



A garden view at the Ephrussi de Rothschild's villa in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat.



Joan Miro sculptures in the outdoor labyrinth garden at the Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul-de-Vence.



Bronze statue Invitation by Kees Verkade in Saint-Martin Gardens, Monaco.



Musée Renoir in Cagnes-sur-Mer



Fountain splashing at the Ephrussi de Rothschild garden.


Strolling Gardens in the South of France

THE BEAUTIFUL GARDENS and green spaces in our area lie dormant in winter, but that is not the case in the Côte d'Azur, or French Riviera, where I recently wandered through some grand gardens. Miles of olive, cypress and orange trees, sculpted evergreens, bronze statues, mounds of herbs and blooming flowers stretched along the cities and towns hugged by the Mediterranean Sea and Maritimes Alps. I listened to the songs of European Robins, Eurasian Magpies, and Common Chaffinch. I inhaled scents of lavender, rose, and thyme. The garden paths were free of crowds. I dawdled, pinched leaves, and painted pictures in my memory to bring back when needed.

My brain flushed with dopamine at this sensory feast. I was tempted to taste the oranges and olives that hung from the trees surrounding the house of Pierre Auguste Renoir in Cagnes-sur-Mer. To splash in the fountains, trace

the archways, and capture the light at the Ephrussi de Rothschild's villa and gardens. Flowers blooming in winter at the Saint-Martin Gardens in Monaco prompted sheer pleasure. Artist Joan Miro's funky-formed sculptures filled me with glee as I strolled the labyrinth paths at the Foundation Maeght in the medieval town of Saint-Paul-de-Vence.



Yet such magnificence does not dull my delight at seeing spring come to life in our local yards, parks, and paths. Gardens express the *joie de vivre*, enjoyment of life, wherever you are. 

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