

AT MY CHATEAU
VILLETTE NEAR PARIS

“TRAVEL AND EVENTS HAVE THE POWER TO LIFT OUR SPIRITS WHILE REFRESHING OUR OUTLOOK ON LIFE.”

Travel and events have the power to lift our spirits while refreshing our outlook on life. I hope my column offers the same kind of inspiration. In the months of May and June, I had the pleasure to attend many renowned events, all of which left me with a new perspective and feeling reinvigorated in my daily routine. I hope that you not only enjoy reading about my journeys, but also decide to go on a few yourself.

THE RED CARPET
AT CANNES FILM
FESTIVAL

62nd Cannes International Film Festival

www.Festival-Cannes.com

This year's Cannes International Film Festival featured a rare occurrence. Four former festival winners—Quentin Tarantino, Ken Loach, Jane Campion, and Lars von Trier—went up against new challengers from around the globe in a fight for the top prize: The Palme d'Or. Twenty films competed for the highest accolade, while another 19 battled for a secondary prize of the Grand Prix.

Tarantino, winner of the Palme d'Or for *Pulp Fiction* in 1994, presented his new film *Inglorious Bastards*, an action flick starring Brad Pitt and Christoph Waltz, who won “Best Actor” award for his performance. Britain's Loach showed *Looking for Eric*, where Eric Cantona plays himself in this film about soccer. Jane Campion, the New Zealand director behind the Palme d'Or-winning *The Piano* presented *Bright Star* about 19th-century English poet John Keat's love affair with his muse Fanny Brawne. And Denmark's von Trier (*Dancer in the Dark*), showed *Antichrist*, a horror tale that depicts Satan as the creator of the world. The film stars Willem Dafoe and Charlotte Gainsbourg, who won “Best Actress”.

Spain's Pedro Almodóvar showed *Broken Embraces*, a tale of a writer and director recounting an accident that left him blind 14 years earlier, and of a torrid relationship with an actress, played by Penelope Cruz; while Ang Lee presented *Taking Woodstock*, set against the background of the Woodstock music festival. Austrian Michael Haneke's *The White Ribbon*, a black and white film set in a German village on the eve of WWI, won this year's Palme d'Or.

Lenny Kravitz and Mariah Carey presented their movie *Precious* among the official selections. Mariah completely changed her diva persona to play a social worker in the film, which was also Lenny's acting debut. Director Lee Daniels tells the story of Precious Jones, a morbidly obese high school girl pregnant by her father for the second time. The movie will open in L.A. and New York on November 6.

MONACO
GRAND PRIX

Monaco Grand Prix

www.formula1.com

This Formula 1 race, held annually at the Circuit de Monaco since 1929, is widely considered to be one of the most prestigious automobile races in the world. In fact, along with the Indianapolis 500 and the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the Monaco Grand Prix forms the Triple Crown of Motorsport. The race winds along a narrow course through the streets of Monaco, complete with steep elevation changes, tight corners, and a dreaded tunnel, making it one of the most demanding tracks in all of Formula 1. Taking the flag in 2009 was British racer Jensen Button of the Brawn-Mercedes team.

This year, I watched the race from the Winston Churchill penthouse suite of Hotel de Paris, thanks to Robert Steer, owner of Senate Grand Prix, a specialty company that organizes deluxe hospitality packages with the best viewing locations for the Monaco Grand Prix. I enjoyed the magnificent view of Monte Carlo Harbor, while free-flowing Champagne, a lobster buffet lunch, and designer earplugs enhanced my experience.

I also checked out the action at the Hermitage Hotel and Alain Ducasse's three-star restaurant, Louis V. Both were serving up excellent lunches on the terrace overlooking the race. But the luckiest spectators were out on the water; dozens of megayachts were docked at the harbor, offering perfect views of the race.



ROGER FEDERER'S
POWER SERVE

French Open at Roland Garros

www.RolandGarros.com

A client invited me to his center-court box at this year's French Open, an offer I couldn't refuse. This tennis tournament is referred to as Roland Garros by the French, named after a WWI pilot. We watched Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal dueling—and conquering—worthy opponents Alberto Martin and Marcos Daniel, respectively. We also were able to catch Marion Bartoli overcoming Pauline Parmentier in women's singles.

Federer may have had a rough year, complete with some clutch losses and injuries, but he persevered and won his first French Open title by defeating Robin Soderling in the men's final, becoming the sixth man ever to achieve a Grand Slam. With the victory, he also tied Pete Sampras' record of 14 majors. Andre Agassi, 1999 Roland Garros champion and a client of mine, was on hand to present Federer with the trophy. For the women's single title, Russian player Svetlana Kuznetsova beat Dinara Safina.

JEWELS ON THE AMALFI COAST, ITALY

WHILE ON A SHORT TRIP TO THE AMALFI COAST TO ATTEND A 25TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY, I VISITED THREE DIVINE HOTELS THAT ARE OWNED BY CLOSE FRIENDS.



A ROOM WITH A VIEW
AT SAN PIETRO

Hotel San Pietro, Positano

www.ilsanpietro.it

Virginia Cinque has been a friend for more than a decade, but a private tour of her hotel was still an exciting treat for me. We began with a lovely lunch at the hotel's seaside restaurant Carlino, where even a simple spaghetti alle vongole is dreamily delicious. Opened in 1970 and joined by Relais & Châteaux in 1979, the five-star San Pietro has earned its place as the best-known seaside hideaway in the world. There are 61 rooms, each with a private terrace with sea views. The famed terrace and its colorful, hand-painted ceramic benches have been featured in travel glossies the world over, as has the unique elevator embedded in the natural rock, which takes guests down to the private beach. The hotel also boasts a tennis court nestled between the cliffs, a spa, and colorful flower and vegetable gardens.



BELLEVUE SYRENE
TERRACE



A LOUNGE AT
BELLEVUE SYRENE

Bellevue Syrene, Sorrento

www.bellevue.it

Located in the most picturesque corner of old Sorrento, the hotel overlooks the Gulf of Naples with a breathtaking view of Mt. Vesuvius. The 50 spacious rooms are tastefully decorated with colorful furnishings, while the sumptuous lounges are infused with a mixture of antiques and whimsical modern décor. The romantic La Pergola on the terrace is my favorite spot in Italy. The Villa Pompeina, which was commissioned by William Waldorf Astor at the turn of the 20th century, now serves as a restaurant with two lounges and a colonnaded terrace, the perfect setting for weddings and dinner parties. The main restaurant, Il Don Giovanni (named after owner, mega hotelier Giovanni Russo) offers a great Neapolitan menu. The magical ambiance of this former 18th century private villa grabs at your heart and will certainly make you want to return to Sorrento!



TERRACE AT JK
PLACE, CAPRI

JK Place, Capri

www.JKCapri.com

Virginia de Angelis, with the help of Israeli-Italian entrepreneur Ori Kafri, reinvented her family's old Florentine style hotel into a new paradise in Capri. Overlooking the Marina Grande, the new JK Place is irresistibly chic with décor that invokes an affluent seaside charm. Building upon the sophisticated design of his JK Place in Florence, designer Michele Bonan brought the colors of the breathtaking sea into the hotel. The property is dotted with tasteful arrangements of art books, black and white framed photographs, white Casablanca lilies, and stylish but comfortable furnishings. Bonan's other projects include the new Cipriani Ocean Resort and Residences in Miami Beach. During a lunch with Virginia, I quickly realized that JK Place is more than just a "pretty face": the cuisine was amazing as well!

Happy Travels,

Olivia Decker

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