

# THE PAINTER LE CORBUSIER

Eileen Gray's *Villa E 1027*  
and *Le Cabanon*



Tim Benton

# THE PAINTER

# LE CORBUSIER

**EILEEN GRAY'S  
VILLA E 1027 AND  
LE CABANON**

Photography by Manuel Bougot

**BIRKHÄUSER**



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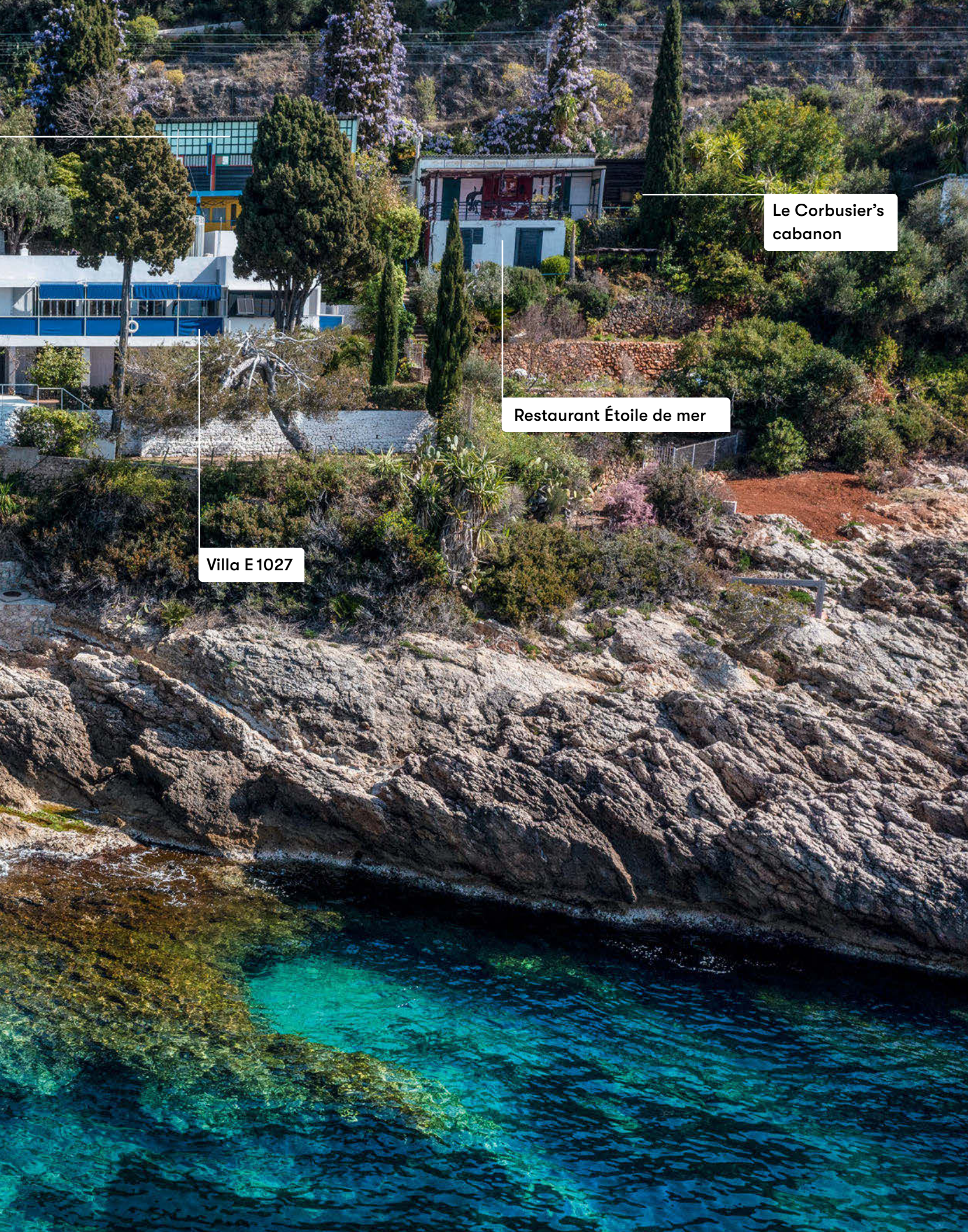


An aerial photograph of a coastal site. In the foreground, the sea is a vibrant turquoise color, with dark green seaweed visible along the shore. A rocky cliff face rises from the water, featuring a series of concrete steps leading up. To the right, a circular stone structure is built into the rock. Above the cliff, a hillside is covered in dense green trees and shrubs. Several modern, white buildings with flat roofs and balconies are built into the hillside. A white staircase leads up to one of the buildings on the right. The overall scene is a blend of natural beauty and modern architecture.

Camping units  
by Le Corbusier

The site at Roquebrune-Cap-  
Martin, photo 2021.



