A Virgin’s Guide to Cannes Film Festival
I - Before leaving for the airport:

First things first: Facebook, MySpace, Bebo etc. It’s a good idea to start cleaning up your image for the professional world, especially if you’re heading for Cannes. From Stephen Wooley to Steven Spielberg – everybody is on a social networking site (the two named a fact). Unless you’ve restricted your profile to a limit consider removing all those playboy bunny fancy dress photos now. If you’re bragging your way into Cannes remove that ‘Employer: M&S Customer Relations’ or ‘Student Union Barstaff’ and replace it by your newly registered production company name (visit Duport.co.uk for easy company registration) ‘John Smith Productions’ or whatever goes your fancy. Chance is most people you meet will be online and at some point in the near future when flicking through their Cannes business cards might want to check up your credentials and it’s a good time to realise that employers do!

This might also crop up if you’re buying last minute accreditation: they will want to check up if you really do work for a company. Having your name on a few websites (related to film that is) is always a good idea. When applying for different festival accreditation it’s the difference between being granted accreditation or receiving an email asking for a letterhead letter from the company director asking to confirm you are an employee. A friend of mine was once asked to send her company’s end of year Annual Accounts Return certified by her bank (note: Soho Square Barclays for Film and TV).

Elsewhere some companies might ask for your business card before being allowed to offer you a party invite, asking you to return later or offering to contact you back. In this time they essentially google you.

When you get to the airport:

Heathrow Airport, that is.

From the second you exit the tube or cab your schmoozing cap is on. Any plane, bag drop off queue etc is likely to be filled with industry executives. Last year British Airways overbooked and replacing my ticket/complaining at the Customer Services desk I was joined by members of PACT and the Producer’s Alliance. 2hours later I was sat next to a sponsor of the ‘Death Proof’ yacht party and offered an invite, also seated two rows behind Helen Mirren. Start to memorise the faces as 1) they could be ‘a somebody’ 2) how easier to start a conversation with them in Cannes than “hey, weren’t you also in that overbooked flight from Heathrow? I’m Xavier by the way…blabla”, it’s really that simple.

When you get to the airport:

Okay, Nice Airport this time.

The cheapest and easiest way to get into Cannes is by buying an open return coach ticket. These cost barely a few pounds and leave almost every 10minutes from all Terminals taking almost 40mins. Cabs will set you back about 100 euros. If you book in advance a 3person helicopter, return and to the Cannes heliport would cost about £30 a head and take 10mins.
II - Where to Stay?

During the two weeks of May the festival attracts over 60,000 visitors and hotel or villa prices soar at times over 500% plus. Accommodation prices descend the further to the Croisette and are often booked out months or years in advance. Many flats are furthermore taken over to install temporary offices (accommodation) for sales agents, PR companies and distributors.

In 2007 I shared a villa close to the Croisette and found myself cabbing into back at night just as I would have done staying further away as I had done previously – had I done that I would have saved myself hundreds.

The advantage of nearby accommodation is not worrying about returning to your flat to shower or to change. If you stay further out, even with the option of catching a cab you are likely to save yourself a little fortune.

Cannes La Bocca is one of the most popular alternatives: it is a short bus ride in the morning (rush hour), however much cheaper and with a wealth of options available (Les Agapanthes resort for instance is strongly recommended).

Mandelieu la Napoule is slightly further away. I was offered a room in a converted castle which came in at under £200 for the entire week. This was also where Soho House hosted its party last year.

Antibes is even cheaper but a trek away. Some catch the train (last one is about midnight) or a bike and again even including cab fare comes in at a bargain.

You can buy a cheap weekly bus card for fewer than 10 euros for the mornings. The return cab to La Bocca costs about 7 euros.
III - What to Bring?

Business Cards: you don’t want to be caught out printing these at the local supermarket (a lot of people do this and it’s not impressive). Have a couple hundred printed before leaving, it’s not expensive and a bare necessity. You will need these to attend certain screenings, you will be asked for these at parties (some invites clearly state ‘RSVP, no entry without invite and business card’) and primarily you will need them when you schmooze, who knows this could be your means to a deal of a lifetime!

