

Five-star networking at its best

An LGR Interview with Kevin Marsh, creator and host of The Monaco Celebrity Lunch

ONCE each quarter, a 'Who's Who' of Monaco business gathers upstairs at the Café de Paris for the Monaco Celebrity Lunch – a power-networking event with a Riviera flavour.

Always there to greet the coast's movers and shakers as they come through the door is creator and host of the event, Kevin Marsh.

LGR's Katherine Robertson caught up with Kevin to find out his recipe for success.

What brought you to the French Riviera? How did the business start?

"I came here in 1998 at the end of a two-year contract marketing television and film productions throughout Europe. As that project came to its natural end, my media clients started saying, 'You're a producer. We're coming to the Cote d'Azur. Produce us an event.' So I registered the company, Marketing Matters, in Monaco in 1999.

As I met people we started to do a lot of corporate hospitality events and B2B networking events both for media clients and corporate clients, banks, law firms and so on. Friends became clients; clients became friends. And that's how it all started.

"Azur Productions evolved as a brand name for the

events but legally they're the same company."

What was your original vision in all this?

"It evolved but if there was a key moment when a strategic plan developed I think it was at the beginning of



WELCOME: Kevin with football manager Ron Atkinson

2003. I was talking with Rob Rutter from Merrill Lynch about the sort of events he would like, and he mentioned sporting lunches in the UK. The Celebrity Lunches evolved from that conversation. We did one initial event and Monaco took to it. It's popular in the UK but Monaco hadn't seen anything like this before.

"We're now going into our fourth year and it's proven very successful and great fun for all of us.

"The original sponsors, Merrill Lynch, Moore

Stephens and Lawrence Graham, are still there and we've been joined by the private airline company Club 328. We work closely together to find the speakers, get the positioning right, to make the lunches a success. It's a great little team."

There will be readers who haven't been to a Celebrity Lunch, so how would you describe it?

"The Celebrity Lunch has three main goals. First, corporate hospitality: the clients (banks, law firms and accountants mostly) come to entertain their clients, so there's a lot of trust involved. Then there's networking and the networking is very important. People come to meet people in Monaco – future business partners and future clients – that's what it's all about. And finally, the events have to be entertaining. Our speakers come from three sectors: they are sporting stars, political speakers or from the world of entertainment.

"They are mostly British. We've had speakers such as Lord Sebastian Coe (the former Olympic athlete who's just won the bid for London to host the 2012 Olympic Games), Sir Bernard Ingham (former press secretary for Margaret Thatcher) and TV celebrity Tom O'Connor. They share amusing stories about their lives and careers and because of who they are they tend to have spent time with famous people. We either love or hate them but we know them and we hear funny anecdotes and stories you don't usually hear.

You also do the Celebrity Lunch en Français. How are they different?

"Well, of course, the celebrities are French. At the first event, we had Pierre Berbizier, former captain of the French rugby team, with M6's Estelle Denis as moderator. And for the second, Nelson Montfort made an hilarious mockery out of translations between English, French, Italian and Spanish. The concept and principles are exactly the same. The differences are mostly cultural. The goal of the French Celebrity Lunch is to bring the English and French-speaking business communities together. The first two were full houses – 46% French to 54% English. Our partners are Monaco's CDE (Chambre Développement Économique) and Stewart Asset Management Group – a Scottish-based financial services company that is currently applying for a business license with the intention of opening an office in Monaco. With their support these events are becoming a bridge between cultures."

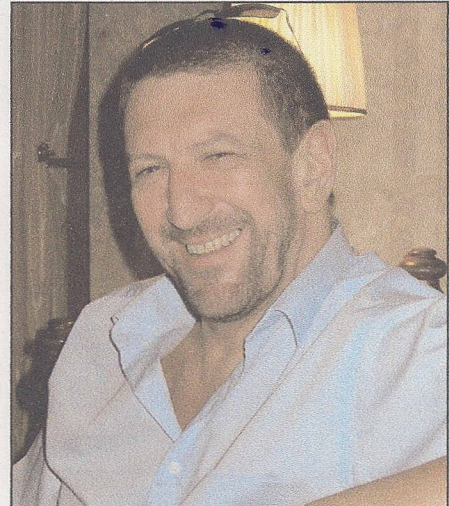
And Let's Go Riviera is involved?

"Let's Go Riviera and Nice-Matin are our media partner for the French Celebrity Lunches. The link between the French and English-speaking communities is important so they are our natural partners.

"Complimentary copies will be available at the events."

Of all the events you've done here, what are the most memorable?

"A couple of years ago, we did a series of stand-up comedy tours in pubs. That was hilarious. It was great to work with the comics and a good learning curve but the audiences were small. Last year we brought the Reduced Shakespeare Company for a theatre tour and we proved that if we can get good acts, great names and great theatres it



will work. So, next month, we are planning shows we've called "An evening with..." in theatres with high-profile stars – a Celebrity Lunch without the lunch. It is a personal affair giving the audiences a lot more access with the star."

