



THE MODERNE HOLIDAY

How the 20th century's most influential architect got away from it all

Architecture Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris, better known as Le Corbusier, redefined architecture for the 20th century. His Villa Savoye, built between 1928 and 1931 on the outskirts of Paris, was the functional, whitewashed concrete realisation of his influential 'five points of architecture' and the blueprint for generations of architects to follow. His Unité d'Habitation (1947–52) tower block in Marseilles was a radical 'machine for living in'. His chapel of Notre Dame du Haut (1950–55) in Ronchamp, eastern France, with its billowing concrete roof, is simply one of the most spiritually uplifting structures ever built. From summer 2015 it is now also possible to see how the most influential architect of modern times thought we should holiday.

Cap Martin is a rocky headland about a mile from Monte Carlo and a 10-minute stroll from Gare de Roquebrune-Cap Martin train station. Set on a steep slope in the shadow of a carob tree, is Le Cabanon ('Little Cabin'), a rustic shack where from 1951 the Swiss architect

spent almost every August. It is a mere 3.66m square in plan by 2.26m high, but although it looks simple it's designed according to Le Corbusier's modular principles – 2.26m is the height of a six-foot person with one arm above their head; 3.66m is twice the length of a six-foot person. The interior is divided into living, sleeping and washing areas based on the same system (pictured above). This, the architect, claimed in 1952, was all anybody needed.

It was another architect who led Le Corbusier to this spot: Eileen Gray's modernist

masterpiece, Villa E1027, stands just downhill of Le Cabanon. The two were good friends until Le Corbusier decorated the villa with eight massive murals, an unsolicited act that Gray considered vandalism. The two fell out, which led to Le Corbusier building his own neighbouring retreat on land belonging to a local restaurant. In part payment, he had five rentable holiday homes built for the family of the restaurateur. Known as Les Unités de Camping, each unit is eight square metres in size with minimalist wooden interiors in primary colours, and pop-out seating, shelves and sinks. They are like something from Ikea, 60 years ahead of their time.

All three buildings, collectively known as Cap Moderne, are open to the public by guided tour only. Interested parties can also take the opportunity to visit Le Corbusier's grave (headstone, left), a 10-minute drive up the hill. He died in 1965, when during one of his daily swims in the sea below Le Cabanon, he drowned. *Kathryn Tomasetti*