Mobile: You’ll notice everybody pulling out their new blackberry in the UK Pavillion, often bought especially for Cannes. You won’t need your laptop (there are computers in the pavilions) however you might want to bring it if you are reporting/reviewing and decide to leave it at the hotel. It is often a drag down on the croisette. A spare mobile phone: if you intend on buying a French sim card. Buy this once and keep it for next year (and the year after etc). I personally have a list of names on my phone ‘Suzanne Cannes’ etc who I know will be using the same number on a yearly basis.

Pocket PC’s are a good idea if you don’t want to wait for a computer to check your email.

Also budget your June phone statement: this will come expensive.

Smint/Gum/Mints: If you want to meet people etc this item isn’t difficult to understand why you’ll want to bring some. Plus you might want to offer it to others ;)

For smokers, Nicorette etc: France is now smoke free also so don’t be rushing out of venues to catch a smoke as you might not be allowed back in.

Paracetamol/ Pro Plus/ Eye drops: You will undoubtedly wake up hung-over and exhausted at least a couple times. Cannes is about late nights and early morning so be prepared.

Camera: don’t take a big SLR because these do become heavy after a day out in the Riviera sun. A small digital is a good idea, plus you might want those photos next time you draw up a guide to Cannes for your colleagues.

Cigar cutter: If you do strike that big deal and decide to celebrate with a cigar you can buy a small wallet size cutter in all the ‘Marchant de Tabac’ (corner shops). Remember that these are lit with matches, NOT lighters (the gas kills the flavour). You only cut a tiny section (prob 1cm diameter).

Small Umbrella: Cannes is known for its temperamental weather and you’ll usually find a couple rainy spells during the two weeks of the festival.
IV - Accreditation

Collecting your accreditation: For those who are accredited this is an easy process and the staff are usually students doing work experience or part time work for the two weeks. The first time I went to Cannes I was dirt scared of not being allowed in, partly because I was so young at the time. This isn’t a big deal however do look smart and don’t be drunk or stoned.

If you are applying for Last Minute Accreditation (you can buy expensive Market passes on the day) these are available on 2 week, 3 or 1 day basis I believe. Sometimes industry executives who have been accredited for years will be declined their accreditation for reasons such as working too heavily in television for the last year. If this is the case keep in mind that even feature films made especially for Television are NOT Cannes material. I knew an oddly dressed indie filmmaker who was turned down because he wasn’t good at talking to people and looked like a hippy so always be courteous and professional until you’re in!

Also understand the accreditation hierarchy: different badges allow you into different areas. It goes somewhat likes this:

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Producer’s Network

Market/Marche du Film

Industry

Short Film Corner

Cinephile
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Press Pass

The first three are reserved exclusively for industry: distributors, sales agents, film festival executives etc. To obtain Short Film Corner accreditation you simply need to submit a short film, and many do so by sending in literally anything, sometimes shot on what you would guess is a mobile phone.

It’s important understanding the hierarchy: firstly they let you into different places. Some allow you into Market Screenings, certain ‘cinema’ (or ‘Salles’) screenings, the Village International etc.

Also parties or some hotels will check your accreditation badge. Hotels such as the Noga Hilton or Majestic are unlikely to authorise Cinephiles and sometimes Press in order to suss out journalists or photographers who might want to interview their celebrity guests whilst at the same time retaining its exclusive image.
V- What to Wear?

Gentlemen:
DAY: Suit if you intend on having meetings. Dress smart: you can wear almost anything during the day when there is no dress code, but stay safe rather than sorry, if you look put in the effort you might be more likely to fit in whilst on the other hand too smart and you could look desperate. Usually shoes, nice trousers/jeans and shirt, blazer in hand and sunglasses is the best option. You can always change later in the day before hitting a party or premiere. Some membership pavilions will allow you a pigeonhole in which you can leave your bag (ie: clothes).
NIGHT: Tuxedo. Without exception. Unless you’re important, a celebrity or specially invited, don’t risk an un-ironed shirt or un-polished shoes. There have been cases (though I never witnessed this myself) where the security check the label in the suit to inspect if it’s primark quality. You can get away with a black suit.

