



The Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo and the Casino de Monte-Carlo – which can be seen from the hotel's balcony – are now world renowned venues

HE WEARS

Jacket and belt, both from Tommy Hilfiger; shirt from Zara; trousers from Topman

SHE WEARS

Dress from Chloé at Browns; sunglasses from Calvin Klein; earrings and bangle, both from Pebble London

Monaco

R E B O R N

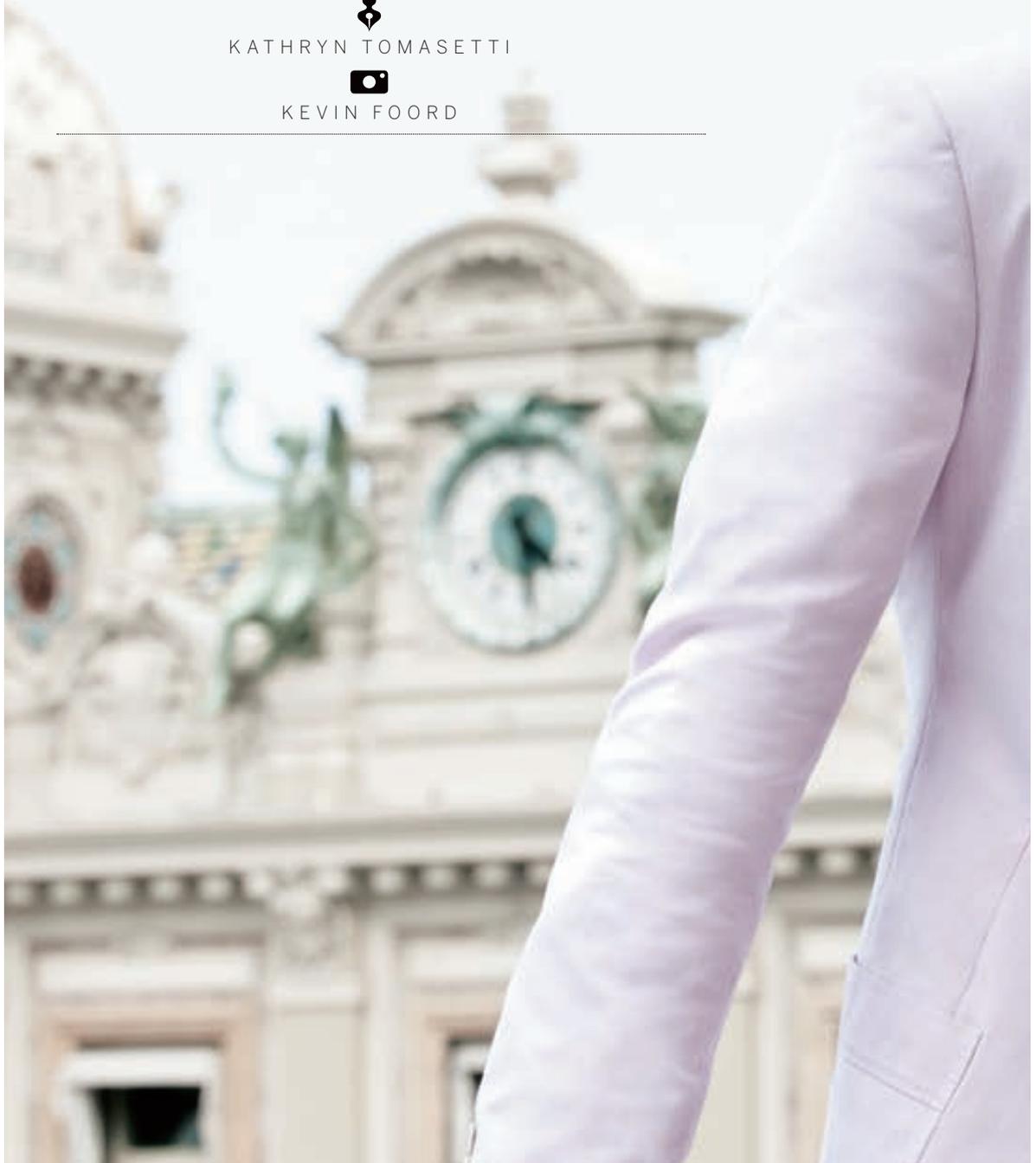
ONCE RENOWNED AS A GLITZY PLAYGROUND FOR THE RICH AND FAMOUS, MONTE-CARLO REMAINS A CENTRE OF CHIC IN THE NEW MILLENIUM



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THE YEAR 1956 put Monaco on the map.

