

# Focus France

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- Film, design, travel
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# Continuing our conversation

In her final few weeks in Malta, French Ambassador **Béatrice Le Fraper Du Hellen** stresses the importance of a rich dialogue between the two countries.

French Ambassador Béatrice Le Fraper Du Hellen is in her final few weeks in Malta as her term draws to an end. There is, admittedly, a hint of sadness as she discusses the past few years of her diplomatic mission in Malta – yet she is also eager for her next post.

“One of the advantages of a diplomatic career is being able to live in different countries and knowing that, in a few years, you will be moving on to another post, with all the new opportunities that brings. It feels like embarking on a new adventure.

“That said, when you do eventually move on, you have to leave people behind, and that is never easy” she says.

Diplomacy is, in itself, the art of creating conversations, building relationships, and translating them into exchanges.

“Improving relations between two countries involves enhancing the curiosity one people have towards the other,” she says.

“It is through such curiosity that we become interested in the other country’s people and products. And such curiosity is stoked through various elements, including media, travel, and of course language.”

The latter explains the French Embassy’s efforts to enhance the opportunities to learn French in Malta.

“Our main thrust is through the *Et en plus, je Parle Français* (and, on top of it all, I speak French) programme,” she says.

“This is paying dividends as French is the second foreign language taught in Malta, after Italian.”

Learning French opens various access points to France, including in the fields of business, travel and tourism, but also to working in EU institutions or even in the United Nations where French is a working language.

“Further developing the French language in Malta will have a significant effect on tourism. The French tourists visiting Malta are in most cases over 40, well-travelled and they like the many cultural attractions in Malte. They also love to have French elements on their holiday – and that means French cuisine, French luxury brands and the language.

“This is also why we have developed an exchange programme between the Institute of Tourism Studies and the Institut Paul Bocuse. This is enabling Maltese culinary students to learn the French way of preparing and serving food and French students to do the same in Malta.”

**“Diplomats come and go, but bilateral agreements are there to stay, irrespective of who sits in office”**

During her term in Malta, the French ambassador has overseen the creation of new exchanges between the two countries.

“Until a few years ago, for instance, hardly anyone applied for science-related scholarships and nowadays the take-up of these scholarships has increased significantly.”

The ambassador says that by bringing a little bit of France to Malta, she has enhanced the knowledge of what is being developed in France right now. And that has enabled the strengthening of Maltese-French relationships in future-looking sectors such as the environment, science and renewable energy.

“Research in France is also strong and we have enhanced the collaborations between the University of Malta and various French institutes,” she says.

“An agreement was also recently signed between the Malta Council for Science and Technology and French space agency Centre National D’Etudes Spatiales. This framework agreement will enable Maltese entities and professionals to collaborate with the French agency and continue raising awareness on the space sector.

“We are also working on other collaborations in the fields of renewable energy, medicine, waste-to-energy as well as the use of natural resources such as salt and algae for medical use.”

France might not be immediately associated with such sectors – rather, we tend to associate it with past traditions. However, France is a European and world leader in alternative power, renewables, research, technology and mobility.

“It’s not a question of choosing between tradition and the future,” she says. “Rather, it is a question of balance – juggling past and future. One example will suffice. The French embassy has recently supported the performance of Nicolo Isouard’s opera *Cendrillon* – that in itself is a prime example of tradition. However, we have also brought over to Malta very popular French DJs who obviously played contemporary music. So yes, the traditional and contemporary can co-exist.”



The ambassador says that further links between the two countries can be made.

“Take Valletta and Marseille, for instance. Both cities have enjoyed status as European Capital of Culture, and that creates a line of communication. One city can learn from the other and help enrich the experience, and the legacy, of being a European Capital of Culture.”

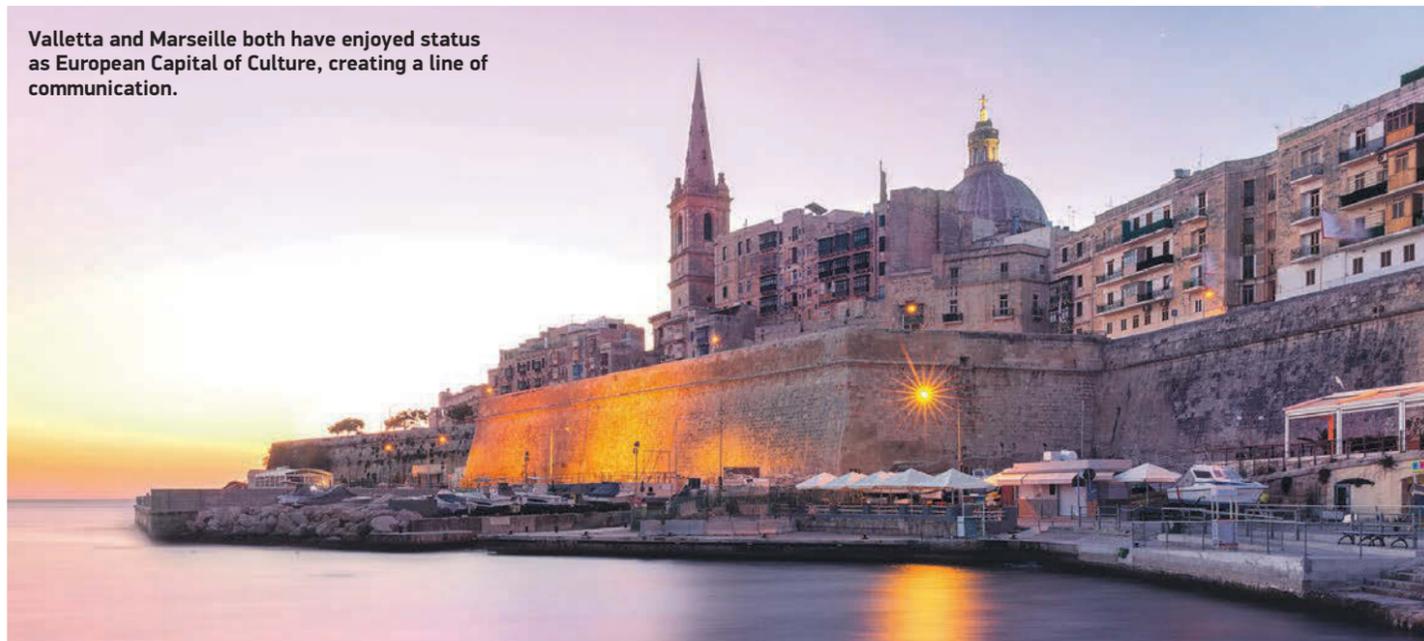
Looking back, the ambassador says that she has enjoyed several highlights during her term in Malta.

“I would say that the most important achievement have been the Maltese Presidency of the EU and the signing of a number of bilateral agreements between France and Malta. These are very important as diplomats come and go, but bilateral agreements are there to stay, for the present and future, irrespective of who sits in office.

“We have enhanced the relationship between the two countries’ diplomats. There is constant bilateral consultation between Maltese and French diplomats and that is very healthy and a sign of success.

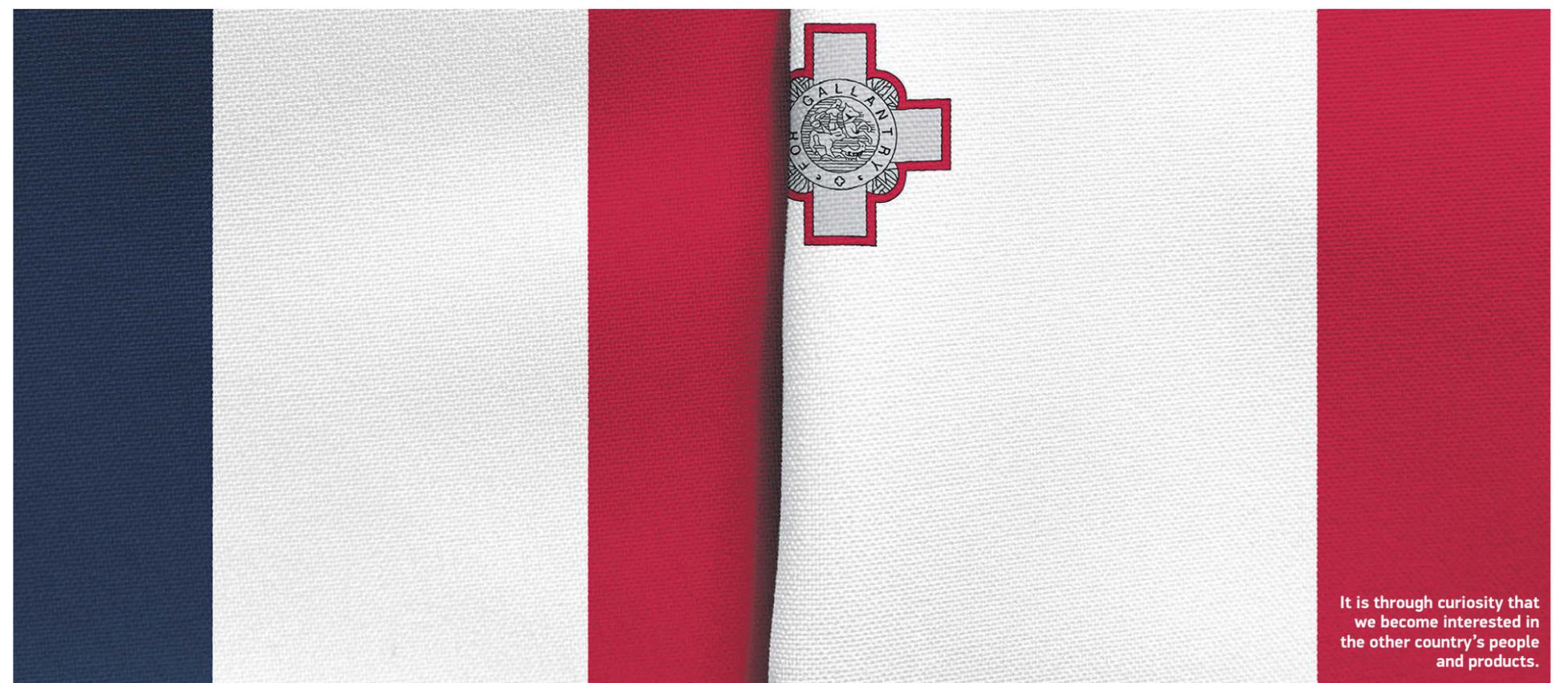
“Moreover, during my term, we have had three Presidential visits to Malta and three visits of the PM in Paris. That makes me proud. It is not anecdotal. It is a sign of a significant ‘*rapprochement*’ (as we say in French).”

Valletta and Marseille both have enjoyed status as European Capital of Culture, creating a line of communication.





French Ambassador Béatrice Le Fraper Du Hellen. PHOTO: MARK ZAMMIT CORDINA



It is through curiosity that we become interested in the other country's people and products.

# Increasing potential

The fact that we are managing to attract more French business people to Malta augurs well, says Maltese-French Chamber of Commerce president **Joseph Bugeja**.

## What are your comments regarding the current Maltese-French business relationship?

The business ties there exist between Malta and France are the result of long years of mutual collaboration. The Maltese-French Chamber of Commerce has close to a hundred members. These are all companies and businesses that in some way or another do business to and from France. This year, it is also encouraging to note that French business activity was stronger than expected, especially throughout June. In fact, there was an unexpected peak throughout June triggered mostly by a stronger than expected service sector which made up for a slight slowdown in the manufacturing sector; results that were published in a survey issued towards the end of June.

It is also very encouraging to note the extent of French business people travelling to Malta purposely to hold meetings with the Maltese-French Chamber of Commerce as well as with the French Embassy.