Ladies:
DAY: Anything you like.
NIGHT: A nice evening or cocktail dress and keep in mind you might want to get changed for the after-party.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Party Dress code: Smart Casual. No shorts, dirty trainers, flip-flops, caps or silly sunglasses. And DO NOT flash labels! No big D&G on a t-shirt, NO labels still attached to the sleeve of your suit: I’ve seen security ask for them to be removed.
VI - A Quick History Lesson

Why? It’s a good idea to know a little about anywhere you decide to attend. Not only is it interesting but it’ll also make you appear a veteran in the industry. Sometimes these veterans will start talking about ‘I remember in 1958 when’ and you don’t want to be caught out in the dark. This once happened to me the first time I went to Cannes, later to realise that the person I was talking to was one of the biggest producers in history.

What?
Created in 1949 as a response to Venice Film Festival’s support of fascism under Mussolini, Cannes was selected from a number of towns but picked due to the, then, rainy climate, in an attempt to develop tourism as well, primarily compete with the Italian festival. It’s competing city for selection was Biarritz on the Atlantic Coast. Louis Lumiere, the founder of film (1885) was appointed President of the Jury, whilst claiming Cannes was never intended to compete with Venice supported by a lucrative secret deal by which both festivals would run in alternating years. This never occurred. By 1968 Cannes Film Festival was enjoying 22 years of growing spotlight. With paparazzi lining the catwalks and the bourgeois and wealthy walking the Croisette, it was escaping the reality of turmoil in France. During the film screening in 68 a number of acclaimed directors and artists stormed the ‘Palais du Festival’. Le Coup de Cinema swarmed through the gates of the 21st Festival de Cannes and brought it to a halt abruptly. In France students had been protesting against the Gaulist government and their recent decommissioning of the president of the Cinematheque Francaise. Led by none other than the world’s leading film industry members, Francois Truffaut, Louis Malle, Milos Foreman, Roman Polanski and Jean Luc Godard, they held an unannounced press conference. Two days later the festival was annulled. The organisers were taken by alarm cancelling the festival that year. The move resulted in the setting up of the ‘Director’s Fortnight’, a selection of films specialising in world cinema and unknowns.

Recently the festival has faced a number of further political tensions with countries such as Iran and Germany lashing out at the selection. The rivalries have with roots the very origins in which the festival was created. Dr Loredana Latil of Sophia Antipolis University explains ‘since the beginning of the century the industrialised States wanted to claim to themselves the cultural domains. As a result cinema became an instrument for the propaganda of totalitarian regimes. Venice did this […] and in 1938 the two dictators (Mussolini and Hitler) shared the winnings. […] In a similar manner Cannes was set up in France to affirm its position in the international foreign political context’. Later French politics saw de-favoured films such the ‘Battle of the Algiers’ (Gillo Pontecorvo 1965) and the ‘Small Soldier’ (Jean Luc Godard 1963) banned from Cannes due to their anti-war feelings, ironic considering Cannes’ attempt at positioning itself on the international scene, often screening films banned elsewhere. In 2005 the German government criticised the Cannes official selection, where no German films had been selected. Minister of Culture Michael Naumann stated his disappointment claiming “ It would be unacceptable if it was permanently the case that a German film was not accepted for the competition in Cannes”. Cannes enjoys defending itself as a stark representation and defender of culture, and since the war Germany represented counter culture or more so, the removal of culture, and in sixty years Cannes has failed to recover from its bitterness.

In 2004 the Palme d’Or was offered to Michael Moore for Fahrenheit 9/11 at a time France was opposed to the war in Iraq. The move was labelled controversial and many reporters criticised the award as having been awarded for a film with little artistic merit with one magazine sarcastically citing the prize was ‘surely’ awarded for ‘purely cinematographic criteria’: ‘the humour, the cut, the auteurship etc, not its political message!’. The day after the awards the Jury President Quentin Tarantino faced a press conference in which he lashed out at journalists describing the film as ‘peu cinematographic’. A year on the head of the festival Gilles Jacob reaffirmed the prizes be awarded ‘for film-making, not politics’ with Jury Present Emir Kusturica insuring the films would be selected under their ‘aesthetic’. Gilles Jacob (Jury) accepted the previous Palme had been awarded ‘more for political than cinematographic reasons’ with the jury’s ‘acclaim for that documentary […] out of the ordinary event that probably won’t be repeated”.