On a sunny day in late April, Prince Rainier III, ruling prince of the Grimaldi family, married glamorous American actress Grace Kelly. At the time, it was dubbed the “Wedding of the Century”.

Fast-forward 55 years and all eyes are once more on Monaco, this time for nuptials to unite, once again, a Monégasque royal and a cool blonde beauty: His Royal Highness Prince Albert II, son of Prince Rainier and Princess Grace, and South African Olympic swimmer, Charlene Wittstock.

On 1 July, a civil ceremony will take place in the Prince’s Palace Throne Room, followed by a Monégasque-only buffet with the newlyweds. The next day, there’ll be a religious ceremony in the palace’s Main Courtyard, followed by a royal procession to Saint Dévote Church, where the new princess will leave her bridal bouquet. The festivities will be capped off with a blow-out gala of a wedding reception.

Back in 1956, Monaco was the world’s premier playground for international playboys. It begs the question: is Monte-Carlo still a centre of chic? The answer is a resounding “yes”. In 2011, Monte-Carlo’s Place du Casino remains, as assuredly as ever, glamour central. It was coined the “Golden Square” a century ago, and the moniker is still apt today. >



Opulent and gracious in equal measures, 19th-century Hôtel de Paris has played host to royalty and the world’s brightest stars

SHE WEARS

Shirt and trousers, both from Moschino; bag from Tommy Hilfiger; belt from Chanel; earrings and cuffs, both from Pebble London

HE WEARS

Blazer from Tommy Hilfiger; shirt from Armani Exchange; trousers from Zara; sunglasses from Oakley





Bentleys and Bugattis nudge up against the belle époque façade of the Casino de Monte-Carlo (montecarlocasinos.com), the most elegant of the five Monte-Carlo SBM casinos. In the 1950s, the world's super-rich crowded its gaming tables to play roulette. Today, a constant stream of optimistic gamblers pours through the Casino's doors from the time they open (2pm daily; €10 casino entrance fee). Next to the Casino de Monte Carlo is the magnificent Salle Garnier (Opera House). And it's within this shimmering cocoon that Prince Albert and his new bride will hold their private reception, followed by an extravagant ball.

FOR NEARLY 150 YEARS, Monte-Carlo's most exclusive address has been Hôtel de Paris Monte Carlo (*Place du Casino, tel: +377 98 06 30 00, hoteldeparismontecarlo.com*), in the corner

of the square. Eminent visitors – including the Aga Khan, Rita Hayworth and Cary Grant – stayed in the 1950s. Through the hotel's elegant foyer, the atmospheric Le Bar Américain is lined with portraits of Grace Kelly in *To Catch a Thief*, the movie that first introduced her to resident royalty. Today, the guest list is just as glamorous as it was in the 1950s: racing drivers and European aristocrats continues to sup aperitifs at the bar. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's top-floor suite still maintains its secret passageway to Mediterranean restaurant Le Grill, although the latter now boasts a Bond-style push-button retractable roof for summertime dining under the stars. And on the hotel's ground floor, there's the triple Michelin-starred restaurant, Le Louis XV – Alain Ducasse, where an exquisite set menu (lunch from €140, dinner, €280) is >



Just steps from the Casino de Monte-Carlo, the belle époque Hôtel Hermitage is one of the most intimate luxury hotels in the Principality

SHE WEARS
Dress from Joseph at my-wardrobe.com; clutch from Jimmy Choo

HE WEARS
Suit from Dries Van Noten at Selfridges; shirt from Moschino at my-wardrobe.com; handkerchief from Hugo Boss

OPPOSITE PAGE SHE WEARS
Dress from Chloé at Browns; sunglasses from Calvin Klein; earrings and bangle, both from Pebble London; clutch bag and shoes, both from Jimmy Choo





still served to dedicated foodies in the opulent Versailles-style dining room. There are some new kids on the block, too. Hip newcomers wowing visitors to Monaco include Buddha Bar Monte-Carlo (*Place du Casino, buddha-bar.com*), which has become the after-dinner cocktail spot *du jour*. Its carved woodwork and swathes of printed silk all make for an illicit 1920s Shanghai ambience. And around the corner, inside the luxurious Hôtel Hermitage Monte-Carlo, the Michelin-starred Le Vistamar restaurant (*Square Beaumarchais, tel: +377 98 06 98 98*) boasts sea views and a two-course lunch menu with wine for just €39.