We are confident to state that the increase in assessing Malta's business potential by the French is increasing steadily. We have received various business individuals as well as groups who were keen to learn more about Malta's success in the economy, the extremely reduced unemployment and the creation of various hubs. Business people visiting Malta represented varied sectors such as insurance, banking, blockchain, IT specialists and retail among others.

**“This group of professional council members are the Maltese-French Chamber of Commerce's greatest asset”**

If I had to pinpoint one evident successful recent business venture, that would be RCI Insurance Limited, a subsidiary of RCI Services Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of RCI Banque SA. The company provides insurance solutions to customers of RCI Banque SA's automobile financing business, are authorised under the Insurance Business Act 1998 to carry on long-term and general business in European markets as regulated by the Malta Financial Services Authority. This is one example of French companies that chose to continue to invest in Malta and who continue to see growth because of their business decision.

## Is there room for improvement in particular sectors?

There will always be room for more improvement. The fact that we are managing to attract more French business people to Malta already augurs well. We now need to promote more the various business opportunities that continue to arise in Malta. We would like to see more French corporate entities participating in Maltese tenders. The French are extremely active in the fields of technology, expertise and innovation and we strongly believe that Malta can



attract more French interests which can in turn help us build more local expertise.

Also, worth noting is the already very significant French maritime interest in Malta which augurs well for further business opportunities.

## With regards to tourism exchange between the two countries, is this improving?

Our organisation was one of the first entities to take the lead in the tourism sector. Since the early years, the Maltese-French Chamber of Commerce has been holding meetings with the Tourism Ministry specifically to push towards more openings and investments in the sector. We always believed that an improved flight connectivity would render the desired results and today we are proud to note an increase of 15.7 per cent which translates to over 170,000 French visitors in 2017.

France is also quite popular with an increasing number of Maltese tourists but here the challenge is to entice Maltese tourists to visit the various and very diverse regions across France instead of the more popular destinations. This should be easier

now given that France and Malta are connected with 48 flights per week with regular connections to Paris Orly and Charles de Gaulle airports, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nantes, Paris Beauvais & Nice onboard airlines such as Air Malta, Ryanair, Volotea and Transavia.

## What are the Maltese-French Chamber of Commerce's plans for the mid- and long-term?

We will be celebrating our 30th anniversary in October 30 of next year. At every opportunity I have, I always emphasise the fact that we are a voluntary organisation and that we represent council members who dedicate their private time in support of our various initiatives.

This group of professional council members are the chamber's greatest asset since they come from a varied spectrum of professions such as engineers, scientists, business traders, lawyers, logistics, ship owners and ship operators, and more. Supporting the MFCC as a council member entails passion and dedication which contribute great value and important team spirit. We are determined to continue to make our chamber grow

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and become more valid and more professional while ensuring excellent communications with our almost 100 loyal members.

Our activities and initiatives depend on our member's contribution but also on the three main support agreements we hold with Bank of Valletta, RCI Insurance Limited and Speedcast Ltd. Our aim is to keep strengthening this support and bring more value to our members.

## French President Emmanuel Macron recently bestowed upon you the Officier de la Legion d'Honneur. What does this mean personally to you and to the Maltese-French Chamber of Commerce?

This was the least thing I was expecting but it was an honour that I received with the utmost humility because our achievements as a chamber were made possible with the direct involvement of so many valid people who share the same passion – that of improving the business relationships between these two countries.

I will forever carry this honour with great pride because I consider it as a token for all our collective work over these past years. This award encourages me to keep striving even more to further strengthen the already great business ties that exist between Malta and France.

## The French Ambassador to Malta, HE Béatrice le Fraper du Hellen will shortly be ending her term in Malta. What have been the highlights of the Maltese-French Chamber of Commerce's collaboration with the Embassy during her term?

It is very difficult to pin-point highlights in our collaboration because there have been so many. Notwithstanding that, it is worth mentioning the recent inauguration of the Slimliner Airbus flight simulator project which I know this was a dream come true for the Ambassador after many years of hard work by another Frenchman in Malta, Vincent Ruiz.

Another recent development was the signing of the first ever agreement between French *caisse des dépôts et consignations* and their Maltese counterpart Malta GI which represents a Maltese-French consensus on giving priority to long term investment in Europe.

The chamber has managed to build an extremely special relation with H.E. Madame Béatrice le Fraper du Hellen. Her amazing disposition and her genuine interest in our activity is noteworthy and definitely not easily replicated. She attended most of our events, knows most of us on a personal level and made sure that our work and hers were always in line. Most importantly, she championed our role and did her best to always support the ongoing crossed investments between France and Malta. Most importantly, we always found her supporting the proactive role undertaken by the chamber in a bid to foster close collaboration between the Maltese and French business communities.

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Solar energy is an attractive proposition for Malta.

# Shining a light on renewable energy

Malta is on a positive path to increase its production of renewable energy, yet more still needs to be done on energy saving. Professor **Luciano Mule Stagno** tells **Veronica Stivala** about how far we have come, and how Malta and France are collaborating in this field.

Malta's high number of sunny days has set it on a successful path to achieving its energy targets. As an EU member state, Malta has been set a target for 10 per cent of its energy to be produced from renewable sources by 2020. This is in line with the Renewable Energy Directive, which specifies national renewable energy targets for each country, taking into account its starting point and overall potential for renewables. At 10 per cent, Malta's target is the lowest, with Sweden's 49 per cent being the highest.

When Malta joined the EU in 2004, only 0.1 per cent of energy produced came from renewable sources. By 2016, Malta had reached six per cent of energy coming from renewable resources. Eleven member states have already achieved their targets. Despite there being less than two years to go, Professor Luciano Mule Stagno, Director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy at the University of Malta remains positive, saying: "I have been an optimist on this topic for several years and I think time is proving me right."

The reason behind his optimism stems from a shift in goals a few years ago from (mostly offshore) wind to solar.

"This was in large part due to what was happening in the renewable energy market worldwide – while the prices of offshore wind installations remained almost the same, the price of photovoltaic systems fell by more than half – thus making

solar energy a much more attractive proposition for Malta."

Luckily we are blessed with a lot of sun. The new target for PV installations set out in the 2015 calls for about 180MWp to be installed by 2020. According to Prof. Mule Stagno, Malta is somewhere in the 110-120MWp range right now, with several large systems already planned and approved, setting Malta on the path to achieve its goals by the deadline.

**"In 2016, Malta was among the countries with the lowest share of clean energy sources"**

While these figures are optimistic, the question remains as to why the country's figures remain so low in comparison to others. In 2016, Malta was among the countries with the lowest share of clean energy sources. What is leading to such low performance?

Prof. Mule Stagno attributes the reason for such a low share to Malta's lack of easily available sources as do many of the countries with high shares of renewables.

"That high share is often a result of extensive use of biomass – burning wood sustainably – and hydro-electric energy, which are two resources we lack completely. Even on-shore wind is problem-

atic due to our size. So we have to rely mostly on solar, and to a lesser extent on heat-pumps, bio-fuels and waste-to-energy."

Malta has potential to increase this share by using, for instance, the still plenty of rooftop space for PV installations. Prof. Mule Stagno makes some further suggestions: Parking lots are another obvious place we could use for this. Wind has also evolved. Deep offshore wind is becoming more competitive, and while Malta does not have a lot of shallow water regions, we have ample suitable deep-water ones.

He says however, that solar water heaters could also contribute more. While he is pleased to see the incentives for the purchase of solar water heaters increased, he draws attention to the fact that most people are under the wrong impression that SWHs offer less value than PVs.

"In reality for the average family of four – if you are keeping your geyser on for two to three hours per day or more, a solar water heater would pay for itself in three to four years."

Prof. Mule Stagno's group at University of Malta is also designing and developing offshore solar systems – and this of course would make the amount of PVs that could be installed almost unlimited.

Prof. Mule Stagno stresses that more needs to be done on energy saving. While incentives have increased for energy saving measures such as roof insulation and double glazing and some years ago there were also incentives to change old



Luciano Mule Stagno. PHOTO: ICREATEMOTION

appliances, there is plenty more that can be done especially with regards to home insulation.

Transport is also, of course, a moot point.

"We are adding more and more cars, and thus consuming more petrol and diesel. Most people don't realise they consume more energy – and therefore pollute more – in their car than in their home."

He has been advocating for years the building of a light rail system.

"A mass transit system would put a significant dent in our traffic, our energy consumption and our greenhouse gas emission – not to mention of course the quality of life," he says.

Key steps in improvement lie in collaboration and research projects, for which the EU has already opened many doors. France is one of the leaders in renewable energy and Malta is already collaborating with various French and European Universities, institutes and companies. Moreover, the University of Malta receives many engineering students who come to do research for periods of three to six months. The last few years have seen more than 10 students

from French universities every year in addition to students from various other countries.

The future is green and, being greener is now almost universally viewed as a good thing – including by businesses. More renewable energy, less pollution means a better quality of life, which makes Malta more attractive. Prof. Mule Stagno underlines how the push in renewable energy in the last few years has also created hundreds of jobs and spawned some very interesting research. In one area in particular – marine offshore renewables, Malta is really on the map. Prof. Mule Stagno's group leads in the testing and development of offshore solar systems – Malta was the first, and only place in the world to have successfully tested systems in open sea. Another group at University of Malta is leading the way on energy storage at sea. There are many other projects. Some of these will become commercialised and are putting Malta at the forefront of this area of research. This is indeed positive and one hopes that Malta will soon reap the benefits of the hard work beyond research stage.



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# An ocean of opportunities

The Mediterranean maritime economy is enjoying an upward trend, with healthy prospects for the future, **Aldo Drago** says.

## Apart from the commerce and trade elements, what other sources of wealth does the Mediterranean hold for Malta?

Natural resources in the form of oil and minerals may be lacking, but the sea surrounding us is a largely underestimated patrimony.

Marine space on its own is an economic asset, and we have a lot of it, with a sea to land aerial ratio much higher than that of any other EU state. This constitutes a resource advantage for alternative energy, aquaculture, marine biotechnology, maritime transport and many other activities underpinning the maritime economy. The ocean-based economy encompasses marine-related industries, natural assets and marine ecosystem services.

All the traditional sectors of the Mediterranean maritime economy have an upward trend and are expected to continue to increase up to 2030. This is triggered by: the growth of trade between Europe and Asia, implying higher international maritime traffic; the development of a middle class and higher standards of living worldwide, bringing more tourists in particular to the Mediterranean Sea region, being the first tourist destination in the world; the increasing energy demands leading to an extremely fast development of offshore oil and gas exploration activities, and to the introduction of new multi-use offshore platforms for renewable energy; and the EU Blue Growth Strategy which is now being exported to all the Med riparian countries beyond the EU.

**“Marine space on its own is an economic asset, and we have a lot of it”**

Innovative businesses based on marine bio-resources in the Mediterranean are also emerging, boosted by new technological developments and tools, bolstering new products and services.

## To what degree would you say these sources have been tapped, to date?

We are living in exciting times. We cannot look back except to learn from experience and to prepare for the future. Investments are definitely needed to strengthen the research and innovation backbone in the Maltese Islands. Competitiveness and economic returns will highly depend on the extent to which our country is able to evolve, adapt and shape swiftly enough to match the demands, challenges and opportunities ahead.

In essence this will require: a substantial investment to build the skilled workforce that matches the challenges of a knowledge-based economy, and a sustained research and innovation infrastructure that provides the base for translating ideas into action, for exploiting technological development into smart and innovative applications, and for targeting added value to

production and service provision that brings into action the cutting edge levels of achievement and leads to economic returns and competitiveness.

