

## The Setting

Astride the Cap Ferrat peninsula with the Alpes Maritimes plunging into the sea on either side, the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild provides one of the world's most spectacular opera settings. Beatrice de Rothschild's villa overlooks the bay of Villefranche and on to the Esterel to the west and over the sea to Italy in the east.

Built under the personal supervision of Beatrice and finished in 1912, she managed to get through 14 architects during the building.

The villa houses an eclectic collection of paintings, furniture, porcelain

Many of the contents were purchased on the platform of Beaulieu station where Beatrice would choose the items from an antique filled train that stopped regularly.

The Villa has virtually never been lived in. The Baroness only stayed occasionally and gave up altogether in 1916, using it only for soirées.

In 1934 the Baroness died bequeathing it all to the Fondation de L'Institut de France, on the condition that the villa kept "the essence of a private salon". Beatrice would therefore approve of the Festival.



and sculpture. Although less well known, it can be compared to the Wallace Collection in London, the Frick Collection in New York and the Jacquemart-André in Paris.

Like other Rothschild houses (Exbury and Waddesdon in the UK), the Villa is as well known for its 18-acre gardens. The villa is named "Ile de France" as it resembled the foredeck of the liner of that name; Beatrice even dressed her 30 gardeners as sailors in red tufted French sailor hats.

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## Directions

### From Nice

Take coast road (Basse Corniche - N98), from the old port of Nice. Follow the road through Villefranche following signs to Beaulieu and Monaco. As you approach Cap Ferrat, there is a filter to the right, just past a petrol station, which leads on to the Cap. Take the filter and at the next lights (30m) go straight on following signs to St Jean Cap Ferrat (and to the Opera Festival)..

### ...then

Once on the Cap the Villa Rothschild is the first turning on the left after about 500m. It is quite soon after a bend, and there are two roads to the left. You have to be careful to turn sharp left into the first turning (not the second downhill). Follow the road round and go through the gates of the Villa and park on the hill up to the Villa.

### From Monaco

Leave Monaco on lower coast road ((Basse Corniche - N98) - direction Cap d'Ail and Nice. Follow road through Eze (Bord de Mer) and Beaulieu. At Beaulieu you pass the port on your left; go on past the Hotels La Réserve and Metropole and then bear left (do not follow the road which bends to the right up the main street of Beaulieu) past the Casino on your right and the beach on your left. Past the Royal Riviera Hotel (pink) on your left and up a steep hill to traffic lights at which you turn left on to Cap Ferrat...