Back in 1956, Stirling Moss won his first Grand Prix de Monaco (*formula1monaco.com*) in a Maserati, Juan Manuel Fangio squeaking into second place after a dramatic spin-out. But today's circuit now runs through Port d'Hercule, a harbour zone that didn't exist 55 years ago. Over the course of his lifetime, Prince Rainier, aka the "Builder Prince", changed the face of the Principality and extended Monaco by a massive 15%. A heliport (*helairomonaco.com*, from €110 per person to Nice airport) was even installed, creating what must be the coolest airport commute on the planet.

Since ascending the throne in 2005, Prince Albert, aka the "Eco Prince", has been carving out his own niche, making the city-state greener, and more accessible. As well as overseeing an innovative scheme for electric-bike sharing, he advocated Port d'Hercule's solar-powered bateau-buses (*cam.mc*, from €1 a trip) at the port.



A magnificent lagoon takes centre stage in four acres of beautifully landscaped gardens at the Monte-Carlo Bay Hotel & Resort

HE WEARS

Swimming trunks from Dsquared at Selfridges; towel from Tommy Hilfiger; sunglasses from Oakley

SHE WEARS

Bikini from Missoni; sunglasses from Oakley; earrings from Pebble London; scarf (as a towel on sunlounger) from Jimmy Choo

OPPOSITE PAGE

SHE WEARS

Top from Chanel; shorts from McQ at Alexander McQueen; shoes from Tommy Hilfiger; sunglasses and bag, both from Jimmy Choo; bangles from Pebble London

ON THE SEAFRONT east of Place du Casino, is the Grimaldi Forum (*10 Avenue Princess Grâce, grimaldiforum.com*), a contemporary glass space that looks out over the bay. This summer, it offers a peek at the past with "Magnificence and Grandeur in Europe's Courts". The exhibition examines 20 royal families, including Europe's longest continuous rulers, Monaco's very own Grimaldi family. Heading eastwards along Avenue Princesse Grâce, the road ribbons past Plage du Larvotto. But Monaco's popular public beach is a fairly recent addition to the city scene, thanks to Prince Rainier. As a suntan became *de rigueur* for holidaying royalty, he created an artificial stretch of sand from reclaimed land and it became an immediate hit. Another palm-fringed resort, Monte-Carlo Beach (*Avenue Princess Grâce, tel: +33 493 28 66 66, monte-carlo-beach.com*), at Monaco's easternmost tip, is also home to >







nightclub of the moment, Sea Lounge Monte-Carlo (717 Avenue Princess Gr^{ace}). Seeming to hover above the Med's shoreline, the club's floor is cloaked in powdery white sand. D^{ecor} is monochrome and retro, with hot pink hubble-bubble pipes, prepped with panache by slick bartenders.

This slick venue embodies only part of today's Monte-Carlo, throbbing with designer-clad revellers and more than a few tanned playboys. Fifty-five years of transformation have created a Principality that's still swanky, yet accessible to all. Its Michelin-starred meals are wallet-friendly. Its beaches are public. And its classy clubs are no longer exclusively for A-listers.

It's a fitting backdrop to the wedding and, what's more, it should help the sunny state to shine for another half-century.



The H^{otel} Hermitage Monte-Carlo boasts killer views of the sea and the Monte-Carlo marina, perfect for yacht-spotting

SHE WEARS

Dress from Joseph at my-wardrobe.com; earrings, necklace and ring, all from Graff

HE WEARS

Jacket, shirt, handkerchief and belt, all from Tommy Hilfiger; trousers from Topman; sunglasses from Jimmy Choo

OPPOSITE PAGE

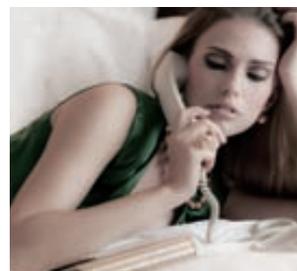
SHE WEARS
Dress from Moschino; jewellery as above

HE WEARS

Tuxedo, shirt and bow tie from Tom Ford at Society Club Monte-Carlo; watch from Graff



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