I believe that the University of Malta has a key role here, and not only as a provider of the professional and specialised human resource for the country. It should also be the key national provider for basic knowledge and data as well as for essential infrastructure which it should offer for free as a public good. The government must provide the resources for this to happen.

The big advantage is that the same infrastructure does not need to be duplicated elsewhere, and therefore reaping the benefit of multi-usage; same for data and knowledge which should be disseminated for use and re-use by multiple players, including the private sector, thus generating a multiplier effect and serving to boost growth at no additional cost.

## Within this context, what is the role that the Physical Oceanography Research Group plays?

The Research Group that I lead (ex Physical Oceanography Unit) is this year celebrating its 25th anniversary. Through a long track record of numerous international collaborative projects, we have consolidated our infrastructure and built a solid reputation, attracting the attention of high level partners, including IFREMER (French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea) and CNRS (National Centre of Scientific Research) from France.

Our focus is on operational oceanography. This is a branch in oceanography where the sea is observed in a continuous and routine manner through the installation and maintenance of permanent real-time sea monitoring systems, and the publishing of meteo-marine forecasts.

Local observations today include: atmospheric parameters, sea level, currents and waves in both delayed and operational mode; forecasts for the same parameters are issued daily on the services website [www.capemalta.net](http://www.capemalta.net) for the Central Mediterranean area, the Malta shelf area and for marine areas closer to Malta, even as close as the coastal waters inside ports and in embayments.

The data is transmitted in real-time not only for research, but primarily to national stakeholders - such as Transport Malta, the Armed Forces of Malta, and the Civil Protection Department - responsible entities and the general public and private users with an interest to apply such data in their routine operations, and to generate added value through service provision and smart applications.

## Education is critical. In what ways do you promote the importance of marine knowledge?

The University is already providing post-graduate courses with a focus on applied oceanography ([www.um.edu.mt/science/geosciences/physicaloceanography/msc/operationaloceanography](http://www.um.edu.mt/science/geosciences/physicaloceanography/msc/operationaloceanography)) and maritime engineering, as well as hosts research



Aldo Drago



groups that are engaged in applicative projects promoting R&I in the marine sector. There is furthermore the opportunity to establish programmes of study and skill development jointly with educational structures within the southern Mediterranean countries.

Several capacity building activities have already been organised by the Physical Oceanography Research Group within this context, and provide a bearing for our role at this regional level - an activity being held in Malta this week is the summer course on ‘Operational Oceanography for Blue Growth’ that is being organised under the aegis of the H2020 JERICO-Next pan-European project (led by IFREMER), targeting participants from the Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea.

The University promotes existing European platforms such as EMODnet and COPERNICUS for greater uptake by the non-EU countries. The Physical Oceanography Research Group is a COPERNICUS Academy node for Malta and is promoting the downscaling of regional scale data fields from the COPERNICUS Marine Environment Monitoring Service (CMEMS) to generate higher resolution and local scale information with merging to local marine observations. CMEMS is led by Mercator Ocean (France) with whom we have collaborated as a champion partner to set up the CMEMS service as it is today.

## You also collaborate with other Mediterranean countries, including France. What form does such collaboration take?

French research institutions have always been leaders in the Mediterranean, and our participation in regional projects has brought us consistently in direct contact with French colleagues and renowned scientists. The very first funded project to which the then called Physical Oceanography Unit had participated way back in 1992, through the AVICENNE initiative, was a joint project with IFREMER and a French SME.

In more recent times the ongoing H2020 pan-European project JERICO-Next is led by IFREMER, as well as SeaDataCloud which is the last of a sequel of EU funded projects, since 1996, with a strong French lead.

Oceanographic data is the common factor in all these projects which have led to the establishment of standards for marine data and information management, and forged the way to state-of-the-art marine observations in open sea and coastal areas. A bilateral project with the CNRS-INSU (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique - Institut National des Sciences de l’Univers) sea glider facility has last year given us the opportunity to use a remotely controlled unmanned device to collect pristine data in the stretch of sea from south of Malta to the north African coast.

This week several French experts are supporting us in the delivery of the summer international course on ‘Operational Oceanography for Blue Growth’ (<http://marine.copernicus.eu/jerico-next-malta-summer-school-2018-july-9-14-operational-oceanography-blue-growth/>) - the course targets oceanographic data exploration, elab-



The sea surrounding Malta is full of prospects.

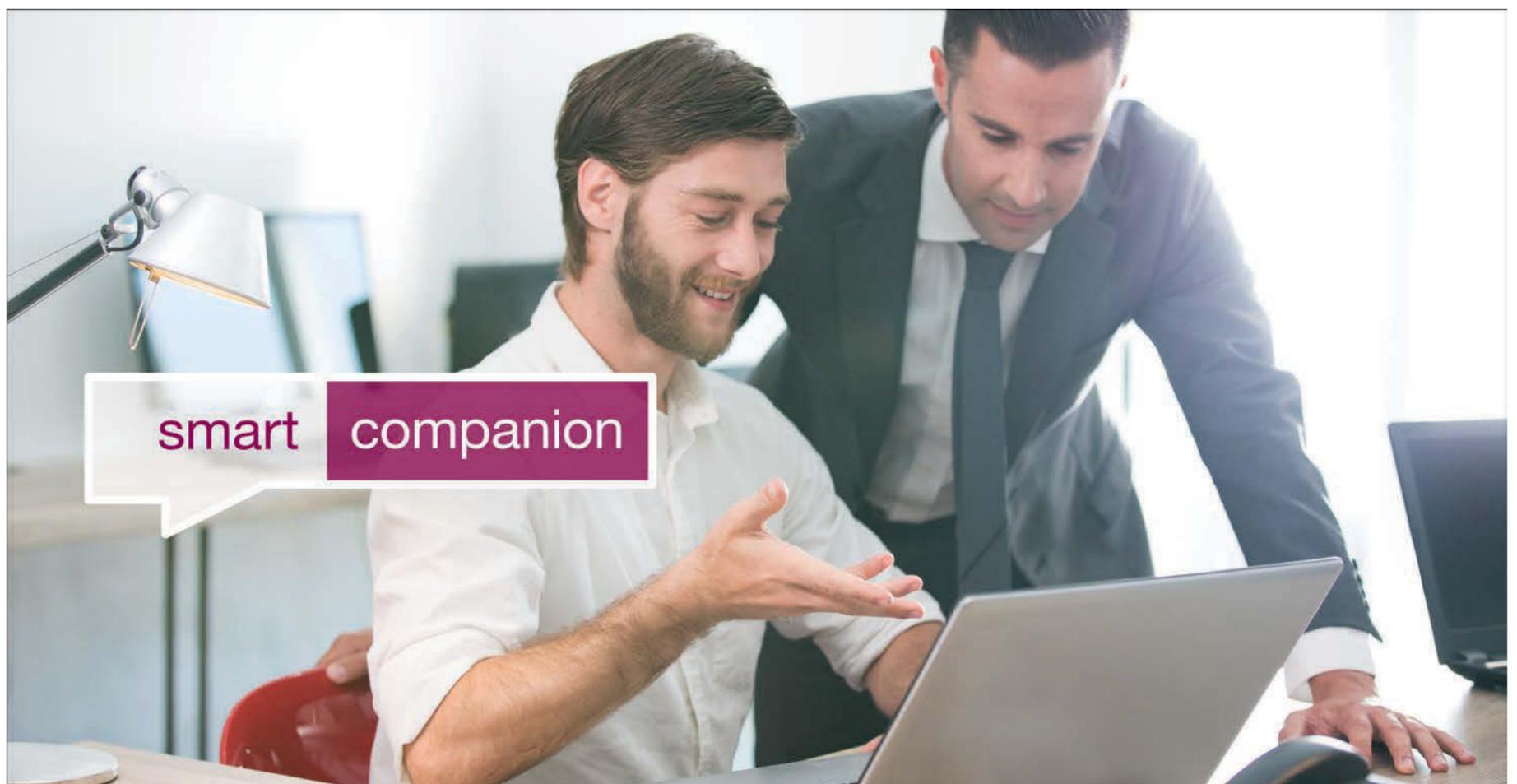
oration and product creation for blue growth. It will empower 38 professional participants from 22 countries to source, interpret and merge marine data, and to acquire the key skills to transform data into knowledge and added value products.

**Prof. Aldo Drago, is currently the co-ordinator of the Physical Oceanography Research Group**

**(PO-Res. Grp., ex Physical Oceanography Unit, PO-Unit) within the Department of Geosciences. The PO-Res.Grp undertakes oceanographic research, in a holistic perspective, including operational marine observations and forecasts, specialised data management analysis and participation in international cooperative research ventures. Under his direction, the PO-Res.Grp has strengthened its activities, knowhow and**

**capability through the participation in several EU funded regional and pan-European scientific projects, INTERREG and MED Programme projects. Prof. Drago has been instrumental in consolidating the regional framework to promote and execute operational oceanography in the Mediterranean. From 1998 to 2013, he served as the Executive Secretary of MedGOOS (now MonGOOS), the Global Ocean Observing System**

**for the Mediterranean, with office in Malta. He has coordinated and participated in a large number of international and local research projects, and leading the Italia-Malta Interreg V-A project CALYPSO South. He is also the national pivot in the BlueMed initiative for Blue Growth, and the vice-chair of the University Maritime Platform. Prof. Drago coordinates the M.Sc. in Applied Oceanography.**



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news



# Nicolo Isouard's *Cendrillon* at Teatru Manoel

Supported by the French embassy, the opera *Cendrillon* was performed on June 28 and 30 in Valletta.

Based on Charles Perrault's classic tale, *Cendrillon* is an opera in three acts created in 1810 for the Opéra Comique of Paris. Born in Malta of French parents,

Nicolo Isouard is considered to be one of the best Maltese composers. For the bicentennial of Nicolo Isouard's death, Teatru Manoel has paid tribute to his work in a production directed by Jean-Philippe Desrousseaux and under the baton of maestro Takénoni Némoto.



Poster of the event



## Energy Observer in Malta

On the road to its six-year world tour, the French boat Energy Observer made its 15th stop in Malta from April 27-30.

This is not any boat: the Energy Observer is the first boat to be 100 per cent powered by renewable energies (hydrogen, solar and wind energy). The catamaran is covered by 130m<sup>2</sup> of solar panels. It can even produce its own fresh water through a desalination system.

After developing it, the French team has embarked in a huge challenge: a six-year world tour with 101 stops. The name-code of the mission is Odysseus. They take the opportunity of each call to visit local innovative initiatives in the field of agriculture and energy. Malta was no exception and the crew met the tenants of the Oasis farm in Bahrija and the apiculture project Beeware.



## French Ordre du Mérite Maritime presented

On May 31, the French Ambassador to Malta Béatrice le Fraper du Hellen presented the Ordre du Mérite Maritime to Dr Andreina Fenech Farrugia, Malta Director General of Fisheries and Aquaculture, to thank her action both in Malta and in the EU in favour of the protection of oceans.

The event took place on a French navy vessel, the *Aviso LV Le Hénaff*, on a stopover in Grand Harbour, in the presence of Minister for Foreign Affairs Carmelo Abela and Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, fisheries and animal rights Clint Camilleri.



French Ambassador to Malta Béatrice le Fraper du Hellen, MCST executive chairman Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando and CNES president Jean-Yves le Gall.

## Maltese-French space cooperation

Jean-Yves le Gall, president of the CNES (National Centre for Space Studies) and Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, executive chairman of the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) have signed a framework agreement to support the development of the space sector in Malta.