Cannes is synonymous with ‘politics’ and for film-makers and ‘Cannes go-ers’ who enjoy to manifest their opinions; it is wise to stay out of the way. In 2007 a distributor for a London based company was caught out without his accreditation around his neck when he decided to join a little ‘manif’ (protest) near the Croisette. When the gendarmerie arrived he was in for a shock as they began to beat him until he was able to pull his badge out of his pocket before they apologised.
VII - How to get party invites?

This is one of the most asked questions for Cannes go-ers and one I still don’t have an answer to. Sometimes you get these from having worked or done work experience with companies. Two years ago I simply emailed BBC asking, because I had worked for the BBC Films website that year. I later found out that my invite was worth hundreds on the ‘black market’. At this same party Tessa Jowell (the then Minister for Culture) had to wait over half an hour because the venue had reached its capacity.

One year a colleague had got the date wrong and we handed over 1 invite (that is, for the three of us) only to be welcomed into the Puerto Rico party. You’ll also find many sales agents organise these and would invite you if you are in conversation with them. Elsewhere just look confident, if you have a reason to go or if you are with an invited friend then there are few problems.

Keep in mind that parties are nonetheless often restricted. A two hour party on a beach costs over £40,000 for 250 guests, that’s over £170 per person so don’t expect to be selective.

On the other hand parties should not be your reason to go to Cannes, if you are there to network, fund or sell your film or even watch films, then you are more likely to obtain invites by doing this, not by gate-crashing (or attempting) to crash parties in a successive order.

Several London based members clubs such as Century, Soho House, M1NT and Groucho set up temporary clubs in villas or beach tents at Cannes. If you have a membership or temporary Cannes membership to these you are then allowed into any party hosted there. These can set you back several hundred pounds however this is ‘refunded’ if you purchase, or rather, are ‘invited’ to join the members club.

Last year I once was about to catch a late night cab (after a 1 hour wait) when two women ran up asking for a lift. They turned out to be executives from one of Germany’s leading production houses and invited me to the New Line Cinema party/Launch party for the Golden Compass.

Also in 2007, BBC Film, Brit Film, Producer’s Alliance, Film London and some other Brit company all hosted their party at the same time. For the two hours everybody hopped from one to the other.

In some cases it’s an idea to surf the web and contact companies directly regarding invites: the worse is being told no. In most cases those publicised online (Screen, Variety and the Hollywood Reporter usually have a list) are likely to be the biggest and least likely to offer an invite. Don’t publicise you’re desperate for an invite, but if you feel you have a reason to attend (did work experience, worked part time with the companies) then your email is likely to be well received.

Handy, is to know your PR staff! There aren’t many companies specialising in film in the UK so know their faces:

- Mathew Freud (great grandson of Sigmund) heads Freud Communications, Kate Lee, Cathy Dunkley or Jo Ferniborough.
- McDonald & Rutter (Charles and Jonathan), Sue Watkins, Matthew Sanders, merged with
- Premier PR in 2006/7, John Reiss, Ginger Corbett & Jonathan Peake.
- BVI (Buena Vista) have their own staff for Disney.
- Phil Symes heads The PR Contact, a company which specialises in indie films and for two years running has had the

most represented films in competition.

- DDA Public Relations: Dennis Davidson, Chris Paton, Lawrence Atkinson, Lisa Lazure and Emma Greenwood, others: Lorna, Linda and Martin.
- Greenroom Digital: Chloe Larcombe
- Digital Outlook: Emma Marlow
VIII - Routes to a Party Invite at Cannes
Extract from Raindance Producer's Lab, Lo-To-No Budget Filmmaking by Elliot Grove. Focus Press 2004

Cannes is a party festival with upwards of two dozen parties every night. The trick is to get invited to the party to enjoy the views over the harbour, the free drinks and food and to be impressed by the guest list. Getting a ticket to a party of the moment is a fine art. Some travellers to the Cannes Film Festival spend their entire day trying to get a party invite.

Go to a sales agent
There will be parties after the screenings of many of the top films in the festival. Go to the sales agent, see if they will give you an invite. In the worst case, if you can’t get an invite, see if they will give you the location of the party. Then it is up to you to see how successful you are with the bouncers at the door.

