

## Visit the French Riviera with a Bruns staffer

By KATHY WESTMAN

This past summer I won a seven day trip to the French Riviera from the firm with which I was employed. I went to the Passport office in Montreal, within three days was ready to leave for Nice. We flew to JFK Airport where we met the President of the company and the Board of Directors at a cocktail in the Lounge on the top floor of the North Passenger Terminal Building.

At 7:00 p.m. Capital Flight 512 took off for Nice. A word of advice to anyone thinking of heading for Europe. When a company charters a plane like this one did, there are always seats left over and these are sold at a reasonable rate by Travel Agents.

The flight was about nine hours and quite an experience. One complimentary drink was served to the passengers along with supper. At 6:30 a.m. we had a 45 minute re-fuelling stop in Shannon, Ireland. Everyone was allowed off the plane to shop at the duty free shops. Great buys were the English made goods like lead crystal and Kodak products.

We went quietly through French Customs and drove in the provided bus to our hotel. It is situated on Notre-Dame Avenue (right near the Notre-Dame Cathedral). The Frantel, opened only 4 months, is mainly for Charter Flights. Rooms start at 95 francs and go up, according to view.

(The French franc costs about 21 cents and is divided into 100 centimes.) The rooms are extra modern with control panels at the

head of the beds for T.V., radio, mood music, lowering the blind and an assortment of other conveniences. Fridges were in the rooms but as of yet haven't been connected.

The only meal included at the Frantel is a continental breakfast each morning (served in your room or the dining room between 7 and 10 a.m.). This does not include any juice. (Juice can be had for an extra five francs). The French breakfast is sketchy, consisting of coffee, tea or hot chocolate, and a couple of croissants.

Dining is expensive if you are not careful. Don't make the mistake of ordering without knowing what you're getting and the cost. An average meal costs about 11 francs. The best way to buy a meal is from the "menu" (the specials for the day). You can buy a "menu" for a fixed rate and get an entire meal. It is very expensive to buy "a la carte". The "menu" includes an entree, a main course and dessert or cheese with tea or coffee. Each section has a minimum of three choices. Bread is always served with the meals. Butter though is extra and is of the unsalted variety. It takes some getting accustomed to but is equally as good as our salted butter. Milk is simply pasteurized and not homogenized.

A bit about Nice. The Riviera-Cote d'Azur stretches along the Mediterranean at the foot of the last outcrops of the Alpine chain. Thanks to its southern situation, the proximity of the sea, the full south exposure and above all, to

the screen of high mountains which protects it from the cold continental winds, it enjoys an exceptionally high winter temperature. Its privileged situation means that the slopes are covered with tropical vegetation; orange and laurel bougainvillea and mimosa. A journey of less than two hours takes one from the palms and lemon trees of the coast to the nearby Alpine and peaks for coolness in the summer and snow-sports in the winter.

With such a number of attractive features allied to the variety and quality of entertainment and to the multitude of hotels and villas, it draws visitors of every class and condition in summer and winter alike. Here are a few facts to help you decide on the wardrobe you should select. There are fewer than 75 rainy days in the year, then when it rains it is only for a short spell and the sky becomes clear again. (Two of these days occurred while I was there). It is never too hot, as sea breezes temper the summer heat and the nights are cool.

Nice was founded about 350 B.C. by the Massabotes. Now it is an essentially modern town of 360,000 inhabitants and well known as a tourist resort throughout the world. It spreads along the shores of the Bay of Angels (Baie des Anges), which is bordered by the famous Promenade des Anglais, a wide avenue well over four miles long edged with rose laurel, palm trees and palatial hotels.

Alongside the modern town is the unchanging Old Town of narrow streets, deep cool shadows, full of

movement in the evenings. The open-air markets (flower market, vegetable market) overflow with a colorful variety of products and make such endless polychromatic scene as delight painters and photographers.

Nice has three gambling casinos: the Palais de la Mediterranee, the Casino Municipal and the New Casino, with boule, baccarat, roulette, escarte, trente, etc. guarantee and tout-va. The admittance age is 21 but visitors to the country are admitted at age 19 with the showing of a passport.

Nice also has a lot of discotheques where one can really swing. One difference you'll notice between a dance here and one there is that it is NOT necessary to have a partner. Boys dance with boys, girls with girls, and if you feel like dancing you can just get on the dance floor and dance solo. Oh, of course, there are male-female teams too. One word of advice-Nice like any other city has pick-pockets and thieves. A passport to a Moroccan is worth about 2000 francs, so watch your passport too.

One doesn't have to depend on buses or trains for transportation in France. Although France's railway system is excellent. You can rent a moto cyclette (20 francs a day) or a motorcycle (75 francs a day). You are also required to put down a 100 franc damage deposit. Gas for these bikes is cheap (2 francs a tank) and you can go a long way on a tank of gas.

Spots to visit are Cannes with sandy beaches and good shopping. You can't miss St. Raphael-the home of yacht owners the world over. Then on to St. Tropez, the home of the topless beaches. The guys will enjoy this as you can dine right on the sandy beach and girl watch. Your waitress serves you in a bikini (no topless waitresses). On the more exclusive beaches everyone from 10-40 is topless. By the way, you won't see this in Nice as the beaches are directly beside the Promenade des Anglais and there's only pebbles, no sand. Frejus nearby offers the ruins of a Roman fortress and a small beach. Biking or hiking the Italian border is less than an hour away.

Bathing in the Mediterranean is an experience in itself. Everyone has to cross the Rue de Anglis and either rent a changing cabana or undress behind a towel. The beach is disappointing (mostly pebbles) but the activity more than compensates for this little discomfort. Each section has its concessionaires-you pay him for attention, for mats to ease your tender parts on the pebbles, for

beach chairs, etc. The changing areas and showers run under the sidewalk and refreshments are always available. You can change on the beach and it won't cost you a sou. Everyone on the beach provides the animated scene for the strollers on the boulevard above. There is little privacy and after a while you don't seem to mind.

Monaco is 13 miles northeast of Nice. Who hasn't heard of Monte Carlo, if not intimately at least in the context of its famous gambling casino. Actually Monte Carlo is one of three town-lets constituting the Principality of Monaco, ruled by Prince Rainer, with the help of Princess Grace (nee Kelly) from their palace on The Rock. Skirting a gorgeous bay where millionaires' yachts rest at anchor, the town rises in tiers like an irregular amphitheater, bright, fresh and elegant as a new spring bonnet.

As the Principality of Liechtenstein is to Switzerland, so Monaco is to France. There is a Monegasque dialect but the language is French and French francs are on par with local ones. A million tourists visit Monaco each year, so in any given month there are more foreigners there than Monegasques. They are a lucky people. They have kept out of two world wars and pay hardly any taxes. They have taken no commitments to make the world safe for something and dangerous for something else. There are no armed forces to be conscripted into. Aristotle Onassis owns the Casino, luxury hotels, the golf and country club, night clubs and numerous other properties, and is a practical partner in the running of this ornamental nation. The Casino's gambling rooms are open to the public, including those who don't care to risk a sou. To obtain an entry card, present your passport at the office in the main hall. (This is one place it is necessary to be 21). Coming from Nice there are the three Cornices and usually the top and bottom ones are used for the sightseeing trip...the scenery is magnificent.

One of my more zany experiences was a visit to a pink castle, a PINK castle. This castle was situated on the side of a cliff overlooking Nice. I saw it one day and decided I had to visit it. One day as I and a male travelling companion were motorcycling up a mountain road we happened by my pink castle. Much to my surprise we drove right in for a visit. The owner spoke very good English.

Travel story continued on page 9.

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thanx