This first framework cooperation agreement aims to facilitate the use by Malta of space observation technologies and systems deployed by CNES to develop applications, for example in the field of maritime surveillance. It may allow for future public and private investment. Cooperation will include exchanges of good practice, training for young engineers and joint seminars and workshops to explore synergies and joint assets in a European framework.

The signing of this agreement confirms the convergence of views between Malta and France to consolidate Europe's position



Jean-Yves le Gall and Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando signing the agreement.

as the world's second largest space power.

Following the signing of this agreement, Mr Le Gall said: "I am delighted by our particularly fruitful exchanges with space managers in Malta, which has a

crucial role to play in the sector, and in particular in the field of space applications. It is important that Malta wishes to strengthen its national research in order to contribute to the future of the European space policy."

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# Island beauty

The Charente-Maritime islands are a marriage of sea and land that cannot but translate into a beautiful holiday.

April is the cruellest month, as that literary giant once wrote. But August is probably more so, because that is when friends and family on holiday start flooding your inbox with photos of lyric Taormina, quiet Rome, palette-pretty Greece, adventurous Botswana and thrilling Vietnam. And all come with that invisible - yet very loud - caption: wish you were here, but you aren't.

Except that in most cases, you don't wish to be there. Taormina is overpriced, Rome dishevelled, Greece too loud, and so on. That is, until your inbox pings with a photo of the Charente-Maritime islands. Yes, it is too pretty, like a biscuit-tin fantasy. But then again, when was being too pretty a problem?

Set in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region, the distinctive feature of the Charente-Maritime are its 460

kilometres of coast, gift-wrapped in the gleeful package of endless sunshine, historic heritage and a table laid with gastronomic delights, washed down with rich cognac. All those ingredients boil and bubble into a variety of holiday options, from snoozing on sand as fine as icing sugar to cycling along glimmering countryside, exploring ancient churches and ticking favourite sips-and-nospsits at historic vineyards.

“When was being too pretty a problem?”

For a beach holiday, the Charente-Maritime offers a generous spread of beaches, creeks, cliffs, salt marshes, canals and river es-

tuaries, all facing the great Atlantic. For a spot of island life, spend your August shutdown on Île de Ré, Île d'Oléron, Île d'Aix and Île Madame. Then there is the Aiguillon bay and the Gironde estuary, where seaside resorts such as Royan, Châtelailon-Plage, Fouras, Saint-Palais-sur-Mer and Saint-Georges-de-Didonne are popular throughout the year.

But Charente-Maritime's water world is not just about the beaches. The Charente river is a beautiful stretch of water which you can use to explore the area - with a total length of 361km, the river is navigable from Angoulême to Rochefort and you can live it on board a canoe, gabarre or boat.

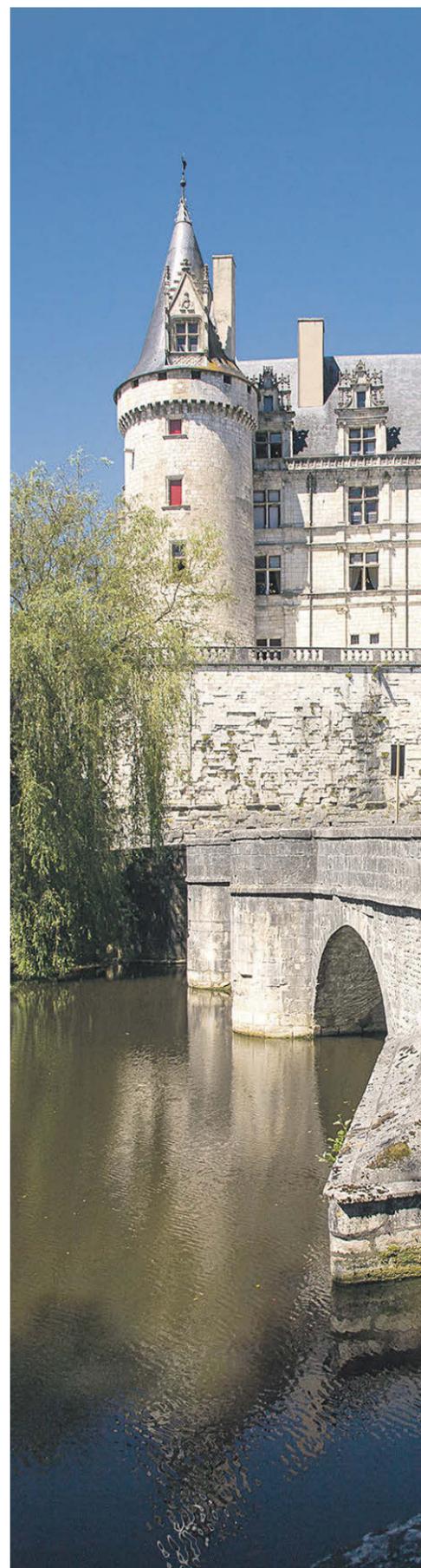
Inland, the Charente-Maritime boasts a historic cultural heritage. Set in some of the most beautiful towns and vil-

lages in France is a wealth of listed sites, museums, castles, forts, Romanesque churches and ancient remains. And that is only the public sites. Private chateaus and castles - such as the castle of La Rochefoucauld or that of La Roche Courbon, are open to the public, offering a glimpse of rare riches.

This meeting of land and sea cannot but translate into a wealthy larder. From oysters and mussels to salt, authentic cagouille à la charentaise, and sun-gorged fruit, lunch and dinner are an occasion and markets are worth the proverbial detour. All, of course, washed down with scented white wines, fresh rosés and fruity reds.

And when you've satisfied your hunger, sit back, sip a cognac - the result of centuries-old alchemy - and enjoy the views.

Explore the Charente river by boat.





The generous larder of Charente-Maritime.

## The unique French wine experience

La Viniculture, which is situated in Manwel Dimech Street, Sliema was established in January 2015, from a passionate love of the land and of course, the vine. When developing La Viniculture, the concept in mind was to introduce producers to Malta that for generations have developed wines of great purity by protecting the soil on which their vines have been growing for many years.

This, in turn led La Viniculture to search in depth for the French terroir, protected from

the mass producing wine companies that have flooded the international wine market.

La Viniculture focuses solely on French wines because, as natives themselves, management feels it is essential to inform all existing and potential clients that one wine which is produced from one grape, in two different regions will taste completely different. This difference is due to a number of factors such as the terroir, climate, natural wine-making process, organic wine-growing and winemaker.



When speaking to clients, La Viniculture make it a point to explain the differentiating factors of their wines.

In doing so, they are able to find the best wine that will suit them, whether it's based on their mood at the time, preferred tastes or else a particular food pairing.

The ultimate aim at La Viniculture is to offer clients exclusive, natural, organic and

biodynamic wines from artisan winemakers. Apart from wine, La Viniculture also offers other products which are imported from the region of Occitanie. These include craft beers, foie gras, pâté, chocolate and many other artisanal food specialities.

To learn more follow the La Viniculture page on Facebook.

(Content provided by La Viniculture)



La Rochefoucauld castle guards rare riches.



**MALTA FREEPORT:  
NETWORK CONNECTIONS  
TO 135 PORTS WORLDWIDE**

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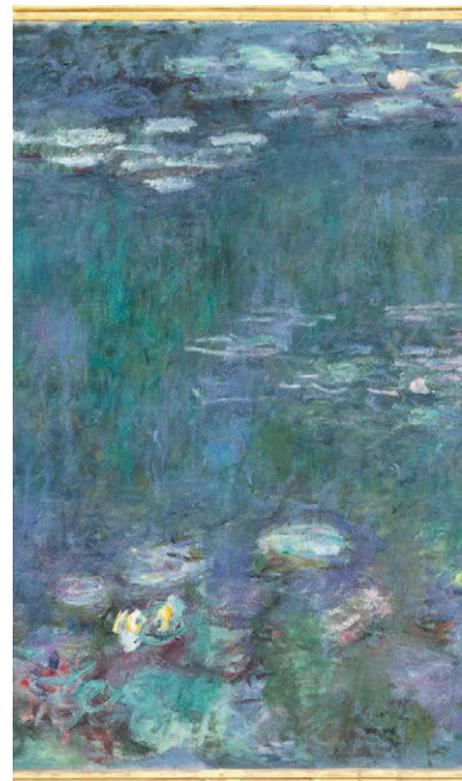
The world's most renowned shipping lines have chosen Malta Freeport as their main transshipment hub in the central Mediterranean. Their strong global operations are increasingly strengthening Malta Freeport's accessibility and presently the Freeport's clients are benefiting from extensive regular network connections to 135 ports worldwide, 64 of which are in the Mediterranean. Such a scenario provides ample proof that Malta Freeport Terminals offers clients the right mix of resources which are fully geared up to efficiently handle 20,000 TEU vessels and larger on both berths. Malta Freeport Terminals has become synonymous with reliable, effective and efficient services – all vital attributes to a successful operation.

**Malta Freeport Terminals is rooted in its mission of exceeding the customers' increasing expectations. Renewing our focus and energy towards its fulfilment is vital to our continued success.**



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# Room with a view

The Orangerie gallery in Paris is home to one of the largest monumental achievements of early twentieth-century painting, with no equivalent worldwide. **Veronica Stivala** muses about her favourite gallery.

I can never get enough of museums and galleries. A trip to a new city, or even a Saturday afternoon, so often warrants a visit to that wonderful world of exhibiting spaces. They envelope you in their often high ceilings, majestic doors, mostly quiet atmosphere as you let yourself get lost in a world of art, prehistoric collections, jewellery displays, and the list goes on.

Yet I will admit to information overload and have often found myself saturated and unable to enter one more exhibiting room. The Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of the Moving Image, both in New York, are two fantastic, yet overwhelming, examples that come to mind. The latter even features maps of the museum, forewarning visitors to pace themselves. It is for this reason that I appreciate the many free museums in London, which allow plural visits.

It is for the same reason that I have come to value smaller museums and galleries that make for a slower appreciation, rather than a mere box ticking of works on display. The Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris is

one of my favourite pocket galleries, if you will, though perhaps this is a misnomer, given the mammoth size of the room-long paintings of Monet's *Water Lilies*.

**"Illusion of an endless whole, of a wave with no horizon and no shore"**

The art gallery is dedicated to impressionist and post-impressionist paintings and in addition to Monet's works, contains creations by Cézanne, Matisse, Modigliani, Picasso, Renoir, Rousseau, Sisley, Soutine and Utrillo, among others. Set on two floors, the upper floor is entirely dedicated to Monet's *Water Lilies*.

In keeping with my oath that less is more, I will focus on the star attraction of this gallery: the water lilies. What is special about this collection is that they were painted

specifically for the two oval rooms of this gallery. As the white walls of the room curve, so do the paintings, evoking a sense in the viewer of being immersed in this ethereal world of the water lilies. The sheer size of the wall-long paintings is mesmerising and it is easy, nay encouraged, to get lost as one imagines the picturesque water garden in the Giverny Estate in Normandy that inspired the artist to create these paintings.

