTE-MARGUERITE ISLAND

The larger of the two Lérins Islands, separated from its little sister Saint-Honorat by the Frioul canal and spanning some 800 m, is a real paradise of cool tranquillity. Accessible via a 15-minute boat from Cannes, it offers a unique view of the coast and the mountain ranges of the hinterland, Estérel and Mercantour.



9 KM
COASTLINE



3,200 M
LONG



BETWEEN
500 AND 900 M
WIDE



SAINTE-MARGUERITE IN FIGURES



133 SPECIES LISTED
OF WHICH 107 PROTECTED

173 ha, of which



**152 ha of state
forest**

**23 PROTECTED PLANT
SPECIES**



SAINTE-MARGUERITE IN HISTORY

The island of Sainte-Marguerite likely owes its name to a chapel erected on the island, in honour of the martyrdom of Antioch, which remained one of the island's main places of worship until at least 1658. After the island's Roman occupation, it belonged to the monks of Lérins for many centuries. In 1617, the Duke of Guise commissioned Jean de Bellon to build a fort to protect the Kingdom of France's maritime border. Built by Richelieu, it was reinforced by the Spaniards who came to occupy the island from 1635 to 1637, then by Vauban in the late 17th century.

The fort served as a state prison from 1687 and then, after the Revolution, as a military prison. For two centuries, hundreds of prisoners were imprisoned there, without trial or judgement, including Protestant pastors, following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Later, prisoners, political insurgents and their families, as well as members of Emir Abd-el-Kader's Smala, were deported to the fort after the conquest of Algeria, between 1830 and 1884. Several dozen of them, having died in captivity, were buried on the north coast of the island, in the oldest Muslim cemetery in France.

Famous inmates

In addition to the enigmatic 'Man in the Iron Mask', Marshal Bazaine was detained there for eight months before making an epic escape on 9 August 1874. The Bishop of Ghent, Maurice de Broglie, was also detained on the island for ten months in 1812.



A NATURAL PARADISE

The best way to discover the 152 Ha of state forest is by setting off along the marked trails. The belt path allows you to make your way around the island, staying close to the clear seabed – a tempting invitation to a summer dip. A botanical trail makes it possible to spot many species of trees and marine plants thanks to its signage, while the great wealth of Mediterranean flora offers itself up to walkers – with a discovery of the maquis made up of lentisks, myrtle, sarsaparilla, cistus, honeysuckle, clematis and more. To the west, Batéguier Lake – where seawater mixes with fresh water from an artesian well – is a protected shelter and important stopover for many species of migratory birds. This ornithological reserve plays an essential role in the nesting of certain protected species, such as the Common Tern. Skilfully preserved, the forest massifs of Aleppo pine, holm oaks and eucalyptus make up one of the most representative natural habitats of the French Mediterranean coasts.

Like any protected site, classified as a biological reserve in 2006, the reserve must combine protection and the welcoming of the public by cordoning off certain areas to protect them from trampling. To ensure the conservation of its heritage and welcome the public in the best conditions, a new management plan has been put in pace for 2021–2029. The following fauna will therefore be preserved: pheasant, snake, hawk, hedgehog, bat and more.

Find out more: <https://www.onf.fr/vivre-la-foret/forets-de-france/%2B/196a::foret-domaniale-de-lile-sainte-marguerite.html?lang=fr>

NFO

The National Forestry Office ensures the site's protection and management.

NFO Enquiries: 04 93 43 49 24

Please note: bicycles are prohibited, dogs must be kept on a leash, smoking is prohibited on the island and visitors are asked to collect their waste as no rubbish bins are provided on the island.



THE CITY OF CANNES AND THE NFO MODERNISE SAINTE-MARGUERITE ISLAND'S SIGNAGE TO BETTER WELCOME VISITORS

The NFO has developed a 'Cannes Lérins & moi' smartphone app, allowing visitors to enjoy themed smart walks and access information on services located on the island (safety instructions, regulations, locations of toilets, restaurants and kiosks, picnic areas, etc.). The City of Cannes contributes to this app's implementation through a grant and the contribution of iconographic and scientific content.

For now, two guided smart walks have been designed.

The first, focused on biodiversity, lasting 1 hour and with a total length of 1.4 km, offers a discovery of the natural heritage all around Lake Batéguier: observation of environments and species, understanding of conservation issues, presentation of management actions implemented, etc.

The second, focused on cultural heritage, lasting 3 hours and with a total length of 6 km (shortcut possible), presents a discovery of the Fort Royal and the Man in the Iron Mask, the Muslim cemetery, Crimée and the La Convention battery.

Available for free on iOS and Android, 'Cannes Lérins & moi' offers a variety of features to better appreciate and protect local natural sites. It allows visitors to track their location in real time and discover the space around them without internet connection.

This tool effectively contributes to the island's development and preservation by providing information on good practices (no rubbish bins, no fires, tsunami shelters, etc.). It also makes it possible to better distribute visitors across locations other than the busiest beaches, while offering information on the site's biodiversity and all the heritage treasures to be found there.



WHAT TO DO ON THE ISLAND

Walk, swim and relax, while also discovering the great wealth of terrestrial and underwater fauna and flora thanks to the botanic trail, the ornithological reserve and the aquariums. Visit the Fort Royal for a real dive into history, with option for overnight accommodation, and explore the Iron Mask and Fort Royal Museum.