Go to the event organisers
Few companies have the wherewithal to actually organise the party themselves. Indeed, many of the American companies would be lucky to have a single francophone employed by them. They hire the services of one of the professional event organisers. Many of these party and event organisers are based in London. Call them up, and either offer your services in exchange for a ticket, or see if you can convince them that your presence will enhance the atmosphere of the party.

Go to the national film organisations
The Irish, the Canadians, the British and South Africans are just a few of the many nations with formal film presences in Cannes and they all throw parties. Walk into their pavilions and ask for an invite. They are usually easier to get than film parties.

Hang out at the Variety or American pavilion
The Variety and American pavilions are the hangouts of the serious Cannes partygoers. Attend either of these pavilions early enough in the morning, and not only will you get a free coffee and croissant, but will hear about any upcoming parties. It is not unknown for serious party-ticket trading to go on. You’ll overhear bartering along the lines of ‘I’ll give you two of my Sony boat party invites for one of your BBC Films lunch ticket’.

Tips and Strategies for Cannes
The Cannes Film Festival is the largest and most prestigious film festival in the world. Each May, hordes of filmmakers, international sales agents, distributors, film financiers, film entrepreneurs, producers, writers, stars and cineastes descend on the seaside port of Cannes for a ten-day marathon of screenings, parties and workshops. There are several competitions running in the festival, and in addition, the Marche du Film operates at the same time
If one is serious about a career in film, a trip to Cannes in late May is simply imperative. To make the most out of your trip to Cannes, consider following one or more of the following strategies for financing or selling your film.

Have a Plan
Although Cannes looks glamorous and casual, astute insiders plan their trip beforehand. Get a copy of the trades about a month before the event and email and call to set up meetings. Actual meetings in Cannes are very fluid, and it can become difficult to adhere to a schedule, but at least you have a strategy in place from the moment you arrive.

Have Something on Paper
Cannes is not the place to bring your seventeenth draft screenplay; people are too busy rushing around to even consider reading scripts. Instead you should prepare a one-sheet which includes a summary of the project, the pitch, key personnel and a brief description of what you are looking for, be it investment (include a brief budget), or a sale. If you are aiming to sell your film at Cannes, include phrases like ‘All rights available except Romanian’, (if that were the case). If you aren’t able to get a sales agent, then you’ll need to prepare your own sales estimates.

Play Ping-Pong
There are always an incredible number of people at Cannes, and you can have more one-on-one meetings in a day than you could in a year back home. The ping-pong theory is that if you hang out in the right places you will bump into people with whom you could, given a little charm and a producer’s savvy, develop useful relationships. You might have bagged a ticket to the legendary MTV party, you might be on the red carpet at the Palais, you might be nursing a drink on the
terraces of the Majestic, or getting plastered at the Petit Carlton. In any of these places, it is likely you will bump into film
executives. Get their business cards, and chat them up.

Make sure that you maximise the benefits to your film from your time in Cannes. Make the most of your little black book
of new contacts. If you talk about a treatment that you have, and the contact says they’d like to read it, make sure you
follow that up quickly and politely. Even if you just send a brief email once you’re back home to say how good it was to
meet them, this will help to distinguish you from the vast numbers of new people that all film executives meet every year at
Cannes.

**Hint** Cannes is a marathon that tests your ability to go without sleep and the recuperative powers of your liver. Whatever
you do, pace yourself, or you will burn out.

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**The American Pavilion Strategy**

To pitch, you need to know where to pitch and who to pitch to. The American Pavilion, along with the other national
pavilions like the British, German, Canadian, South African and European Media pavilions are excellent places to meet
other filmmakers at your level. A few strategically placed drinks should enable you to garner hot tips on who is looking for
what. The pavilions also become a trading market for party tickets. Desperate pleas along the lines of ‘I’ll give you three
Kodak tickets for one Soho House invite’ will become familiar. Pavilions run business centres and for a relatively small
fee (I paid 300 Euros) they offer a service providing free coffee and croissants (useful for meetings), Internet access and
conference rooms. They will also receive your messages and mail.