The unique set of *Water Lilies* were offered to the French State by Monet just after the Armistice of November 11, 1918 as a symbol of peace and were installed at the Orangerie in 1927, a few months after the artist's death. They are truly one of the largest monumental achievements of early 20th-century painting, covering a surface area of 200m<sup>2</sup>. The dimensions and the area covered by the paint surrounds and encompasses the viewer on nearly one hundred linear metres which unfold a landscape dotted with water lilies, willow branches, tree and cloud reflections, giving the "illusion of an endless whole, of a wave with no horizon and no shore" in the words

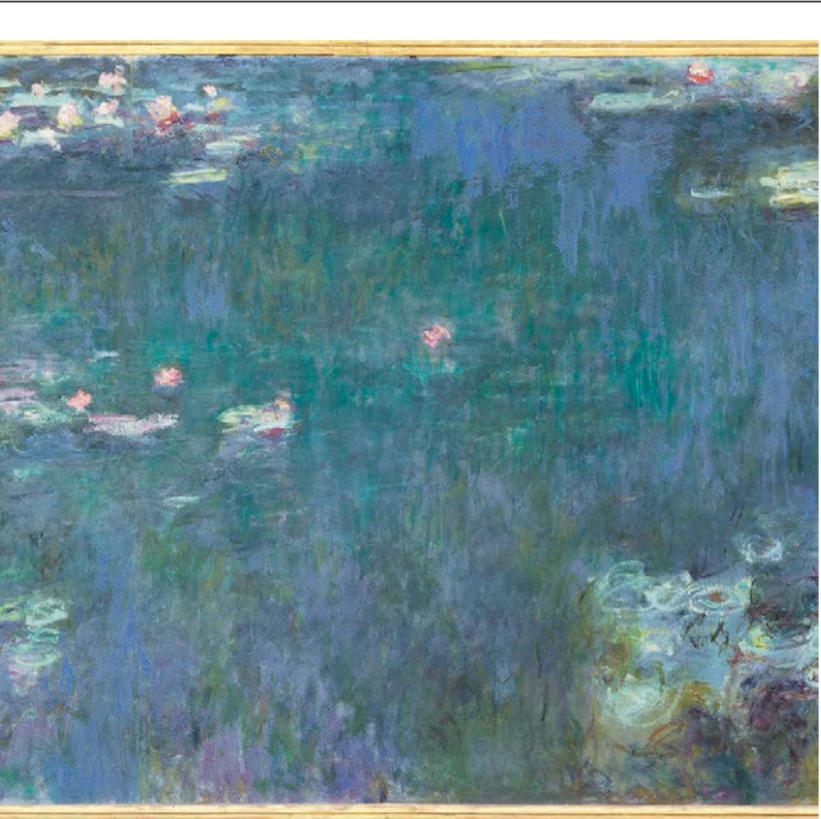


of Monet. This unique masterpiece has no equivalent worldwide.

Apart from their sheer size and beauty, what captured my attention was the hold this creation had over Monet. The entire collection, known as the *Nymphéas*, comprises some 300 paintings, over 40 of

which were painted between 1890s and 1910s. The vast majority of these were painted in the last years of his life.





PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE ORANGERIE GALLERY

were large format, and which occupied Monet for 30 years, from the late 1860s until his death in 1926.

The visuals reproduced here are from a permanent display at the gallery, but for those visiting Paris up until August 20 of this year, they are in for a special treat: a

special exhibition, entitled 'The Water Lilies. American Abstract Painting and the last Monet' focuses on a very specific moment in the life of Monet's paintings, in 1955, when these great decorations were beginning to attract the attention of collectors and museums.



# Le zapping c'est chic

From *Engrenages* to *Les Revenants*, France is conquering the small screen.

When did the golden age of television dawn? Was it with the first few seconds of the pilot for HBO's *The Sopranos*, with New Jersey mobster Tony Soprano (played by James Gandolfini) doing the unthinkable and visiting a psychiatrist? Or was it two years later, with David Simon's cult series *The Wire*? Or maybe it was *Six Feet Under*, that delicately dark drama which went on to propel Michael C Hall for a staggering eight series of *Dexter*.

No one will agree on a definite season or episode. The only thing most critics would agree on is that it was American cable networks such as HBO, Showtime and AMC which invested millions to first propose television as a serious medium, remove the once-held stigma that no real actors would appear on television, and then attract the big stars to the small screen.

The list of Hollywood A-listers translating their talent to television reads like the ending credits to a blockbuster - from Christian Slater, James Franco, Matthew McConaughey and Claire Danes to Kevin Spacey, Steve Buscemi and Kelly Macdonald, they're all there, at the end of your remote control.

Such success naturally migrated to other countries. Nordic noir hit the small screen with a big

black bang and a closetful of thick cardigans. Danish series *Forbrydelsen* was picked up by BBC and then repackaged in the US as *The Killing*. The same good fate befell *The Bridge* and *Borgen*.

Italy also tuned in, producing *Gomorra*. And France did not sit back on its favourite couch. Rather, it turned its attention to television. This, however, was more difficult than in other countries, mainly because the French film industry is subsidised by the state and the big screen is the favoured option with the more seasoned actors.

But the foundations were already there, with *Spiral* attracting a huge audience. *Les Revenants* followed. On paper, a zombie narrative set in a small Alpine village would never work but in the real world - or at least that of television - it did. Then French television received its greatest endorsement when Gerard Depardieu signed up for Netflix's *Marseille*, exploring and exposing the city's dirty underbelly.

The success of this series fuelled the production of more French television. With plots as diverse as France's cheeseboard, productions share a set of common elements: slow-paced storytelling, gorgeous cinematography and that *je ne sais quoi* that keeps viewers tuning in for more.



## Marseille

The show's creator Dan Franck has compared *Marseille* to *House of Cards*. It is, but at the same time, it's not, as the French drama is a mix of one part politics and five parts crime in all its forms. It all plays out in a city which, despite the clean-up of recent years, still has a dark underbelly which spikes politics and fuels the narrative, one episode after the next. And at the centre of it all is Gerard Depardieu, as broody as ever, moving his chess pieces against his younger opponent, played by Benoit Magimel, for the final battle royale.



## Spiral

*Engrenages* was a huge hit in France, on BBC Four in the UK and on Netflix in the US. Now in its seventh season, it is difficult to describe - but saying that it's French is probably enough. There's drama in the courtroom, office politics played out in police departments, criminals with friends in high places, predators and prey, and Audrey Fleurot's flaming hair - itself a character - all set against a gritty Parisian backdrop.

## Un Village Français

First aired in 2009, *Un Village Français* caused the same sensation that the NBC mini-series *Holocaust* did in 1978 Germany, as it asked viewers to seriously address Vichy and the issue of collaboration during the Nazi occupation in World War II.

This period drama begins in June 1940 in Villedieu, a fictional village in the Jura mountains, with the Germans at the door. The French have to accept that invulnerability was indeed an illusion, and as the Nazi forces sweep through France, with every episode, the war intensifies, the options narrow and collaboration between occupiers and occupied thickens.



## The Returned

People return to their Alpine village and discover that they have been dead for several years. That is the introduction to the mysterious universe of *The Returned*. Slow-paced, cruelly so, but gorgeously shot, *Les Revenants* is strange, gorged on suspense and suspicion, and will send shivers up and down your spine.



## wines



# Raise a glass

At this year's Bordeaux Wine Festival, all the news coming through the grapevine was excellent.

This year's edition of the Bordeaux Fête le Vin, held from June 14-18, celebrated its 20th anniversary in grand style, hosting the finale of the Liverpool-Dublin-Bordeaux Tall Ships Regatta.

For centuries, the wines and harbour of Bordeaux seem to have experienced similar destinies. They have developed in parallel, learning from one another how to develop, rise to the highest level, and contribute to the city's fame and fortune.

All this and more were on show for the 800,000 visitors to enjoy. From tasting the region's wines along the three-kilometre wine trail on the banks of the Garonne and talks with producers and wine merchants to concerts and firework displays, here is the Bordeaux Fête le Vin in all its highlights.

## Bottle party

The tasting pass was, as in all previous editions, one of the keys to the success of Bordeaux Fête le Vin. A glass in one hand and a pass in the other, wearing their glass-carrier around their necks, thousands of visitors strolled from one pavilion to the next, exploring the diversity of Bordeaux and Nouvelle-Aquitaine wines.

## The taller they come

Kruzenstern, Tarangini, Belle Poule, Belem, Vera Cruz - just the sound of their names

invited visitors to imagine a voyage on the high seas.

Of the 30 ships that were present, more than 20 were open for tours. This proved to be a unique opportunity to see how they function, learn about their often turbulent history, meet their crews and breathe a little of the air of the high seas and adventure that they exude.

## Enter the dragon

Famed all over the world for lighting up the skies on the occasion of spectacular celebrations, the Group F magicians were back in Bordeaux, five years after their magnificent display for the inauguration of the Chaban-Delmas bridge. They followed up on their promise with an exotic procession down the Garonne river followed by a grandiose pyrotechnic explosion.

## Love, love, love

The organic winegrowers held a celebration in a location upholding their values: the great hall in the Darwin centre. Paul Daniel, the director of the National Orchestra of Bordeaux-Aquitaine, accompanied the tasting, adding a few Beatles tunes to the symphony orchestra's repertoire. Some of the excerpts were from Sergeants Pepper's *Lonely Hearts Club Band*, a



nod and a wink from the English director to Liverpool, the city from which the Tall Ships Regatta departed.

## The festival spirit

Throughout the four days of the Bordeaux Fête le Vin, marching bands, choirs, and rock bands performed on stage or in parades. The full programme included the famous Bagad Lann Bihouée Breton pipe band, the Jaipur brass band, the Banda'Leo, and Mezerg with his boomboom piano.

## A taste of the South-West

The whole of South-West France was represented along the quays. Naturally its wines flowed among a series of gourmet pavilions, refreshment stalls, and tourism promotion booths highlighting the products and specialities of the Basque Country, Corrèze, Médoc,

Dordogne, Charentes, Lot, Gers, Landes and Limousin.

## A river flows

In the middle of the festival, under the plane trees opposite the Place des Quinconces, a temporary structure was erected with an exhibition offering a voyage through more than a thousand years of history, linking Bordeaux's wines to the Garonne river, to the estuary and to the oceans. The exhibition trail evoked the appearance of *vitis biturica* in the Roman town of Burdigala, showing the various vessels that were used to transport wine over the centuries.

## There they go

The tall ships had other ports of call and, after four days in Bordeaux, they left in a procession, to return to the open seas and continue their voyages, accompanied by the sound of foghorns and cannon fire.



# 40 years of deliveries to and from France

This year, Express Trailers marks 40 years of operations between Malta and France. Malta's leading transport and logistics operator has in fact been delivering to and from France since 1978 managing entire supply chains, offering groupage services and full trailer loads, both for import as well as for export.

Express Trailers started its service to and from France with one depot in Paris. Eventually, growing demand led the company to explore the addition of new routes. Today, Express Trailers operates a weekly service that connects Malta with its three depots in Paris, Lyon and Lille.

The service caters of all types of cargo including dry, chilled or frozen food products, cosmetic packaging and specialised cargo such as pharmaceuticals. Express Trailers also move personal effects, motor vehicles, and works of art.

"The handling of perishables such as food is never a simple process nor is the handling of personal effects, antiques and fine art, a straightforward task," said David Fleri Soler, head sales and business development at Express Trailers.

"When it comes to the transport of pharmaceutical products, this requires skill and precise operating procedures. This is where our fully-monitored, temperature-controlled and GDP-compliant transportation services satisfy the increasing demands of our clients doing business with their French counterparts while meeting all requirements in terms of regulation, security and quality handling."

Mr Fleri Soler is also a member on the Council of the Maltese-French Chamber of Commerce and therefore, has always harboured a special interest in developing the service route between Malta and France from a transportation and logistics perspective.

"Over these past years we kept experiencing an increase in trade between Malta and France and this increased the demand for our service. Two years ago, we added Lille as our third depot in France to service our customers doing business with the region and we also consolidated our business collaboration with French transport and logistics company Dimotrans."

"With over 30 years of experience the Dimotrans Group shares our same values of providing effective, flexible and responsive offers in multimodal road, air and maritime transport, in customs and in B to B and B to C logistics, to manage entire supply chains," added Franco Azzopardi, chairman and CEO of Express Trailers.