HOW TO GET THERE

Three companies, located on Quai Laubeuf, provide connections between Cannes and Sainte-Marguerite Island.

Return fare: Adults: €18,50 / 5–12 years: €12,50 / 13–25 years / Over 65 years: €17

Trans Côte d 'Azur

- Tel: 04 92 98 71 30
- www.trans-cote-azur.com

Riviera Lines

- Tel: 04 92 98 71 31
- www.riviera-lines.com

Compagnie Horizon

- Tel : 04 92 98 71 36
- www.horizon-lerins.com/

WHERE TO EAT

Two snack bars can be found near the pier. Various picnic areas are dotted around the island.

Two restaurants are located near the fort, open for lunch only from April to October:

La Guérite - open from 12:00 to 18:00

- Tel: 04 93 43 49 30
- www.restaurantlaguerite.com

L'Escale

- Tel: 07 52 37 66 72

HISTORY OF THE FORT ROYAL

Sainte-Marguerite's unspoilt nature contrasts with the austere minerality of the Fort Royal, constructed in the 17th century on the highest point of the island, facing the Bay of Cannes and the Gulf of Juan.

Archaeological excavations have revealed the site's age: traces of a 3rd century BCE habitat, possibly linked to a Celto-Ligurian sanctuary dedicated to the eponymous deities Lérôn and Lérinè (attested by literary sources), have been discovered under a Roman establishment which succeeded it in the 1st century CE and of which underground galleries (cryptoporticus), an imposing buttressed wall, cisterns and the painted decoration of a thermal building remain. At the same time, a vast Roman maritime villa was established by the sea, around Lake Batéguier. In the 4th century, part of this area was turned into a cemetery.

The acropolis site was likely reinvested in the Middle Ages under the impetus of the Lérins monastery, owner of the island at the time. In 1612, the Abbey of Lérins ceded the island to Claude de Lorraine, who gave it to his brother Charles, Duke of Guise and Governor of Provence, in 1618. That same year, the Duke installed his vassal Jean de Bellon there, instructing him to build a fortification (around 1618–24), to protect the archipelago and the coast.



In 1633, sensing a Spanish attack on the coasts of Provence, Richelieu acquired the island for the royal domain and sought to strengthen its defences. The Spanish troops nevertheless succeeded in seizing the Lérins Islands in 1635 and took refuge there for two years, building a new fortress – the Fuerte Real – around the 'Old Castle' of Bellon, including a rampart, several bastions, barracks for the garrison and an ingenious rainwater-collection system intended to supply several cisterns. The French later retook the islands in 1637 and improved this imposing structure, henceforth renamed the Fort Royal.



The buildings' current state testifies to the military engineering of Vauban, commissioner general of the fortifications under Louis XIV, who remodelled the Fort Royal over the course of three on-site visits (1682, 1693 and 1700). Saint-Marguerite is therefore home to one of the very rare examples of an island fort from the 17th century, dating back to the reign of Louis XIII and still including all of its characteristic elements: ramparts and bastions, watchtowers, gates and posterns, barracks, powder magazine, chapels, places of arms, wells, moats, glacis and advanced structures, among others. This unique ensemble was listed as a historical monument on 27 July 1927.



In addition to its strategic importance, the Fort Royal also served as a state prison under the Ancien Régime, before later becoming a military prison. Here, arbitrary internment, without trial or judgement, was the norm. For over two centuries, hundreds of prisoners – both anonymous and famous – came to live in the fort's cells: Protestant pastors made outlaws after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685); young nobles exiled by their families; Napoleon's Mamluks (1816); part of Emir Abd el-Kader's Smala (1843–1848); Marshal Achille Bazaine, accused of treason during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and who succeeded in an incredible escape (1874); and the mysterious 'Man in the Iron Mask', incarcerated for 11 years (1687–1698) in the fort's main building, today home to the Iron Mask and Fort Royal Museum.

The Fort Royal remained a military building until the 20th century, though it gradually abandoned its defensive function.

In 1862, the Old Castle tower was transformed into a semaphore (maritime signal-communication system) and raised by one floor. After the Great War, the fort welcomed disabled soldiers. The last garrison evacuated the premises in 1940. Occupied by the Italians and, later, the Germans (1943–1944), the fort was finally decommissioned in 1944. Having remained military property, it was then bought by the City of Cannes in 1995 (thanks in particular to a public fundraising campaign).

The site's heritage management now calls on various skills – both internally and externally – under the scientific supervision of the Regional Directorate for Cultural Affairs (DRAC PACA).



THE FORT ROYAL

A visit to the fort is a step back in time, through the centuries. Here, you can take a walk around the ramparts and enjoy exceptional views of the Côte d'Azur, or stroll through the barracks and discover the 17th-century church, the well and the powder magazine, as you observe the characteristics of a bastioned fort (ramparts, bastions, watchtowers, postern, place of arms, wells, etc.). This unique ensemble has been listed as a historical monument since 1927. Located in the heart of the fort, the Iron Mask and Fort Royal Museum offers visitors the chance to explore the prisoners' cells, some of which were painted by artist Jean Le Gac in 1992.

The museum also includes a permanent exhibition space, bringing together a significant collection of underwater and terrestrial archaeology. In the heart of the ancient Roman cisterns, furniture from underwater excavations, shipwrecks stranded off the islands' coasts and a beautiful collection of amphorae is presented. Visitors will also discover a collection of painted decorations dating back to the Antiquity.