**Sellers Sell**

Film sellers attend Cannes to sell completed pictures. They are not there to look at new projects unless they have brought
along an acquisitions or development executive. Remember that making a bad contact can be worse than making no contact
at all; don’t pester someone to listen to your pitch when they are not buying. Check the guides; these people will be listed,
with their job titles (buyers are highlighted), in the guides supplied by the main trades before and during the market.

**Publicists Can Help You**

Publicists rule Cannes. It is they who control the guest lists of all the top parties, they manage the major stars and know
where they are staying, and, they can sometimes get you a ticket to an incredibly glamorous event if you treat them
properly.

**The Hotel du Cap**

About four kilometres east of Cannes is a swanky seaside resort called Cap d’Antibes, or Cap for short. The Hotel du Cap
is where the A-list talent and players hang out. No trip to Cannes is complete without at least one visit to the glitzy bar of
this power pen full of the likes of Weinstein, Elwes, Bruckeimher and co.

**Parties**

Most of the serious networking takes place at any one of the hundred odd parties that take place during the Canes Film
Festival. Your first job on arriving at Cannes is to discover what parties are to be held, assess which ones are the likeliest to
offer you a real chance of meeting people, and then trying to get an invite or ticket. Getting into the right party involves a
fair amount of social nous and a degree or luck. One tactic is to walk up to the maitre d’ or security guard at a party venue,
present your business card and barge through. This technique will work at lower echelon parties and afternoon drinks
soirees on the terraces overlooking the sea.

To get a truly hot ticket in Cannes, like an invite to the MTV party, requires some successful pre-planning. Unless you
know one the party organisers, or someone in the upper levels of MTV, your best bet would be to make friends with a
publicist or other insider who might be able to give you a tip.

Once you have your MTV ticket, you have to decide whether to go and network, or to trade your ticket for other parties
which might also be difficult to get into.

My friend Rinaldo Quaquarini of the Screenwriter’s Store in London attends Cannes with filmmakers software company
Final Draft. During Cannes I would see him several times in the course o the day a our paths crossed on the Croisette as
each of us raced from meeting to meeting. When he found out that I had not one but two MTV party tickets, he started
pleading with me to give him one. About six hours before the party started I got a text message offering me £500 worth of
software for the tickets. I then passed him in the Market, and said: ‘Sorry, Rinaldo’ and he laughed and said, ‘I’m only
kidding’. Then, around an hour before the party was due to start I got another text message, this time offering me £1000
worth of software for the pair of tickets.

The next day he sheepishly grinned and said ‘The sick thing is, I would have given you a grand’s worth of software. And I
don’t care if the party was crap! I just wanted to be able to say I went!’. The MTV parties that I have been to actually are
quite disappointing. Held in various venues around Cannes, including Pierre Cardin’s futuristic house in Miramar, the MTV party tickets are hot simply because there are only a thousand of them, and there are over forty thousand delegates at Cannes.

**Raindance Writer’s Lab, Write + Sell the Hot Screenplay:**

**Hint** Never take a screenplay to Cannes. Take a one-sheet and treatment. People are too busy to read a script at Cannes.
IX - The Cannes Dailies

Everyday Variety and Screen International and the Hollywood Reporter publish their free journal for pick up at the entrances to the pavilions and the film market. These include the summary of up to date news, recent sales, screenings, parties, photographs etc.

You might want to keep a few of these magazines, the sales agents production releases or kits, the books you might have picked up etc. For these you can find a DHL or 'La Poste' (post office) in the basement of the Film Market. Sending parcels back to London are much cheaper than paying the surplus at the airport.

Variety:

2008 Cannes costs
Deflated dollar makes fest even more painful
By ELSA BERTET

With its legendary snootiness, the Cannes Film Festival has never catered to all walks of life, but it was just a matter of time until the overwhelming strength of the euro would propel the fest's exclusivity to the next level. This year, doing business in Cannes will not only take years off of your life, it'll thin your wallet more rapidly than before.

For those headed to the French Riviera, here's a quick price preview:

Cab ride from Nice Airport to Cannes
E65 to E70 ($103 to $111) before 7 p.m.; E67 to E82 ($106 to $131) thereafter.