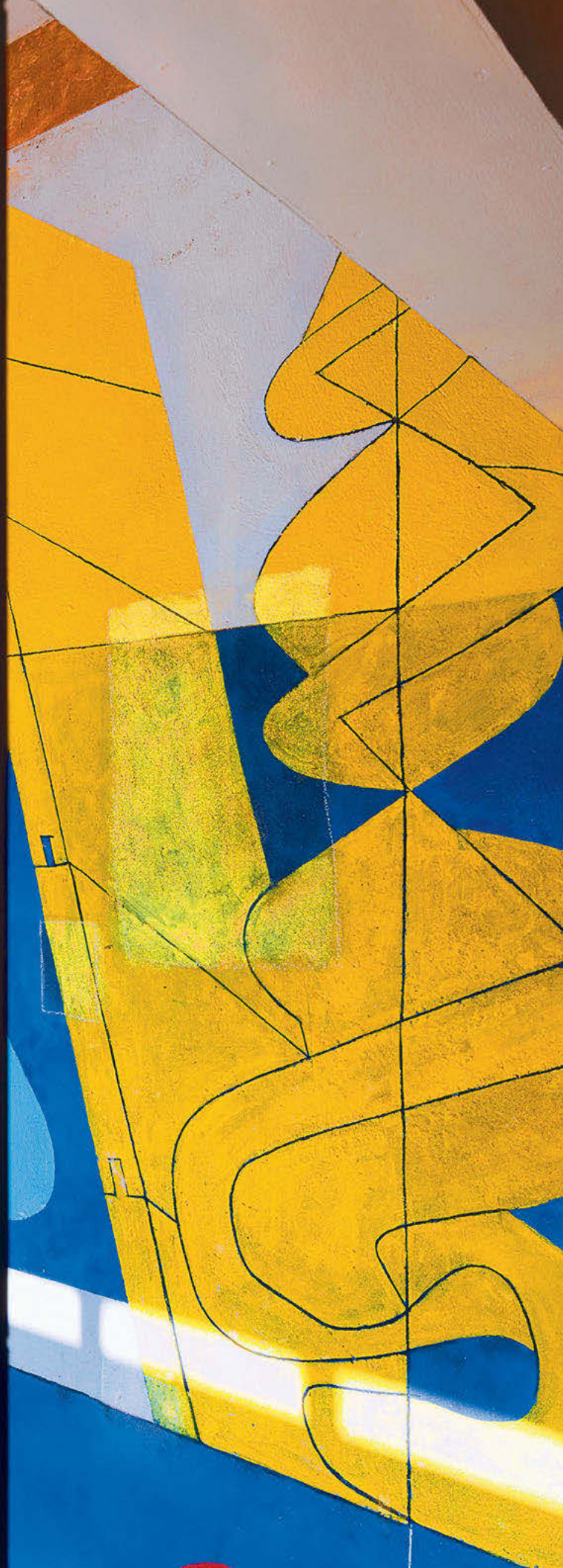


Le Corbusier's  
cabanon

Restaurant Étoile de mer

Villa E 1027







# FOREWORD

ANTOINE PICON

Le Corbusier's drawings and paintings have received renewed attention in recent years, not least because of the close links they have to his architectural work. Their connection with the architecture explores in particular new and implicit spatial combinations; a role that they have played on many occasions for an architect whose sensibilities as a plastic artist is widely acknowledged.

From the end of the 1930s onwards, Le Corbusier also tested the possibilities of mural painting to enliven architectural space. Following a first project in Vézelay in 1936, the walls of the Villa E1027 designed by Eileen Gray provided him with the opportunity to experiment with an artistic practice that was still new to him. The Cap-Martin site would later host many other murals by the architect. It is this collection that is presented by this publication. Tim Benton provides clues to this œuvre in an analytical text that captures the complexity of Le Corbusier's approach.

Le Corbusier did not immediately adopt the principle of mural painting, far from it. It contradicted his famous definition of architecture as a pure play of light and volume. A whole series of factors combine to explain this conversion: The architect's pictorial evolution was struck by Picasso's vigorous compositions; the desire to explode space in some way while pursuing, paradoxically, a desire for a synthesis of the arts inspired by the great examples of the Renaissance. But the impact of personal circumstances should not be underestimated either. As Tim Benton shows, in the 1930s Le Corbusier was going through a deep crisis that influenced his ideas and his practice. The new relationship between wall and painting to which the frescoes of E1027 bear witness cannot be reduced to the mere 'rape' of Eileen Gray's work, as several Anglo-Saxon critics have insisted, even if there can be no question of minimising the symbolic violence of Le Corbusier's intrusion into a space he did not design.

By also presenting the other paintings produced at Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, from the restaurant Étoile de mer to Le Corbusier's cabin, the book also places this episode in the context of a much longer evolution. The Fondation Le Corbusier is delighted with the publication of a book that provides the reader with valuable information to better appreciate the Cap-Martin paintings, these major testimonies of Le Corbusier's indissociable plastic and architectural approach.





Eileen Gray and Jean Badovici, E1027, the 'Villa by the sea', 1926–1929, with Le Corbusier's camping units in the background.









Side elevation of E1027 with balcony.









Upper level of E1027, with the view towards Monaco.