

Hyères in style

► SLEEP

■ A classic Côte d'Azur villa on a peninsula jutting into the Med, **Hotel Le Provençal** is a favourite of festival jurors, with its sea views, private terraces and vast swimming pool. A series of gardens step down to the water, passing tennis and pétanque courts. Doubles from €143. **Place St Pierre; provençalhotel.com**

■ Right on the beach, a stroll away from the fashion action at La Capte, **Hotel Bor** has a simple, boutique feel, with sunrise balconies and simple, modern furnishings. The terrace lounge, steps from the waves, is a destination day and night, but you'll have to pay €10 for access to a deck chair. Doubles from €110, room only. **Allée Emile Gérard 3; hotel-bor.com**

► EAT

■ Festival veterans still talk about the tagines cut with sweet, fresh fruit at **Le Jardin de Saradam**, run by a Moroccan family in a villa at the centre of town. The garden in question is tucked away behind gates climbing with vines, and stays open late. **Avenue de Belgique 35; +33 4 94 65 97 53**

■ So stylish it seems purpose-built for the festival, **Le Marais** is festooned with modernist design by Eames and Prouvé in a kitschy, sunny palette. Gaps in the marquee ceiling and floor-to-ceiling windows onto the sea make it practically part of the beach. Order one of the seafood pastas (from €18) or line-caught fresh fish. **Boulevard de la Marine 1366; lemaraisplage.fr**

► DRINK

■ Laid back and great for large groups, **L'Endroit** is sheltered by louvered trellises on a sun-bleached dock over the shore. Double loungers were built into the decking to allow luncheon guests to segue into sundowners and snacks of grilled squid, tuna and aubergine. **Allée Emile Gérard 1, lendroit-hyeres83.com**

■ **Le Sax** is a flash marina-front destination, popular for cocktails and the odd bit of live music. It's one of the only clubs in this sleepy town open until 2am, and serves the festivalgoers filing out from the fashion shows at La Capte. **Avenue du Docteur Robin, +33 4 94 38 68 74**



Clockwise from top left: Sushant Chhabria, Traveller No. 01, 2014; Polly Tootal, #43534, 2014; Ozden Yorulmaz, Ed Meets Jack No 5, 2013; Thomas Rousset, Sans Titre, 2013

"My dream, as a young boy in Provence, was to do something in fashion, because we were missing contact between professional and creative people," says Blanc, who, since launching Hyères as a student, has spent more than half his life organising it. "We added photography because we felt fashion without photography is not really complete."

Each year since, a handful of young, promising creatives have been decorated with medals of excellence that open doors to other, even more glamorous worlds.

"Hyères is now equally important for photographers," says Marie Rime, last year's winner of the Public Prize in the photography category. "If you're selected, you get press, visibility... There are constant opportunities – working with fashion designers, having your own exhibitions, things you would never have been able to do on your own."

The winner of the photography category receives €15,000 and creates the portfolio images for the following year's fashion finalists. Ditto the winner of the fashion

Grand Prix, on top of collaborative projects with Chanel, the award's sponsor. Previous winners include Belgian designers Christian Wijnants and Anthony Vaccarello and Dutch duo Viktor & Rolf.

Outside Paris Fashion Week, Hyères is perhaps the coolest design event in France, despite being free and open to the public. But as a counterpoint to the frenzy of Paris, the Hyères vibe is defiantly linen-shirt-and-flat-shoes casual.

"We try to make it more honest and more convivial," says Blanc. "Some people say it's a family and that's the best compliment I could receive." Participants stay in laid-back *auberges* in the old town and party with civilians in bars by the beach rather than with billionaires on yachts.

"Everyone talks to everyone," says Rime, whether it's a fashion-house CEO or an unpaid intern. As a result, Hyères attracts the quieter heroes of fashion and photography. Last year Humberto Leon and Carol Lim of Kenzo headed a jury that included actress Chloë Sevigny and filmmaker Spike Jonze; in the past,