A cappuccino at the Carlton Hotel
E7 ($10); an American coffee -- with unlimited service: E8 ($13)

A large bottle of Perrier sparkling water at the Noga Hilton
E7 ($12)

Three-course lunch special at Gray d'Albion beach
E25 ($40); a bottle of rose, Chateau de L'Escarelle: E16 ($26)

A 'Festival' lychee martini at Century Club Cannes
E13 ($21) at the London-based private members club's temporary beach outpost

A Bellini with Laurent Perrier Champagne at the Hotel du Cap
E39 ($62); a glass of Laurent Perrier Champagne: E25 ($40)

A four-cheese pizza at La Pizza Restaurant
E12 ($19)

A Mojito at the Martinez hotel bar
E18 ($29); a Vodka and Burn (similar to Red Bull) cocktail: E16 ($25); a Bellini with Taittinger Champagne: E18 ($29)

A tuxedo rental from the concierge of the Majestic Hotel
E100-E120 ($158-$190); bowtie rental: E15-E20 ($24-$32)

La Roche Posay sunscreen at La Pharmacie du Festival
E15.90 ($25)

A pack of AAA Duracel batteries at Monoprix
E4.90 ($8)
Cannes you dig it?
Yes you can, with these expert tips on how to survive the film industry's biggest schmooze fest, which is taking place this month (16 27 May)

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**THE BEST THING**

- Catching up with friends and contacts from far corners of the globe.
- The shear visceral excitement, plus all the talent in one place.
- The location and the parties. Oh, and if you're lucky, a few good film screenings.
- The sunshine.

**THE WORST THING**

- The length (two weeks), the stress and the blogging (see below).
- Seeing people on a jolly when you are slogging away all day and suffering from a lack of sleep.
- Thousands of film journals, which makes getting into to see the movies a bit of a scramble.
- The strict security at The Hilton.

**WHERE TO STAY**

- We always rent a villa and work out of it as well. It's by far the most civilised way to do it.
- The legendary Bateauj (33 04 93 68 90 00) is by no means luxurious, but it's 30 seconds from the Croisette and fine if all you do there is sleep.
- The Carlton (33 04 93 06 40 06; www.ichotelsgroup.com) is a lovely hotel with good rooms and a great bar.
- The Carlton (see previous entry) would be nice. But in reality, a house share some way out of Cannes, like Nice... or Paris.

**BEST BAR FOR SCHMOOZERS**

- The Grand (+33 04 93 38 15 48; www.grandhotel-cannes.com).
- Century, the beachside setup of the London club (www.centuryclub.co.uk) is a good place to check out industry insiders and UK celebrities.
- The Hotel Martinez (+33 04 92 96 73 00; www.martinez-hotel.com), but it can get late and messy.
- Le Petit Majestic Bar (+33 04 92 93 94 92) is a bit of a dive, but attracts industry players, and stars who are idling in the wee hours.

**BEST RESTAURANT**

- I know the takeaway menu at Mr Pizza (+33 04 93 43 75 55) well. Nounou (+33 04 93 39 24 53; www.nounou.fr) is great for seafood.
- The old port is overrated, but there are some nice little restaurants just behind the Croisette.
- Farfalla (+33 04 93 68 93 00), Order the salmon tartare.
- Exorbitant festival prices mean that kiosk dining on the Croisette becomes a better option now than during the rest of the year.

**INSIDER TIP**

- Don't try blogging with me.
- Last year, Nikki Beach was running a gift service for stars - get someone famous and get a raft of free goodies.
- Talk to people. You'll be surprised at the invites you'll get from chatting with people at the parties you're not invited to.
- Drop phrases such as "Steven loves the script", and "Birds on board", and doors will open...

Hang around outside the Riviera and wait for industry people who can give you red-carpet tickets.
Le Petit Majestic: Open until the early hours for food and drinks, this is one of Cannes networking schmooziest venues.

The London club Century, sets up for two weeks at Vegaluna Beach in Cannes and for the last few years has been one of the networking hot spots. Other clubs such as M1NT set up a villa further out and offers a free English cab service from behind the Carlton.

The Noga Hilton is rented for parties, office/rooms and by many sales agents.
The Marche du Film.

One of the many clubs which set up on the beach alongside the Village International.