IN THE FORT ROYAL

Within the fort, you'll be able to visit the Méditerranoscope, a space dedicated to underwater biodiversity, managed by the CPIE (Permanent Centre for Environmental Initiatives) of the Lérins and Pays d'Azur Islands, an organisation which works to preserve this rich natural heritage. This space features aquariums reconstituting the seabed of islands rich in protected species.

Open from April to October.

Tel: 04 93 39 26 80 - www.cpieazur.fr

The Provence Côte d'Azur Chantiers de Jeunes youth-volunteer association has been involved in the fort's renovation for over 30 years. From securing the ramparts to repairing buildings, various restorative works are carried out to promote access to this unique construction on the Cannes coast.



THE MYSTERY OF THE IRON MASK



*Everyone has heard of the Iron Mask – we know him from the many books devoted to the subject and he has even inspired several films over the years, the latest of which starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Jeremy Irons, John Malkovich and Gérard Depardieu. His existence (and that of his steel or velvet mask worn outside of his cell) is proven thanks to the records of the Bastille, where he was transferred in 1698 and remained until his death in November 1703. His popularity arose with Voltaire, who wrote *The Age of Louis XIV* in 1751, in which he denounced the 'tyrant' king who had locked up a mysterious prisoner, forcing him to wear a mask. This object would have featured iron hooks to create a chin strap, a detail that would be subsequently amplified by popular rumour. Over the years, has been given around fifty different identities, some more farfetched than others: Louis XIV's twin brother, an illegitimate son, a woman, Molière, a spy ...*

What we do know is that he spent 34 years in prison, 11 of which on the island, and that he had a designated jailer, Saint-Mars, the only person with whom he was permitted to converse. His cell, with fireplace and latrine, faces due north, featuring a window equipped with three massive grilles. Remarkably well preserved, this prison was 'tailor-made' to keep his identity a secret ... Paradoxically, while his identity remains unknown, this 'prisoner whose name no one knows, whose forehead no one has seen, a living mystery, shadow, enigma, problem', as Victor Hugo put it, remains the fort's most famous prisoner. To this day, no one has ever unravelled this mystery.

THE IRON MASK AND FORT ROYAL MUSEUM

Open every day except Mondays and certain public holidays; free on the first Sunday of each month, as well as for those under 18 and students under 26.

From October to March: from 10:30 to 13:15 and 14:15 to 16:45.

April to May: Closes at 17:45.

From June to September: 7 days a week from 10:00 to 17:45 continuously.

Free guided tours are organised from June to September (several departures per day).

Entrance fee: €6.50, concession €3.50.

Monday only from October to May: €3.50 (Fort Royal open, museum closed).

Information and registration for visits :

04 89 82 26 26



ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMMODATION ON THE ISLAND

Established within the fort since 1971, Cannes Jeunesse is a community and accommodation centre with reception facilities in listed buildings. It offers à la carte stays with or without activities. The site offers discovery classes or sporting (mainly boating) and cultural courses for schoolchildren, hosting of associations or works councils, adapted structures for the disabled (clinics for developmentally disabled children, senior care, etc.) and the organisation of seminars, as well as the hosting of families and individuals on weekends outside of school holidays (half-board night + breakfast: from €68.15).

For more information:

○ 04 97 06 27 20

○ www.cannes-jeunesse.fr/cis/individuels-familles.html

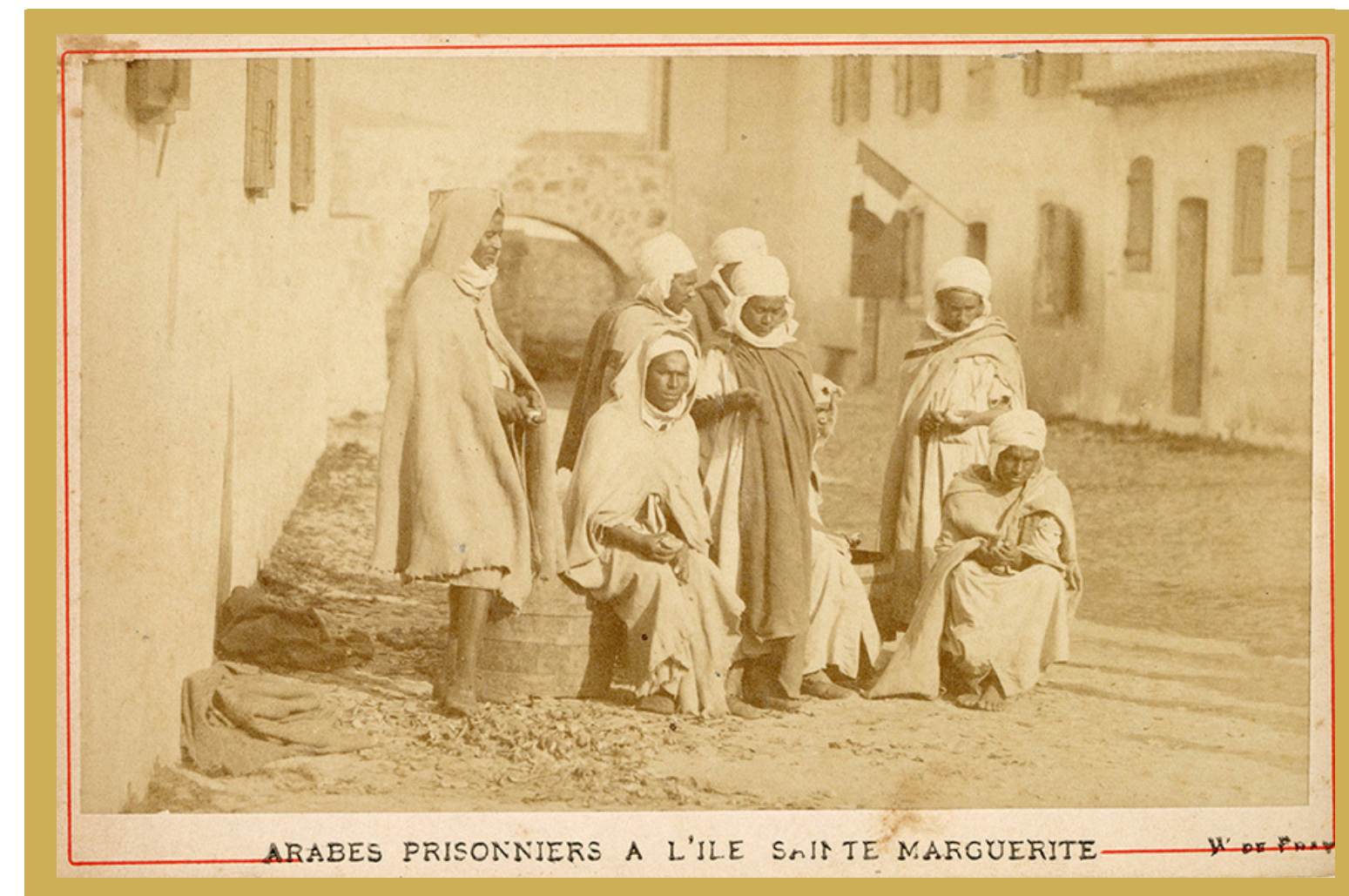
THE MUSLIM CEMETERY

In the 19th century, while Cannes was experiencing a remarkable boom as a seaside resort welcoming the world, Saint-Marguerite Island served as the keystone of an unprecedented system of repression, associated with the French conquest of Algeria. Between 1841 and 1884, more than 3,000 men, women and children were exiled and imprisoned at the Fort Royal by the government, without legal proceedings.

274 of them never regained their freedom. They now lie in unmarked graves on the island's north coast.

Upon the initiative of David Lisnard, Mayor of Cannes, and thanks to patient research conducted by the historian Anissa Bouayed as part of a project to study and enhance the Muslim cemetery of Sainte-Marguerite, a list of names of the deceased has been established. Their story, revealed to the public during an exhibition in 2023, offers us a new perspective of this unique place of memory in France.

Find out more : <https://www.cannes.com/fr/culture/archives-municipales/le-document-du-mois/le-document-du-mois-de-mars-2024.html>



Cannes Municipal Archives (2FI3932), donation by G. Ferretti

THE 20TH CENTURY ON THE LÉRINS ISLANDS

Following the annexation of the 'free zone' by Nazi Germany in 1942, Cannes fell to Italian troops and, later, to the German army, who occupied the city from 9 September 1943.