What's next?

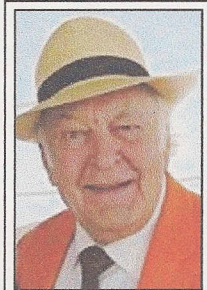
"Expansion. Up to now, virtually all our business has come to us. Now I want to start bringing business into Monaco. We're working with Jean-Pierre Fonteneau and Dany Rubrecht at the CDE on that, because that is one of their goals as well. Monaco's got a great offer: 'You want a venue, we give you a country.' We can leverage our business model off that."

So, what's it like to run a business as an expatriate on the Côte d'Azur? Are you having fun?

"I love it and enjoy what I do. All my clients are wonderful, very successful people. They're key people running huge worldwide organisations. Their clients are the best of the best.

"Every day I feel privileged to be in Monaco. It's clean, it's safe and full of amazing people. I sit on my terrace and I'm looking at three countries. The sky is blue, the sun is shining and in five minutes on my scooter

I'm at the beach. I couldn't ask for more..."



Actor Donald Sinden is performing in October

Autumn events
Monaco Celebrity Lunches

In English...

- September 29
Tony Robinson
(a.k.a Baldrik)
- December 1
Rt. Hon. David Mellor
Q.C.

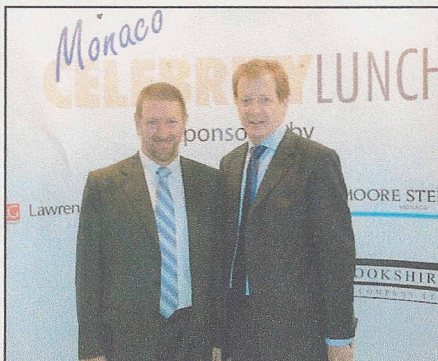
En Français...

- December 15
Speaker to be decided

An Evening with...

- October 18-20
Sir Donald Sinden

email: info@Azur
Productions.com or
tel: +377 93 30 08 75
for bookings



SPEAKER: Kevin with Alastair Campbell (right)

The man who really could close a door without touching it

HENRI Broch is a professor of physics at the University of Nice and, after 25 years of study, has become a specialist in the demystification of the paranormal.

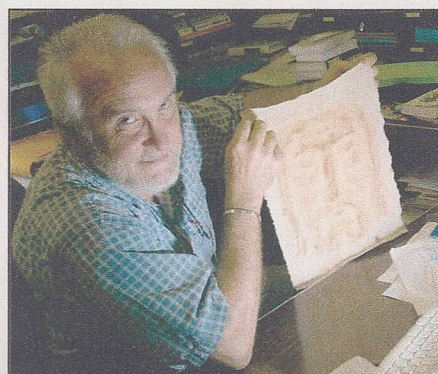
In his latest book *Gourous, sorciers et savants* (gurus, witches and scholars) he scientifically analyses occult mysteries and discloses their secrets.

How do you make a Saint-Suaire (the Holy Shroud)? How do you make your door close without touching it? All this is in the book (published by Odile Jacob editions) and prefaced by Georges Charpak, a Physics Nobel prize winner. Henri Broch is

a reference in the university world.

The *Zététique* lessons which he has been giving since 1986 on campus are more than just an official façade. *Zététique* is a funny word which dissimulates a very serious concept: the art of doubt, a scientific methodology which has been taught since the ancient Greek period.

"In 1982, I realised that 68% of my students believed in telekinesis: the power of thought on objects." In 1993, this professor also challenged those who believe that they have supernatural powers. The challenge was simple:



MYSTERY SOLVED: Prof Henri Broch can recreate the Turin Shroud using ochre pigments and glue

the one who disproved the rational thought of Henri Broch would win €200,000 that a wealthy friend had made available. Unfortunately the show ended in 2001 because of a lack of participants.

However, 264 magicians, mediums, forecasters, witches or wizards have all tried their luck but in vain. Each time, the *zététicien* had scientifically uncovered their subterfuges. Then ten years ago, someone came to his physics laboratory in Valrose and claimed to be capable of closing doors without touching them, just with the power of thought. "It is my best success. The

man was telling the truth." They needed to see if this feat was a result of supernatural powers or not. The answer was clear. The man, of good faith, who was 1.97m tall, contracted and relaxed his abdomen muscles while concentrating until the door which was ajar. "The scientific explanation was obvious: his repeated contractions provoked variations in pressure in the room which were enough for a door kept ajar to close without touching it

However, for this to work the room must be small." The man was relieved. "He had ended up thinking he was abnormal!"