One of Express Trailers' longest standing customers on the Malta - France route is world-renowned Toly Products. Toly chairman and CEO Andy Gatesy commended Express Trailers for its unflinching support to the company's operations.

"We have been working with Express Trailers for over 30 years and although the bulk of our shipments goes to France, Express Trailers support our international shipping to many other countries," he said.



"When we started sourcing and trading in China, Korea and Hong Kong, Express Trailers proved to be the best logistics

partners for us and their support helped us establish Toly in Malta as an efficient logistics hub for the rest of Europe. In fact, today,

we also send shipments to Germany, Austria, Benelux, Switzerland, UK and other countries round Europe. Whatever the

challenge, Express Trailers never say no and they've been incredible partners for us along the way," said Mr Gatesy.

Mr Azzopardi concluded: "This 40-year experience working with France has earned Express Trailers a lot of know-how about the French market and this has enabled us to be able to apply a low-risk, efficient and complete service to our customers. Today, anyone who wants to do business with France knows that their products and cargo will be in the safe hands of a company with acquired experience, an obsession for excellence and with a 40-year proven expertise."

(Content provided by Express Trailers)

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BUREAU VALLÉE MALTA

# Continuous investment

Malta Freeport Terminals has invested significantly in recent months in a concerted drive to ensure it is able to meet growing demand from the world's largest container lines and enhance its reputation as one of the Mediterranean's leading transshipment hubs.

The Freeport has been an unbridled success story since it was privatised in 2004. Twenty main-line services now call every week and last year alone it handled 3.15 million containers.

This means that clients benefit from global links with 135 ports, 64 of which are in the Mediterranean and important strategic routes to India and Brazil today feature in its growing list of serviced ports.

Malta Freeport Terminals CEO Alex Montebello said: "We are very proud of the growth achieved by the Freeport in recent years; however, we are now oper-

ating at full capacity in a highly competitive environment, so we must invest further to equip us with the tools we need to tackle the challenges ahead."

A major part of this investment will involve the squaring off the Terminal Two North Quay, which, together with other developments, will make it possible for the Freeport to handle four million container movements per year.

This major development will complement the investment made over the past year in new on-site services, cranes, tractors, trailers and technology.

The Freeport now has a capacity for 1,622 refrigerated units (known as reefers) for the storage of perishable cargo and last summer installed the top-notch Terminal Operating System Navis N4 system that controls the entire logistical operation of each container ship: determining what



containers are on board as well as identifying which should be discharged and those that ought to be loaded.

Today, the Freeport counts some of the world's largest shipping lines among its clients and is capable of receiving the biggest container ships ever built which can be as long as four football

itches (399 metres) in length and carry over 20,000 containers.

However, it is not only businesses that benefit from this success. Malta Freeport Terminals has also continued to invest in the local community, funding the creation of a garden and recreational facility on the Birżebbuġa promenade – which

will see the transformation of an abandoned stretch of land covering 5,000 square metres along the promenade into a garden with water features – as well as sponsoring local sports clubs and other entities.

(Content provided by Malta Freeport Terminals)



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## Shipping the future

CMA CGM is an original entrepreneurial adventure that started in 1978. Founded by the late Jacques R. Saadé, it is the story of a group which has become one of the leaders of the shipping market, due to its strategic relevance, its capacity to anticipate evolutions in the market, and also due to the qualitative work provided by its teams.

Now headed by Rodolphe Saadé, from its base in Marseille, the CMA CGM Group is present in more than 160 countries through its network of over 755 agencies, with more than 29,000 employees worldwide.

With a young and diversified fleet of 445 vessels, the CMA CGM Group serves over 420 of the world's 521 commercial ports. Through more than 200 shipping lines, the company operates on every one of the world's seas. Its global presence and efficient ships enabled the CMA CGM Group to transport a volume of 15.6 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) in 2016.

Last year was a milestone year with the launch of the largest shipping alliance. The Ocean Alliance is the largest operational agreement ever made between shipping companies.

By offering more ports and more direct calls, as well as better transit times, CMA CGM provides customers with unmatched quality services. This new offering reinforces competitiveness and strengthens the shipping line's position as a key player in the shipping industry.

Through CMA CGM Malta Agency Ltd, customers have the opportunity of shipping their products to or from the far reaches of the globe, through this extensive global shipping network.

CMA CGM is also present in Malta with its transshipment office. This office serves as its regional hub in the Mediterranean Sea, through which it reaches over 130 different container terminals around the globe. CMA CGM manages all its Mediterranean transshipment activity through Malta Freeport Terminals.

(Content provided by CMA CGM)





## Full service at sea

KS Shipping Malta is a registered local maritime company offering a holistic complement of diversified international maritime services including ship registration services (together with crew endorsements), bunkering, ship repair, cargo operations, transshipment and yachting.

Services also include ship management services, including ISM and ISPS certification, as well as crewing services, including MLC2006 certification. The advantages of registering a vessel in Malta is that Malta is one of the world's largest ship's registries. Ship owners and operators recognise that a Maltese vessel will not be subject to trading restrictions, and that they enjoy preferential treatment in certain ports.

Moreover, registry requirements are renowned and recognised by major international shipyards and classification societies.

KS Shipping Malta is a member of FPAL and FIATA, and has also been accredited as being in compliance with Bureau Veritas Standard for Quality Management System of Seafarers Manning Offices.

KS Shipping Malta also offers additional services such as underwater hull inspections (Class approved) and hire of load cells and load testing. KS Shipping Malta is the sole distributor for FOLCH ropes with a stock of various ropes held in Malta. FOLCH ropes are certified by DNV / GL and meet OCIMF specifications.

KS Shipping Malta has been involved in assisting a number of vessels flying the French flag, both commercial as well as French Navy vessels during their stay in Malta.

Since its inception, KS Shipping has sought to become one of the most prestigious ship agencies in Malta. Keith Murphy, owner and director of the company, has always sought to provide the most professional and courteous service to ship owners, master, and crew.

"A vessel and its crew is like a living entity and has to be regarded and respected, as such, with specific, and sometimes sensitive needs being addressed accordingly," Mr Murphy said.

(Content provided by KS Shipping Malta)

## Technology for business transformation

In today's wealth of data collection methods, it is relatively easy for businesses to amass a large amount of data. The crunch comes when it comes to process it and extract meaningful information to guide decision-making.

Multigas operates mainly in the industrial, food service and healthcare sectors by delivering atmospheric gases, special technical gases and gas related equipment and services. The company was formed in 1986 to take on the gas related business from L.Farrugia and Sons, which had originally entered the sector as early as 1926. Multi-national companies with French roots are among key business partners and customers.

Over the years, Multigas accumulated a number of data islands that demanded time-consuming data refreshes and analysis. To address these reporting challenges, Multigas felt the need to engage on a Business Intelligence (BI) project.

The BI solution, based on Microsoft SQL Server and PowerBI, is a custom-built solution that transforms data into actionable intelligence upon which the organisation's strategic and tactical business decisions can be taken. The BI solution offers various benefits such as cross-functional reporting, accessibility from any device, data security, ease of use, and blazing fast data retrieval and analysis capabilities. Thanks to the implemented BI solution, gone

are the days where reports took ages to be compiled. Over 10 years of business data can now be analysed in minutes and shared in an interactive visual way through PowerBI. Additionally, end-users can also run analyses and create reports and dashboards themselves, without having to rely on the IT team, hence, embracing a self-service approach to report creation. It is now hard to recall why users had to wait so long to get hold of a new report and this new reality is promoting a proactive approach towards work, within the organisation.

The BI solution offers a simple approach for decision makers to examine data, understand trends and derive valuable insights. Furthermore, the automation and standardisation implemented throughout the solution means that data governance is now built-in, thus offering a 'single version of the truth'. Data security management is simplified with aid of roles that define who has access to what. On premise and cloud data analysis tools give users ultimate flexibility.

The solution, which earned Multigas a place among the finalists of the MCA eBusiness Awards 2017, provides business intelligence like never before, allowing end-users to go from data to insights in minutes, using any data, anytime and anywhere.

(Content provided by Multigas)



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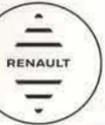
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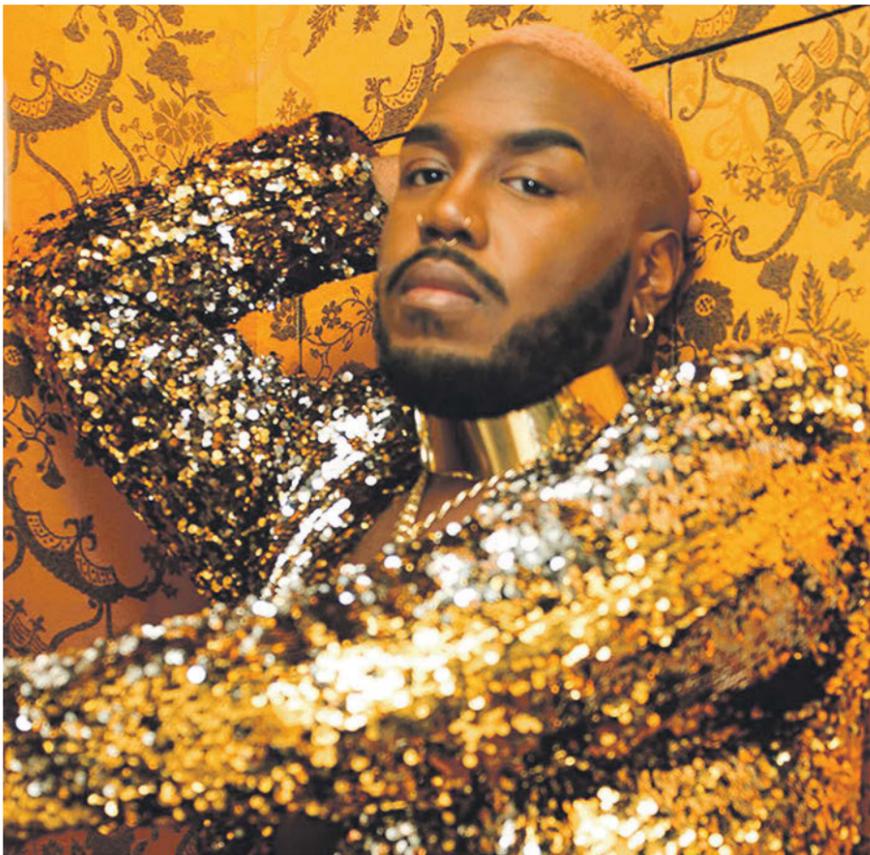
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Kiddy Smile



Maître Gims

# Artists of note

**Faye Clark** listens to the new French music artists who are making a noise.

This year's new names in French music are turning up the volume, joining the more established ones on stage and in the process giving more airwaves to the country's music scene.

While last year's sounds were dominated by pop artists such as Ed Sheeran, Kendrick Lamar and Drake, the variation of sounds being produced this year has opened the pathway for artists to have their creations heard. Genres such as electronic, R&B and hip-hop are making headway in the French music industry and topping the charts.

Gandhi Djuna, known by his stage name Maître Gims, has generated an explosive presence in France for his rap music. The artist began his career in the group Sexion d'Assaut but has gone on to develop a successful solo career following the release of his album *Subliminal* in 2013.

In March, he released his new album *Ceinture Noire* (Black Belt) which hogged the top spot in the charts for 11 weeks running. The album also reached number one in Belgium and Switzerland.

The artist also features alongside Naestro on their hit *Bella Ciao*, which topped the French singles charts for four consecutive weeks and peaked at number four in Germany.

The French hip-hop genre features lyrics that draw upon cultural and ethnic identity, rebellion and humour, elements that Gims elevates in *Ceinture Noire* and his earlier works.