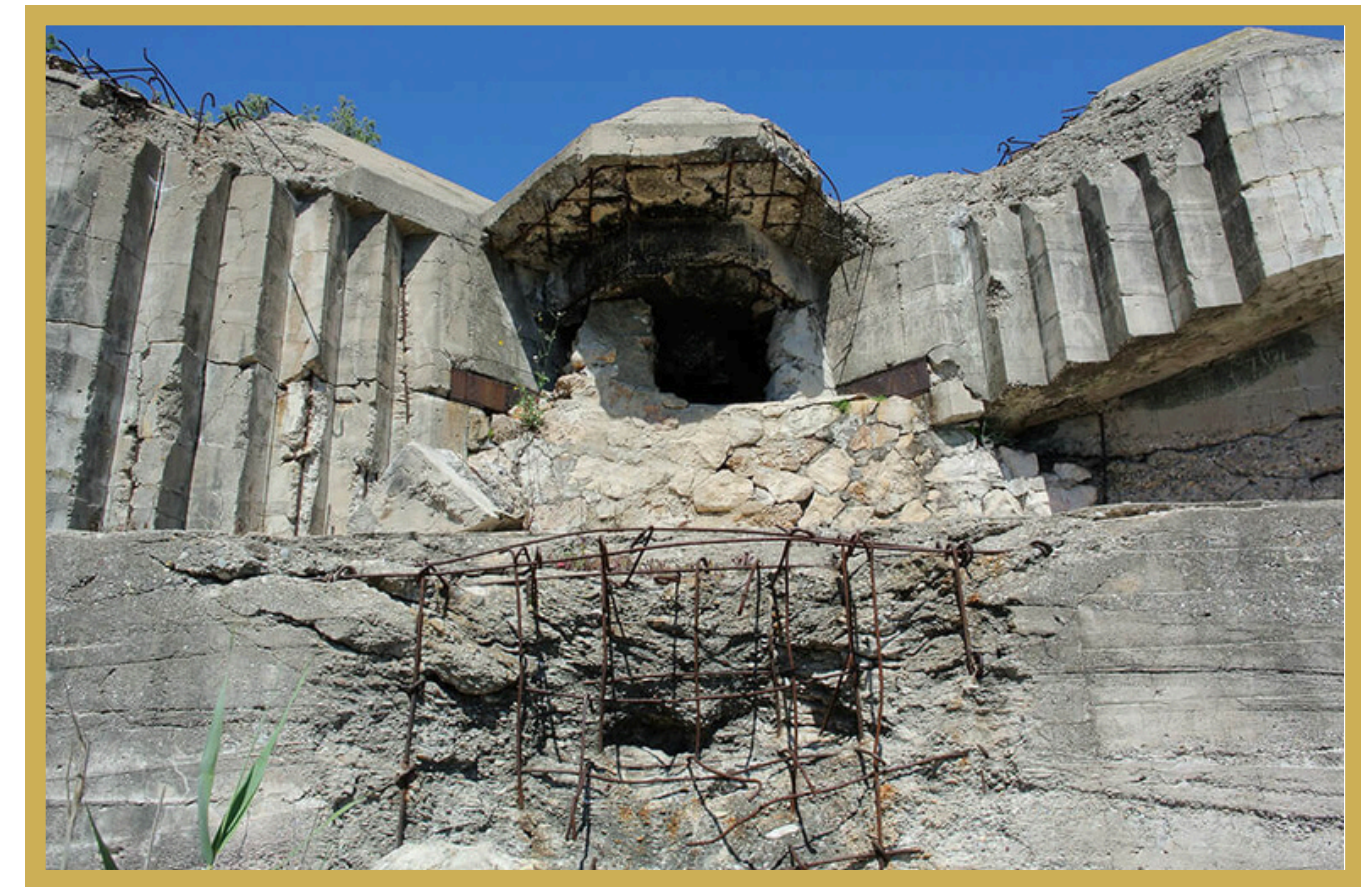
Fearing an Allied landing, the 148th Wehrmacht Reserve Division immediately organised the defence of the Cannes coastline: the shore as transformed into a defensive front, punctuated by artillery casemates (blockhouses) and fenced off with walls and barbed wire, anti-tank barriers, minefields and an anti-submarine net.

Liberated on August 24, Cannes quickly freed itself of these imposing reinforced-concrete bunkers that had come to disfigure its beaches and hills. The last of these would be destroyed in the 1980s, with the exception of two small structures still visible today.

On the Lérins Islands, on the other hand, the entire German defensive system has remained almost intact, with its six H670-type blockhouses, intended for 47 mm naval guns and supported by several mortar platforms, fortified firing posts (tobruks) for light machine guns, shelters and various other constructions.

Having been long ignored and even neglected, these constructions present an exceptional heritage and unique testimony of the occupation of Cannes by the Third Reich.

Find out more: <https://www.cannes.com/fr/culture/archives-municipales/le-document-du-mois/le-document-du-mois-de-juin-2024.html>



Blockhouse at Pointe de la Convention (Sainte-Marguerite Island), damaged by Allied fire in August 1944



SUBMERSION OF ARTIST JASON DECAIRES TAYLOR'S SCULPTURES THE CANNES UNDERWATER ECOMUSEUM DROPS ANCHOR OFF THE COAST OF SAINTE-MARGUERITE ISLAND

On Thursday, 28 January 2021, the sculptures of the Cannes underwater ecomuseum, carved by the famous British international artist Jason deCaires Taylor – a great lover of the city – were installed a few dozen of metres from the shores of Sainte-Marguerite Island. The six Cannes residents having lent their features to the artist were present for the submersion now taking shape in Cannes, upon the initiative of its mayor David Lisnard: the first underwater ecomuseum in France and the Mediterranean by this renowned sculptor.

Made from an environmentally friendly material, the statues promote the return of underwater fauna and flora, which will gradually return to the area around the works, ring-fenced off for swimming and significantly enlarged for the occasion.

Two metres tall and weighing about 10 tonnes each, the six statues making up the museum were crafted from an environmentally friendly marine material with a neutral pH, providing a refuge for underwater life. Submerged some 84 to 132 metres from the shore and at a depth of 3 to 5 metres, these sculptures are accessible to a wide audience of divers, simply equipped with a mask and snorkel. The theme, jointly chosen by the Mayor of Cannes and the artist, evokes the mysterious Man in the Iron Mask, imprisoned on the island for 11 years, while also paying tribute to the 7th art showcased by Cannes for many years.

The six faces were transported by barge and then submerged near the south shore of Sainte-Marguerite Island, in an area reserved for bathers and enlarged to accommodate them.



JASON DECAIRES TAYLOR'S FIRST WORK IN THE MEDITERRANEAN IS EXHIBITED IN CANNES, SOUTH OF SAINTE-MARGUERITE ISLAND

Jason deCaires Taylor is a British artist renowned around the globe for the quality of his work and his active commitment to the protection of underwater environments. His works have populated the waters of Lanzarote, the Thames, the Bahamas, Cancun, Oslo and Granada with his disturbing silhouettes (a work listed by the National Geographic magazine as one of the 25 wonders of the world) and it is in Cannes that Jason deCaires Taylor has installed his latest creations.

Evolving in nature, his ecological and poetic works serve as reefs providing a refuge for underwater life, while also raising awareness among the general public of the need to preserve marine biodiversity.