A poster for Madeleine, outside the UK Film Centre. Two years ago large posters of Iraq hostages were displayed on the Palais itself.
XIII - Food and Drink

It's been known for people to do the full two weeks spending zero on food and drink: it is possible to eat nothing but what's offered at the numerous 'networking breakfasts', cocktail parties, receptions, lunches and evening parties or after parties. There are however a number of excellent restaurants in the back streets of the Rue d'Antibes at reasonable prices. Le Petit Majestic also serves until the early morning.

XIV - Football

FOOTBALL: May 14 Manchester; UEFA Cup final
CRICKET: May 15-19 Lord's: First Test, England v NZ
FOOTBALL: May 17 Wembley: FA Cup final
FOOTBALL: May 21 Moscow: Champions League final
CRICKET: May 23-27 Lord's: Second Test, England v NZ

It is possible to watch the big matches in Cannes. You'll be surprised at the number of industry wearing their football t-shirts down the Croisette and many fly back especially to watch the games (returning that same evening). The UK clubs usually have screens (M1NT or Century) during which time you probably won’t need a membership. Elsewhere the Irish Pub near the train station screens most games. These are easy opportunities to network since you'll have something to share in common.

XV - The International Village

The 'Village International' welcomes over a hundred different countries hosting their national pavilion on the beach, yards away from the Marche du Film. On one side you will find the largest industries including the British, French, Canadian, Indian and American pavilions. The American Pavilion is the only non-government funded one and requires a membership at a fee of approx £25 for the duration of the festival: for this you can reserve places at their guest talks (usually excellent) and usually have free drinks. On the other hand £25 for a couple drinks and a talk you might not have to time to go to (if it hasn’t booked out already) is, personally, not worth it considering you can obtain a Kodak Pavilion pass for free (in exchange for a business card) which offers the same advantage. The UK and Media Pavilions also have meeting space, internet access, a bar, a number of sponsored 'happy hours' and promotional material including studios, funding programmes etc. The Media Pavilion requires a membership which includes a pigeon hole, free croissant and coffee daylong, and a room to stock your suitcase or pile of material collected at the Film Market.
XVI – And Finally

Cannes Film Festival, or the Festival International du Film has for six decades been the world’s leading film festival. The town of 70,000 welcomes over 40,000 industry, press and cinephiles. Cannes is the only place a film student would be asked to write an essay on ‘why do you deserve accreditation?’ to receive one, and classifies accreditation badges under over 20 different levels of hierarchy. It welcomes everybody, from producers to wannabees, press, celebrities, the wealthy and the poor, and even if you don’t make it through the accreditation process, you’re sure to find at least a few thousand still flocking to the Riviera to catch a glimpse of the stars or to gatecrash one of the 400 odd parties taking place over the 10 days. It is where a young M. Night Shyamalan spent two weeks sipping free coffee and croissants from the British Pavilion because he was too shy to meet anyone. Scruffy haired but neatly dressed, no-one would have guessed, walking down the Croisette, that under his arm was in development the script for one of history’s biggest films that would propel him into overnight stardom. After patiently watching and learning the ways of the ‘smooth talking’ ceremonial pitching which so often occurs, he returned a year later, confident and well shaven, and secured the financing for his first feature: The Sixth Sense.

Trying to explain how festivals work in terms of networking and its importance is not easy to explain on paper. Essentially festivals like Cannes act on a human level in terms of creating an environment where all sectors of the industry from around the world are able to meet, form bonds, form friendships and obtain inspiration during the event. The ability to then schedule a further talk at a party or happy hour later that day creates a social and often booze fuelled rendez-vous marking the festival as the most significant networking film event on the calendar.

Cannes is like no other, where film professionals storm out of press conferences (Roman Polanski in 2006 accusing reporters of asking ‘stupid questions’), where films are booed, where you can’t walk two steps without passing a handful of photographers, rubbing shoulder with the ‘stars’, being dragged away by topless girls promoting Trom av films and the fanfare of artists lining the French Riviera. The port and coastline are pebbled with giant yachts and hotel prices shoot up from 30 to 5000 Euros per night. The level of excitement often scares and enthuses first time goers, but also distracts from the core of work Cannes offers for grabs.

Good luck!