

Title:

Monaco Prince Takes Pole Position

Word Count:

563

Summary:

Less than a year after succeeding to the throne, Prince Albert of Monaco is swapping the luxury of his palace for the wilds of the North Pole to highlight global warming.

Keywords:

Monaco, Monte Carlo, Hotels, weather, map, Monaco Grand Prix, Nice airport, holidays, property, real estate, Albert, Prince, de Paris, Columbus

Article Body:

More used to Grand Prix cars than dog sleighs, Monaco's Prince Albert's forthcoming trek to the North Pole has been greeted with surprise by many.

But the Prince is fairly accustomed to the cold, in contrast to the Mediterranean warmth of Monaco where he became ruler last July following the passing of his father Prince Rainier, who had ruled the tax haven for over 50 years.

Albert represented Monaco at the last five Winter Olympic Games in their Bobsleigh team. And he is going to face some cold and hostile conditions on his seven day trip to bring to the attention of fellow world leaders the environmental damage to the arctic regions that global warming is having.

Speaking at a recent news conference in Monaco, Albert explained his thinking behind the trip to assembled journalists.

'If in our modest way, by this action we are able to bring environmental problems to the forefront and force some leaders to take stronger actions, this expedition will have achieved its objectives'.

Environmentalists have welcomed Albert's expedition, and his image in the world's media is changing from that of a playboy millionaire to a responsible leader.

In 2002 47 year old Prince Albert agreed to a DNA test to show whether he was

the father to a boy born to a former air hostess he had had a relationship with, and more recently has been linked by the press with 28 year old South African swimming champion Charlene Wittstock.

But one of the first actions he took after succeeding to the throne was to sign the Kyoto Protocol, taking Monaco outside of the small group of countries that had failed to ratify the treaty, designed to reduce the world's emissions of greenhouses gases.

Monaco Grand Prix

The Monaco Prince Albert inherited from his father is now the world's best known tax haven, and the ultimate European destination for luxury hotels, including the Hotel de Paris, frequently quoted in guides as among the top ten in the world.

one local on-line travel guide comment that Prince Albert's interest in the world's environment sets a different agenda than that of his father, who transformed the principality in his reign into an economically safe country for the world's wealthy to live and invest.

Residents of the principality enjoy a zero rated income tax.

As well as being a tax haven, Monaco hosts the best known Formula 1 Grand Prix of the year around the streets of Monte Carlo and Fontvieille in May. Over recent years Monaco has also become a destination of choice for the super-rich in September, when it hosts the Monaco Yacht Show.

And while the Grand Prix and Yacht Show fill the hotels in Monte Carlo and Monaco each year, and on an everyday basis every second car seems to be an Aston Martin or Ferrari, locals hope that Prince Albert doesn't look too close to home when it comes to his concern for the environment. Cancelling the Monaco Grand Prix in 2007 to show his concern for the environment would certainly grab world headlines, but might not be a popular decision among his subjects.

But locals feel that there is little danger of this though - Albert is after all the son of Hollywood star Grace Kelly, and future media appearances could just as well be in celebrity magazines as environment campaign ones.