MASKS: A THEME SPECIFIC TO CANNES

The theme of masks, chosen in collaboration with the City of Cannes, echoes the city's history and cultural heritage by referring to the famous 'Iron Mask', a famous prisoner locked up on the Sainte-Marguerite Island State Prison from 1687 to 1698. An iconic figure of local history, the Iron Mask is also an internationally recognised symbol, invoked since the 18th century to denounce the arbitrariness of absolute power.

What's more, this theme resonates with the 7th Art, of which Cannes is the world capital with its Cannes Film Festival – inseparable from the city's history – as well as the 'Cannes on Air' project to create a creative economy sector.

These sculptures will evolve over time, covering themselves in algae, shells and corals and therefore becoming an integral part of the local marine ecosystem as their rough texture and various nooks and crannies allow marine fauna and flora to take refuge and thrive there.

A BRAND-NEW WORK, CREATED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE CITY, WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PEOPLE OF CANNES

From 2 to 4 July 2018, during a summer retrospective exhibition of Jason deCaires Taylor's works at the Sea Museum (now the Iron Mask and Fort Royal Museum), the international artist established a pop-up studio at Sainte-Marguerite Island's Fort. Over the course of three days, the artist and his two assistants made 45 casts of volunteer Cannes faces.



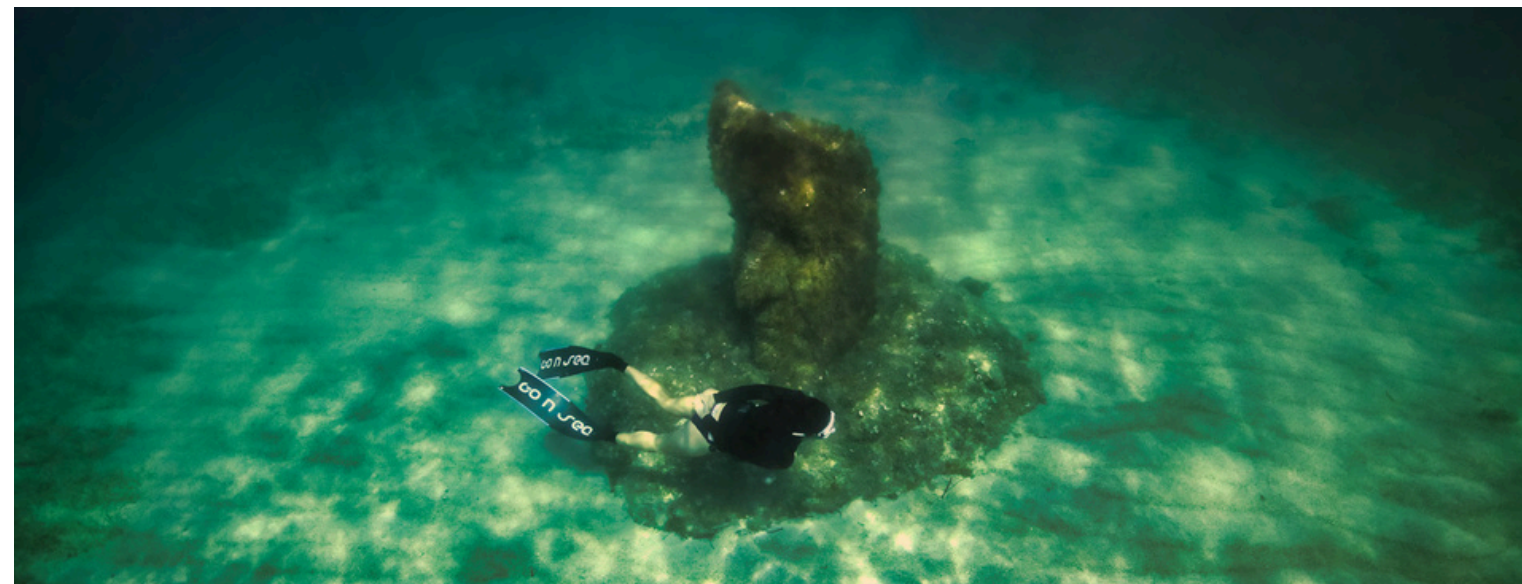
From these, the artist selected six models representative of the diversity of the Cannes population. Here are their names and ages at the time of casting: Maurice Merenda, 78, fisherman; Eugène Kustov, 30, self-employed; Anouk Vanghent, 7, primary-schoolgirl; Nour Bradai, 20, student; Marion Beaudin, 29, cultural facilitator; Dominique Royal, 54, employee.



EXTENSION OF THE PROTECTED AREA PROHIBITED TO ANCHORAGES, ON A LOCATION CAREFULLY CHOSEN TO RESTORE UNDERWATER BIODIVERSITY

The location of the six sculptures was chosen on a heavily anthropised and degraded site which was easily accessible and required no diving equipment – a simple mask and snorkel are all visitors need. It is freely accessible and protected by a ban on anchoring vessels. The bathing area (anchorage prohibited) within which the sculptures have been implanted was quadrupled and extended to 29,000 m², offering added value in terms of landscape and the environment for this Natura 2000 listed site. At the initiative of the town of Cannes, this protected area will be extended at the end of 2024 to cover a total of 43 217 m².