Gims is not the only rap artist who is having a successful year. Artists such as Dosseh, Aya Nakamura and Lartiste are claiming their spot in the rap and hip-hop genre.

Lartiste is a French hip-hop artist from Bondy who stoked his fame flames when he joined rap band Malédiction at the age of 13. In 2006 the artist released his first solo production, *Evasion* and then went on to release further mixes and albums of his own.

His album *Maestro*, released in 2016 and *Grandestino*, released earlier this year, both reached the top 10 in the French charts – with *Maestro* reaching number four and *Grandestino* reaching number nine. In particular, his track *Mafiosa* from *Grandestino* stayed in the top-10 for 14 weeks and peaked at the number two spot for three consecutive weeks.

“The show wanted her to perform a song that did not represent her own image and music style, so she decided to take her own path”

Despite the artist's success, the past year wasn't smooth-sailing for the 32-year old. In March last year he was assaulted and consequently, forced to cancel tours, concerts and interviews. Even with such hurdles, *Grandestino* sold more than half a million copies.

It is not uncommon for artists to face obstacles during their career. One such artist is Kiddy Smile, an electronic and dance artist who has sent shockwaves through the industry, not only for his music but also his social identity.

The artist, who previously danced with The Gossip and LCD Soundsystem was told that his look was too different, which spurred him to shape his own career path in music. He has received over 100 million views on YouTube for his latest single releases, with videos featuring an homage to LGBT identity.



Mathilde Gerner

The DJ has long battled with his own LGBT identity and says that he owes it to music for helping him find his way. The artist has enabled the black-queer community to become recognised and his music video *Teardrops In the Box* gives viewers an insight into the closeted struggles of a coloured, gay-male. For his continued work with the LGBT community, he is now widely recognised as a role model – such is his status that he has also performed at the Fete de la Musique festival in France, outside the presidential palace.

Some artists come close to fame before they have even made their name in the industry.

Mathilde Gerner, known as her stage name Hoshi, was originally meant to appear on *The Voice*, but decided against participating in the blind audition, due to a

conflict of music choice with the show's production. According to Hoshi, the show wanted her to perform a song that did not represent her own image and music style, so she decided to take her own path into the music scene.

She is now considered to be a rising star in the French music industry, with her recently released debut album, *Just Believe It* already creating a storm. The track *Ta Marinière* remained in the top 10 for seven weeks, with its peak position at number seven. The song was also chosen to represent France in the 2018 *The Origin Song* Contest, where the singer-songwriter took France to the semi-final in February.

The singer will now appear in the television show *Rising Star*, but her career has already been kick-started thanks to her drive and talent.

# Minding the French language

Learning French opens a world of possibilities.

In 2017, the Institut Français launched a communication campaign to promote the French language in a modern and innovative way around the world, in partnership with the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, the International Organisation of La Francophonie as well as the Alliance Française Foundation.

A language of sharing and influence, French brings together more than 270 million speakers on five continents. It is not just the language of glamour and romance – it is a modern language, one of employment, innovation, digital and business. It is also a language complementary to English, and whose learning helps to learn other languages.

## Why you should learn French

- It's a language that is spoken all over the world
  - French is the only language, together with English, to be spoken on every continent
  - 274 million people speak French around the world
  - 29 countries have French as their official language
  - French is the second language of international news in the media
  - French is the second most widely learned foreign language in the world
  - French is the third language of business in the world
  - French facilitates access to careers in international relations, industry, tourism, law and research

## Where to learn French in Malta

The Alliance Française de Malte-Méditerranée

Like the other French Alliances in the world, the AFMM has three missions: offer French classes for all audiences; better publicise French culture and Francophone cultures, in all dimensions; and promote, through events and shows, the promotion of the creation and values of the Francophonie and cultural diversity.

Located in Marsa, it welcomes every year more than 800 students, children, adolescents and adults who want to learn French. It provides classes of all kinds, from general French and conversation classes to specific courses for companies.

### France Malta Association

The France Malta Association offers French classes to French-speaking children.

France Malta is a Maltese association founded in 2013 by French parents wishing to allow

their children to continue learning French in a Francophone setting in Malta. All children participating in the programme have French as their mother tongue. Classes are taught by Francophone teachers.

### Centre Franco-Malais

The Centre Franco-Malais helps students learn French in Maltese schools.

Created in 1984 as part of an agreement between the French and Maltese governments, the CFM now falls within the remit of the Ministry of Education of Malta. Its primary mission is to meet the needs of teaching French as a foreign language in Malta. It is mainly aimed at high school students and teachers of French, but is also open to anyone wishing to learn French.



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## events



Feries de Bayonne. PHOTO: DELPIXART/ISTOCKPHOTO



Puy du Fou. PHOTO: LE PUY DU FOU

# What's on in France

From rock music to medieval re-enactments and dance shows, France's events calendar offers plenty of red-letter days.

## Rock en Seine

August 24-26

First organised in 2003, this pop-rock festival has become a "must attend", welcoming more than 120 000 festival-goers. The 6 stages are spread in the Jardin de Saint Cloud at the doors of Paris, a huge garden which was designed by Louis XIV's architect Mr. Lenôtre. Come and discover unknown singers as and dance on the sound of famous groups. Among these, the Foo Fighters, Radiohead, Green Day, REM, Arctic Monkeys and Ed Sheeran have already walked on St Cloud's grass. What about you?

## Feries de Bayonne

June 25-29

Every Maltese town has its feast, and in much the same way, every village in the Basque region has its *feria*.

In Bayonne, these five days and nights celebrate the multiple traditions of the region in a very family-friendly atmosphere: ham degustation, songs, parades, jousts and bulls are all included in the programme.

This is France's biggest event as 1.2 million festayers gather in Bayonne. Don't forget the white and red dress code.

## Festival d'Aurillac

August 22-25

The International Festival of street theatre takes place every year in Aurillac, a small city in the centre of France.

The municipality has converted no less than 110 different places into ephemeral stages. From dance, theatre pieces and music to sketches, flash mobs and physi-

cal performances, it has the proverbial something for everyone. Just walk around the city, venture into the small alleys and be surprised.

## Festival de la Chaise Dieu

August 18-28

Every summer's end since 1966, the Festival de La Chaise-Dieu has been attracting thousands of music lovers and internationally renowned artists to the heart of the Haute-Loire uplands, to a small village and its majestic Gothic abbey church of Saint-Robert.

An exceptional heritage charged with spirituality, astonishing acoustics, high-end programming, and a warm atmosphere, everything concurs to offer festival-goers an exceptional experience.

## Interceltic festival of Lorient

August 3-12

Every summer, around 700,000 people from all over the world gather to the Celtic town of Lorient for the Interceltic Festival. The event celebrates the best of Celtic music hailing from Scotland down to Spain.

As the sound of bagpipes fills the air, the festival's musical parade mesmerises the gathered crowds at the Moustoir stadium and around the fishing port, supporting around 200 events and shows and involving a staggering 5,000 performers.

Tourists will love the atmosphere – and although it's a multi-cultural celebration, it's a great time to rub shoulders with the Lorient locals too. Well into its 40s now, the

Interceltique may be greying a little around the temples, but it's still young at heart.

## Rencontres d'Arles

July 2 – September 27

What if the best art gallery in the world was a town in Provence? All summer, until September 27, the Rencontres Photographiques, a big festival dedicated to the art of photography, will be inviting you to explore the pretty little streets of Arles. And with exhibitions and cocktails, traditional markets and trendy open-air cafés, your visit is just beginning.

## Biennale de la Danse

September 11-30

The New York Times has described the Lyon Dance Biennale as "the most important and ambitious dance festival in the world".

There is no better way to describe this event whose scale is rarely reached elsewhere. During the 20 days of the event, 100,000 people take part in this festival, attending 166 performances carried by 40 dance companies from all over the world.

## Fête de la Gastronomie

September 21-23

During this weekend, a multitude of events are set to celebrate French culinary culture as part of the Fête de la Gastronomie. It's an opportunity for chefs from all over France to show off their culinary delights to the foodie public.

Never mind if you are in Paris, Nantes, Bayonne or else in the heart of Burgundy, rest assured that you will find various initiatives and degustation opportunities in all regions.



Interceltic festival of Lorient. PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

## Puy du Fou

Throughout summer

More than a theme park, the Puy du Fou in Vendée is a unique place which allows you to travel back in time.

With historical shows on a large scale, in a beautiful natural setting, Puy du Fou guarantees a fun and cultural experience. In particular, the Cinéscénie is a must-see – a night-time artistic production which recounts the history of a local family, the Maupilliers from the Middle Ages to the 20th century.

Prepare to be dazzled as you revisit a past to when nobles and common people were united by the same community values.



Rock en Seine. PHOTO: ROCK EN SEINE



Festival d'Aurillac. PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

## transport

# Full charge ahead

France is becoming a world leader in electric mobility.

France comes with stereotypical strings attached. Think France and your mind – fed on a diet of popular culture – promptly conjures up images of old country piles, vintage tables outside a sleepy café, cheese, onions, and a dusty Citroen 2CV pattering down a country lane.

And yet, France, despite the sepia tones, is setting the pace of the future and in recent years has earned the reputation of a leader in research, development, technology, alternative and renewable energy.

Indeed, it is living up to its credentials as the seat where the Paris climate agreement was signed in 2016.

“To reach such targets, it is necessary to reduce dependence on fossil-fuelled vehicles and increase the take-up of e-mobility”

When it comes to alternative and renewable energy, France is exploring all forms and avenues to accelerate the development of a low-carbon economy and meet its target of producing 23 per cent of its total energy needs from renewable energy by 2020. For the nation's energy transition, the administration of French President Emmanuel Macron has budgeted €15 billion.

One of the routes being explored is that of hydrogen energy. In fact, government has confirmed an investment of almost €100 million in the sector by 2019 as part of its plans to develop hydrogen energy.

France is also exploring the potential of tidal energy. Earlier this year, the French government announced that it will launch a preliminary study into the feasibility of harnessing en-

ergy from tidal zones in Normandy and Brittany, areas with some of the most powerful tides in the world.

And France is not going solo – rather, it is assisting other countries to switch to alternative energy. Earlier this year, at the International Solar Alliance launch in New Delhi, India, President Macron pledged €700 million to help developing countries adopt clean energy.

France's 23 per cent target includes 10.5 per cent of renewable energy in the transport sector. Other transportation targets specify the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 40 per cent by 2030.

To reach such targets, it is necessary to reduce dependence on fossil-fuelled vehicles – which currently account to 28 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions in France – and increase the take-up of e-mobility.

This take-up is gaining ground. Last year, more than 40,000 plug-in vehicles were bought by individuals, pushing up the share of PEVs to almost 1.5 per cent. The most popular brand last year was Renault – the Zoe sold 15,245 units, representing an increase of 34 per cent over the previous year. The French brand was followed by Nissan and BMW.

Increasing sales are being given a push through government incentives, with Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo upping funding for electric cars, buses and taxis.

This year, France has continued its push towards electric mobility. Recent figures show that June has been a strong month for electric car sales – in particular, the commercial vehicle segment is growing. In fact, June saw the registration of 3,240 private electric cars and 859 registered commercial EVs. Sales of electric vans increased by 61.16 per cent compared to June 2017.

Plug-in hybrid cars have also taken off, with 1,427 vehicles put into circulation in June – representing a plus of 17.45 per cent compared to the same month last year.

If it continues with this push towards e-mobility, another stereotypical image needs to be added to our idea of France – that of an electric or hybrid car driving silently by.




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# Counting on blockchain

Amanda Lia interviews Mediarex Sports & Entertainment CEO Alexandre Dreyfus.

