

# Behind The Scenes

## SUMMER ON THE BEACH

As the weather heats up on the French Riviera, *yeahbaby* gets the inside scoop on Nice's beachside bars, magical markets and fab festivals, tracking down the locals that make the city shine

BY KATHRYN TOMASETTI, PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM WHITE



### MICHAEL FUNISS

A freelance web designer and expert in the field of internet marketing, Michael is also a beach fiend. He has been the owner of a studio apartment in Nice's Old Town since 2004, and this year he swapped his native Lichfield, north of Birmingham, in favour of residing full time on the French Riviera.

'I first started coming to Nice to visit a friend who moved out here. Then I came into a bit of money – around the same time TV in the UK became obsessed with overseas property – so I decided to buy myself a small flat in the Old Town.

'Just this year I managed to negotiate with my employers to go freelance for them, which freed me up to try living out here in Nice full time. The beauty of my job is that it can be done from almost anywhere in the world as long as I've got a laptop and a good Wi-Fi connection. I can even work from the beach. It almost feels like cheating!

'Nice's beach is immensely important to the local residents. It's really the great melting pot of the city... rich, poor, young, old, beautiful and ugly. They all love people-watching here – making it the ultimate place to see and be seen!'







“Our regular celebrity visitors include Sean Connery, Emma Watson and Keanu Reeves”

ALI ABDELHAFIDH,

The owner of Castel Plage (*Quai Rauba-Capeau*, tel: +33 [0]4 9385 2266, [www.castelplage.com](http://www.castelplage.com)), is originally from the coastal resort of Zarzis in southern Tunisia. He's called Nice his home for more than 40 years.

'As owner and manager of Castel Plage – a beach club, bar and restaurant rolled into one – I'm literally on the beach from mid March to mid September. My work requires constant effort and a lot of energy, but it also gives me

great pleasure. Especially when our regular celebrity visitors – including Sean Connery, Emma Watson and Keanu Reeves – stop by.

'During my down time, I love discovering handmade decorative objects, and I often hit Nice's back streets for some serious antique hunting. Both Niçois artisans and bric-à-brac markets, especially the Cours Saleya's *marché à la brocante* (second-hand market, Mondays 8am-6pm), are stuffed with treasures associated with the beach.'

“ One of my favourite local traditions is organising last-minute picnics on the beach ”



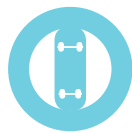
**ROSA JACKSON**

Canadian-born, Cordon Bleu-trained chef Rosa Jackson (Les Petits Farcis; [www.petitsfarcis.com](http://www.petitsfarcis.com)) has lived in France for two decades. She leads gourmet tours through the daily Cours Saleya produce market, then teaches visitors how to whip up Niçois delights like *pissaladière*, a pizza-like onion-topped tart, and *socca*, a savoury chickpea pancake.

'I started coming to Nice on holiday while living in Paris. Before I knew it I had bought an apartment near the Cours Saleya market with the perfect kitchen for teaching cooking classes. From there, everything happened naturally.'

'My market tours and cooking classes are designed to give people a sense of what it's really like to live in Nice. We cook in my home kitchen in an Old Town building that once served as a monastery for the church across the street.'

'One of my favourite local traditions is organising last-minute picnics on the beach with any friends who happen to be around. I'm not inclined to sunbathe but I like to dip in the sea early in the morning or just before sunset.'



“ Nice is definitely the best place on the Côte d’Azur for cycling, skateboarding and rollerblading ”

**JULIE LAGEYRE**

Niçoise born and bred, Julie Lageyre works at Roller Station (49 Quai des Etas-Unis, tel: +33 [0]4 9362 9905, [www.roller-station.fr](http://www.roller-station.fr)), just opposite Nice’s main beach and the city’s 5km-long Promenade des Anglais.

‘Nice is definitely the best place on the Côte d’Azur for cycling, skateboarding and rollerblading – all of which can be rented by the hour or for the day from us. Nowhere can compare to our amazing Promenade des Anglais. It’s flat and wide, which makes it easy

for beginners, and it’s really long – great for experts too. I enjoy popping across the road for a little rollerblading, but on a hot day during summer, it’s also great to get on a bike and make the most of the cool breeze.

‘On my days off, I love meeting up with some friends and head to one of Nice’s private beach clubs for a salad and a glass of rosé – Florida Beach ([www.florida-beach.fr](http://www.florida-beach.fr)) is my current favourite. Otherwise, we try to find off-the-beaten-track coves, often going out of town to nearby Villefranche or Beaulieu.’



“For me, Nice in the summer means fantastic music and cultural festivals, and enjoying drinks with friends!”



#### DENYS DUGAS-BOURREAU

Denys is the head barman at Hi-Beach (47 Promenade des Anglais, tel: +33 [0]4 9714 0083, [www.hi-beach.net](http://www.hi-beach.net)), the city's newest beach club. The eco-friendly space boasts a sushi bar, blanket Wi-Fi and a killer cocktail bar.

'I was born in Saumur, in the heart of the Anjou province in north-west France. After five years studying in Paris, I moved to sunny Nice at the start of summer 2006.

'I've worked in all kinds of places – clubs, bars, exclusive hotels. And now, the beach! At Hi-Beach, I not only mix top drinks, but I create unusual cocktails too. A good bartender should

be curious and able to concoct cocktails following both current fashions, and specific requests from customers. My favourite cocktail to prepare – and that Hi-Beach drinkers really seem to love – is my mojito *pastèque* (watermelon mojito).

'For me, Nice in the summer means loads of fantastic music and cultural festivals. And of course enjoying drinks with friends!'

The city's biggest music festival, Nice Jazz Festival (8-12 July; [www.nicejazzfestival.fr](http://www.nicejazzfestival.fr)), takes place in the Jardin Albert I gardens, opposite the Promenade des Anglais and the beach.



“My father opened Fenocchio in 1966, when I was 16 years old. In those days, our shop was half the size it is now!”



#### FRANCIS FENOCCHIO

Francis and his family have owned the popular Old Town ice cream shop Fenocchio (2 Place Rossetti, tel: +33 [0]4 9380 7252, [www.fenocchio.fr](http://www.fenocchio.fr)) since 1966. This buzzy glacier is regular stop for visitors and locals en route to the beach.

‘I’m an ice cream artisan, and have been responsible for creating ice cream and sorbets for our shop in Nice’s Old Town for years. My father opened Fenocchio in 1966, when I was 16 years old, and I worked alongside him from the very start. In those days, our shop was half the size it is now, and we did everything – including all production – on site. Today we mix up our ice cream (we have close to 100 flavours to choose from!) at a workshop just outside of town. We use all fresh, mostly local ingredients, like walnuts, cherries, apricots and even jasmine. Personally, my favourite flavours are the simplest ones: traditional vanilla, made with egg yolks, and Bourbon vanilla bean, from Madagascar.

‘Naturally, summer is our busiest season, so I have very little free time to enjoy Nice or the beach during these months. But when I am lucky enough to find myself with a day to spare, I like to retreat to the hills to unwind playing a few rounds of golf.’

#### GETTING THERE

Find your place in the sun on the French Riviera this summer. bmibaby flies to Nice from Birmingham and East Midlands from just £36.99 one-way, including taxes. For more information log on to [www.bmibaby.com](http://www.bmibaby.com)