The submerged ecomuseum exists in harmony with fishing and diving activities, while promoting the animal and plant life for which this site was originally listed. The project's implementation has been accompanied by regular ecological monitoring of the underwater ecosystem of the Lérins Islands archipelago. This is a privileged observatory of the evolution of marine biodiversity, aligned with the City of Cannes' desire to protect this natural area, which was also fully cleaned in October 2019, in partnership with ENEDIS.





ANOTHER OF THE ISLAND'S HISTORICAL CURIOSITIES: THE BATTERIES AND THEIR HOT-SHOT FURNACES

Built upon the orders of General Napoleon Bonaparte in 1794, two cannonball-heating furnaces made it possible to supply hot-shots to the cannon batteries.

Placed on strategic points to the east and west of the island, echoing the cannons present on the neighbouring island, these offered an effective coastal defence against enemy ships attempting to approach.

These 'hot-shots', which could have a range of 2,000 metres, set fire to sails and wooden bridges, effectively neutralising any incoming ships.

Only nine hot-shot furnaces remain in France, four of which are located on the Lérins Islands.

SAINT-HONORAT ISLAND

The smaller of the two islands belongs (except from its coastline) to the Abbey of Lérins whose monastic complex borders the south coast of the island. A visit to this island is the chance to appreciate the spirit of this very special place. Travelling around the island and between the vineyards, visitors will enjoy a peaceful atmosphere, punctuated by the sound of bells and prayers. The Cistercian monks who live there maintain this agricultural landscape, cultivating vineyards and olive trees to produce wine and olive oil as well as distilling a variety of liqueurs. Here, a feeling of peace and calm will wash over you as soon as you set foot on the island.



SAINT- HONORAT IN FIGURES

1 500 M
LONG


40 HA
SURFACE
AREA



3 KM
COASTLINE


400M
WIDE




100,000
visitors per year



HOW TO GET THERE

Connections offered from Quai Laubeuf in Cannes by the company Planaria

Prices: Adults €22 (€20.50 via the website) / 13–18 years: €18 / 8–13 years: €14 / 4–8 years: €11

- Tel: 04 92 98 71 38.
- www.cannes-ilesdelerins.com



WHERE TO EAT

A restaurant and snack bar are located not far from the pier. Various picnic areas are dotted around the island.

La Tonnelle

This restaurant is open for lunch only. (closed November–March)

- Tel: 04 92 99 54 08.
- [La Tonnelle website](http://LaTonnelle.com)

LÉRINS ABBEY

Founded in around the year 410 by Saint-Honorat, this community of monks embodies 16 centuries of tradition. The current Cistercian community settled on the island in 1869 after the abbey underwent a brief period of secularisation. Though rebuilt three times since its first construction, the abbey has retained much of the 12th-century monastic complex, such as the cloister and the chapter house. The latter is only accessible during heritage days. The current abbey church was built between 1874 and 1878, in the neo-Romanesque style.

Spread around the island, its chapels formed the route of an important pilgrimage in the Middle Ages. Though most are 20th-century reconstructions upon ancient foundations, the Trinity and Saint-Sauveur chapels – the most remarkable and best-preserved buildings – date back to the Middle Ages in their current state.

Recent excavations of the Saint-Sauveur chapel have revealed the existence of a chapel and two monastic cells dating back to the first half of the 5th century. These have made it possible to trace the site's evolution over more than 16 centuries.



THE MONASTERY TOWER

The Monastery Tower, whose construction commenced around 1080, is composed of three buildings built successively.

Initially a refuge tower, then large military building, it later became the living quarters of the monastic community from the late 14th century until 1788.

A monastic complex was established there with three superimposed cloisters, a chapel dedicated to the Holy Cross in which the monastery's relics were conserved, a refectory and monastic cells.

From the platform located at the top, lined with machicolation and partly equipped with battlements, the view extends over the islands and the coastline from Esterel to the Cap d'Antibes.

This construction was renovated in the 19th century by Viollet-le-Duc, who added a bell tower.

This monastery features on the list of the first buildings classified as historical monuments in France (and the first in the Alpes-Maritimes) drawn up in 1840 by Prosper Mérimée.

It is currently the subject of a major restoration programme.



THE COMMUNITY OF MONKS

The 23 monks making up the community of Lérins Abbey today carefully cultivate vines and olives through organic farming.

The community lives according to the rule of Saint Benedict following a schedule punctuated by prayer and work. They meet seven times a day and once a night to pray together, as well as with their guests and visitors to the island during the day.

The production of wines and liqueurs is one of the community's main sources of revenue. The vineyard expands over eight hectares (five dedicated to red wine, three to white) and cultivates seven grape varieties: Syrah, Mourvèdre, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Clairette, Rolle and Viognier. Its annual production is about 35,000 bottles.

The wealth of flora and exceptional climatic conditions are key to the quality of the wine produced here. In 2010, the community inaugurated the 'Clos de la Charité', a plot of 500 vines, most of which are sponsored, and whose harvest produces some 300 bottles. This sale takes place every year on a Saturday in late September or early October.



The liqueurs, made by monks for more than a century, are also renowned. Lérina (yellow and green) is made from 44 plants macerated in alcohol. Around 9,000 bottles of the island's various liqueurs are produced.



Among other agricultural activities, over 120 ancient olive trees ensure a production of about 800 to 900 litres of high-quality olive oil. The local government, in partnership with the shared Mediterranean conservatory, is currently planting a conservatory orchard of ancient olive varieties.