It's on everyone's tongues and on everyone's minds, especially with the recent regulatory developments in Malta. Still, how much do you truly know about blockchain technology, cryptocurrencies and DLT?

I set out to find out more. And, who better than Alexandre Dreyfus, in his own words, "a passionate net-entrepreneur since 1995", to shed some light on the subject? For sure, he remembers the dotcom bubble burst back in the late 1990s and growth of small startups like Google and Amazon who have now become giants in their industry.

The CEO of Mediarex Sports & Entertainment, a Malta-based company, accepted my invitation without hesitation. Dreyfus, a web entrepreneur, has called Malta his home for some 12 years, and has been involved in internet businesses for over 20 years.

**For those who are not quite knowledgeable about what blockchain truly entails, how would you go about explaining it?**

Cryptocurrencies are digital or virtual currencies that work as a medium of exchange. The most famous, Bitcoin, was created in 2008 as a peer-to-peer electronic cash system. Put simply, a blockchain is a list of records (or blocks) which are linked and secured using cryptography (code solving). Each block contains a cryptographic hash of the previous block, a timestamp and transaction data. By design, the blockchain is immutable, meaning that it cannot be changed or modified. While blockchain is the technology that underpins cryptocurrencies, the technology is not just limited to the financial world.

**Tell us more about chiliZ. How does it work and who is the team behind it?**

ChiliZ is our esports and sports venture. It's a blockchain-based, fintech platform that aims to organise, empower and connect fans to players and teams in today's most popular esports games and tournaments.

The first white-label application of the chiliZ platform will be Socios.com – announced last month, we offer a turnkey solution for football clubs and teams who are looking for digital transformation or as a means to monetize and further engage their fan base. We like to call it democratised team management. Mirroring



Alexandre Dreyfus

the way in which traditional football clubs like Real Madrid and FC Barcelona are governed by their members (or 'socios'), esports teams and football clubs will be managed by their fans.

The Mediarex team is made up of more than 25 creatives, developers and gaming industry veterans, myself included.

**The Maltese Parliament has established the first regulatory framework for blockchain technology, cryptocurrency and DLT. What are your thoughts on this and how, do you think, will this help attract new companies to operate in Malta?**

By introducing a regulatory and legal framework, Malta is revolutionising the way in which blockchain technology is perceived, operated and governed. The framework provides trust, credibility, stability and, above all, a level playing field for companies who want to work in blockchain, and in turn, has created a cluster of like-minded individuals and organisations that will allow this exciting industry to flourish.

**Does Malta have the necessary infrastructure to support ICOs?**

A: It will soon. Just last week, we announced our plans for the chiliZ Blockchain Campus – office space in Gzira that will house world-leading exchanges, crypto-friendly European banks, leading blockchain media groups, service providers including recruitment services and some of the largest Asian crypto funds in a unique cluster in order to grow the blockchain ecosystem locally and globally. The campus will act as a one-stop-shop, think tank and ICO pitch centre, allowing blockchain companies to focus on innovation and the creation and implementation of mainstream products.

**I know this is a question inevitably asked by many. But, what do you think is the future of cryptocurrencies and blockchain?**

Some 25 years ago, the question would have been 'what is the future of the internet?' The technology is just the foun-

ation; the question should be what are the applications that can be built on blockchain? Up until a year or so ago, I was a very public opponent to blockchain. Then I started to educate myself about the technology, its use and the opportunity.

Like the internet bubble in 1999, there will be successes and there will be failures, but overall, the technology will change and disrupt many industries. As a matter of interest, I do not personally own cryptocurrencies – I'm not a trader – but I build and invest in development for the future.

**What inspires you and keeps you motivated?**

My biggest motivator is being taken out of my comfort zone, building and experimenting. I love the fact that blockchain is global and allows me to travel all over the world to engage with so many different cultures. My motto is try, fail, fix, repeat. That's what motivates me.

## The World Cup in Malta

Last February, a very special first official visit took place in Malta. Not a foreign president nor a famous singer, but a mythical object, whose shape is familiar to over half of the world population: the World Cup trophy.

It was brought to the country by the French World Cup winner Christian Karembeu, welcomed for the occasion by the President of Malta. Indeed, only World Cup win-

ners and heads of State can hold the precious trophy. The famous distinction was exposed at the Suq tal-Belt where fans gathered to have a close look and exchange some words with the French football star.

Malta was the 18th country to welcome the World Cup, on its road to Moscow. No doubt that a few stars remained in Malta, in the eyes of the young and old.



## A culture shaped by diversity and independent thinking

Mazars Malta, one of Malta's leading multi-disciplinary audit and advisory firms, forms part of Mazars, a multinational group with French roots specialising in audit, accountancy, taxation, as well as legal and advisory services.

Originally, Mazars was set up in Rouen, France, in 1940, by Robert Mazars. It remained a local firm until the 1980s, when then CEO Patrick de Cambourg started to internationalise the firm, expanding the business from 33 employees in 1977 to the global firm of today, which employs more than 20,000 professionals in 86 countries through its member firms. Nowadays, Mazars operates as a single entity in the form of a fully integrated partnership.

Mazars' origins in Malta go back to 1998 and, over the years, Mazars Malta has established itself as a business advisory-driven firm with a strong reputation for providing personal services and quality advice. Today, the firm operates as a one-stop shop with a niche focus on specialist knowledge in the gaming, insurance and financial services sectors. As an integrated member firm of Mazars, Mazars Malta is also in a position to draw upon the experience and resources of the multinational group.

Strong values have been at the heart of Mazars Malta since its creation. These provide an ethical point of reference for the partners and the team in their interactions with clients, local and foreign authorities, and other players in the sector.

Mazars Malta managing partner Anthony Attard explains that the firm's strength lies in the holistic approach it adopts towards understanding its clients' business.

"The one-stop-shop model we have adopted is run by a dedicated group of professionals who are responsible for maintaining an ongoing relationship with the client," he said.

"We act as trusted advisors, and are the primary point of contact for the client, putting all of Mazars' experience and expertise at their disposal in terms of support, insights and solutions. We also ensure that all of the firm's specialist services are delivered in a manner consistent with the client's needs, and in as seamless and integrated a fashion as possible. As advisors and auditors, we foster state of the art accountability, efficient and agile structures and organisations, enhanced performance, and the creation of long-term value for our clients."

For more information visit [www.mazars.com.mt](http://www.mazars.com.mt).

(Content provided by Mazars Malta)



## Five reasons to go electric this year

Imagine an island where you can hear birds sing. Till today this is still a dream but the Renault Z.E. (Zero Emission) range has been developed to make this dream become a reality.

The Renault Z.E. range consists of the Renault Twizy, a covered quadricycle, the Renault Zoe, a fully fledged family car and the Renault Kangoo Z.E., a van that is ideal for modern businesses. They all combine environmental responsibility with driving pleasure and are covered by a five-year/100,000km (whichever comes first) warranty.

When opting for one of the Z.E. models you will benefit from: €6,000 cost to purchase reduction provided by the government electric car grant; €0 registration tax payable on a new electric car purchase; €0 road licence payable for five years; economical running costs, as low as roughly €0.03 per km; and low carbon footprint contributing to a clean environment.

Each vehicle model within the Renault Z.E. Range offers distinctive characteristics. Twizy brings island dwellers an incredible new urban mobility solution for one person and cargo space or up to two occupants. Thanks to its ultra-compact footprint

and a very low centre of gravity, Twizy can slip into the smallest of gaps and park on a cent. It takes barely six seconds to accelerate from zero to 45km/h. On a typical island journey, it enables a time saving of 25 per cent, including parking, without consuming a drop of fuel.

The award-winning Zoe is now available with two batteries size options, 22kWh or 40kWh battery, and your choice is dependent on your drive range needs. These new batteries are still located under the floor to lower the centre of gravity, which has no impact on either roominess of the car or the boot volume. From a commercial vehicle aspect, the Kangoo Z.E. offers cutting-edge technology, so-much-so that the vehicle provides the driver with real-time information through the real-time range calculator. This is positioned behind the steering wheel thus ensuring that the driver does not get distracted from the road.

The Renault Z.E. range is available from Kind's - Auto Sales Ltd. For further information visit [www.autosales.com.mt](http://www.autosales.com.mt).

(Content provided by Auto Sales Ltd)



## The shape of things to come

The industry we know so well today has much humbler beginnings which take us back to China around 500BC when bamboo was used to construct the first pipelines. At Multigas we continually develop our world-class technology to ensure that you're always ahead of the curve. Our beginnings might be distantly in the past but our sights are firmly set on a brighter future.



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# Chained melody

The Tour de France is not just about cycling – it's also an opportunity to experience countryside charms.

On July 1, 1903, 60 cyclists lined up at Montgeron, to the south-east of Paris, to embark on the first Tour de France. The cyclists rode through the night for over 450 kilometres to complete the first epic stage to Lyon.

More than a century later, the Tour de France has grown into one of the main cycling events in the world. However, it's not just cycling that is on the menu – the

3,329-kilometre route, with a brief 15-kilometre detour into Spain during stage 16, is a showcase of beautiful France, with its smooth roads, idyllic countryside and postcard-perfect villages.

So even if two wheels are not your thing, the Tour de France is still an opportunity to see the country in all its picturesque glory.





The 201-km Stage 1 from Noirmoutier-en-l'île to Fontenay-le-Comte. PHOTOS: REUTERS



The 182.5-km Stage 2 from Moulleron-Saint-Germain to La Roche-sur-Yon

# Wheels of fortune

## The best places to watch the Tour de France

### Noirmoutier-en-l'île

Set around half a mile off the coast of Vendée, the small island of Noirmoutier this year hosted the Grand Départ. Cyclists set off from the island and crossed the bridge to mainland France, finishing the stage at Fontenay-le-Comte.

Noirmoutier has everything an island should – from sandy beaches to salt marshes and pine forests. Spend a weekend relaxing on the sandy beaches of Dames and Sableaux or exploring the island's cultural heritage. You can also spend a day at the Sealand Aquarium, which features hundreds of species. You can even try the Passage le Gois across to Vendée – however, get your timing right as this is covered by the tide twice a day.

### Lorient

The bustling port town of Lorient hosts the fifth stage of the Tour de France. For those who are into military history, this town packs a punch as it hosts Morbihan, a former naval base and former headquarters of the French East India Company. You can also visit the Keroman submarine base, built in 1941. It ceased operations in 1995 and today is a tourist attraction, home to the Grand Large sailing association.

From here, cyclists make their way along the Brittany coast to finish in Quimper.

### Le Grand-Bornand

This charming Alpine village welcomes cyclists at the end of stage 10 and is the first mountain

stage of the Tour de France. The town may not be friendly to the cyclists' leg muscles but it sure is friendly to tourists, with its traditional charm, wooden chalets, lush mountain pastures and a pretty little market square.

### Carcassonne

From the outside, the medieval walled city of Carcassonne looks impenetrable. But once inside – after a huffing-and-puffing climb, the city will treat you to a fairytale collection of towers, cobbled streets, ramparts, drawbridges and medieval houses. It is said that Carcassonne was the inspiration for Walt Disney's *The Sleeping Beauty* – and you can understand why.

Cyclists arrive at Carcassonne on June 23, after a tough climb up the Pic de Nore. After a day of rest, they leave the following day as the Tour de France heads off into the Pyrenees.

### Espelette

The Tour de France will be passing through the Basque region of France for the first time in 12 years.

One of the highlights of this stage is the little town of Espelette. Known for its dried red peppers, this town showcases this fiery ingredient in its menu, as well as in its appearance – look closely and you will see bunches of red peppers hung to dry outside the traditional white Basque houses.

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