

spree St Tropez, France

It's hard to tell which St Tropez has more of; swimwear boutiques or ice-cream stands. But too much indulgence in the latter can make shopping for the former a depressing experience, particularly in a tiny fishing village that has grown into a decadent playground for the wealthy. Whether looking for the perfect outfit in which to turn heads while lunching at one of the 31 beach clubs along Pampelonne Bay, or to wear aboard one of the multimillion-dollar mega-yachts that line the port or to take a dip in the beckoning azure waters, one can find it in St Tropez.

La Boutique, on the beach at Club Les Palmiers (Route de l'Épi, Ramatuelle; tel: 33 4 94 79 82 80), is only in its third season but has already established itself as the place to buy alluring and daring swimwear. Stephanie Cachat, who oversees the shop, prides herself on offering lines and brands not found everywhere in St Tropez, including London designer Melissa Odabash, Italy's Vanda Catucci and Lolita Jaca of St Barths. Suits (€100 to €400/HK\$1,080 to HK\$4,300) that shimmer, some knitted and others in bright colours, dazzle diners during summer's daily fashion shows at seafront establishments.

Designer Arianie Schlouch, the queen of swimwear in St Tropez for 20 years, features pieces so chic in her two boutiques – **Arianie** (Place de la Garonne, tel: 33 04 94 97 81 84) and **La Voile Rouge** (Ramatuelle; tel: 33 04 94 79 86 91; arianie@wanadoo.fr) – that the fashions would fit in perfectly for a night on the town ... at least in audacious St Tropez. Swarovski crystals adorn some pieces, which range from €300 to €600 and which are modelled daily during lunch at the hip beach club La Voile Rouge. La Perla and Emamo are among the hot brands sold.

Fisico owner and designer Cristina Ferrari from Italy will soon open a boutique in St Tropez, but for now her fans can find her couture yet comfortable



Daniel Thierry

beachwear at the boutique at **Le Club 55** (Plage de Pampelonne, Boulevard Patch, Ramatuelle; tel: 33 4 94 55 55 55; www.club55.fr), the granddaddy of the beach clubs. Corinne de Colmont, whose husband, Patrice, owns Le Club 55, runs the shop, which also sells outstanding creations by Laura Urbinati and Dernani (from €100 to €170), as well as the lingerie-inspired swimwear line Pas Pour Tous.

Vilebrequin, which started in St Tropez in the 1970s but is now on five continents, caters to males. Known for its vibrant, bold and colourful patterns – and patented waterproof pockets to keep valuables dry – the line's whimsical shorts (€200) are a hit with the jet-set. It is almost impossible to be out of sight of a Vilebrequin store in St Tropez, where there are five outposts (including at 1 rue de la Poste, tel: 33 4 94 97 67 12; www.vilebrequin.com).

The entire family can find fashionable and functional swimwear at **Kiwi St Tropez**, which opened in 1985 and offers lines for everyone at its three locations around town (such as at 34 Rue Allard, tel: 33 4 94 97 42 26; www.kiwi.mc). An abundance of tropical prints (flamingos and toucans abound) and bright colours make up the collection, priced from €50 to €80. *Kelly Carter*