Among other events on the island, the descendants of former Cannes families come to Saint-Honorat Island each year on Ascension Day in memory of their ancestors' pilgrimage. After attending mass, they march in a procession in front of Saint-Pierre Chapel to the sound of galoubets and tambourines, offering local products and symbolically renewing the act of allegiance to the man who ruled as Lord of Cannes until 1788.





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THE HOT-SHOT FURNACES



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Located at the eastern and western ends of the island, two cannonball-heating furnaces stand, built in 1795 upon the orders of Napoleon Bonaparte. Like those of Sainte-Marguerite, they made it possible to heat cannonballs to a temperature of around 800 to 900 degrees in order to burn enemy ships. These very well-maintained structures have been listed as historical monuments since 1908.

THE ABBEY MONASTERY HOTEL

Retreats are accessible to both men and women, individually and in groups of up to 35, as well as to couples. Stays may not exceed one week (min. 3 nights). The hotel closes each year from All Saints' Day in November until mid-December.

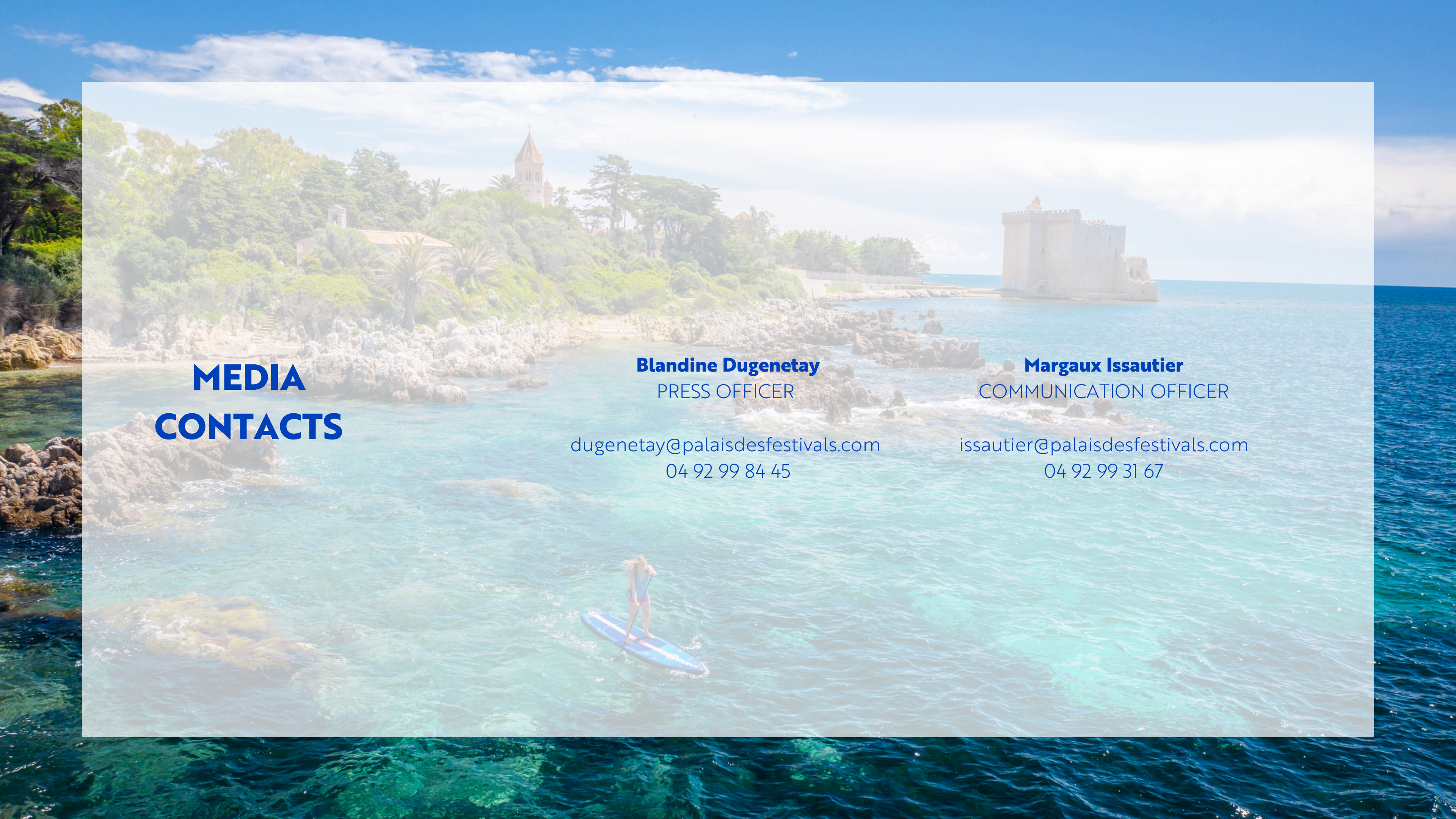
Meals are taken at the refectory in silence. Whether adults seeking serenity or students preparing for their exams in peace, over 4,000 come each year to enjoy this tranquil environment.

The Abbey also welcomes groups all year round for meetings, seminars and themed guided tours (religion, fauna and flora, etc.).

Participation in costs is left up to the discretion of each guest according to their own financial situation (for information, the operating costs for a full-board night and two meals are between €47 and €57 p/p depending on room type, with or without bathroom).

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