

Marseille —France

After years in the doldrums Marseille is awakening from its slumber. More than 8 sq km of land around the port and city centre are being developed for offices, apartments and public buildings. The project, dubbed Euroméditerranée, has attracted architects such as Zaha Hadid, whose CMA-CGM Tower dominates the skyline, and Jean Nouvel who is working on a project for an 135m-high office block. Euroméditerranée has earmarked €7bn of the required financing, with €6.3m coming from the French state and the rest from private investors. There was added encouragement for Marseille in September when the city beat off stiff competition to become European Capital of Culture in 2013. Almost another €100m has been set aside to help finance young creatives. Marseille could become a city to rival Barcelona.



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Corinne Vezzoni & Associés

Corinne Vezzoni set up her architecture firm in 1999. The studio is located in the famous Le Corbusier Unite d'habitation building. She recently won a competition to build a conservation centre where the archives of the MUCEM (Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et la Méditerranée) will be stored. "Marseille is an exceptional place to work, there is always something to design, even 25 years after I first began working here," says partner Laporte. corinnevezzonietassociés.com

Eric Castaldi

Architect Castaldi set up his firm in La Joliette, Marseille's new business district, in 1985. His work focuses on renovating existing buildings through private investment. At the moment he is converting part of a massive grain silo into offices that will be ready next summer. "Europe's desire to open up the Mediterranean means that the potential is definitely here. It gives Marseille the chance to be an important city in the next 10 years." castaldi-architecte.com

Héléne Boule

Only 28, Boule, who finished her studies at Les Beaux Arts de Marseille a year ago, is already making a name for herself as a designer. She recently signed a deal with Belgian company Vange. "What's amazing about Marseille is that it's a meeting point for so many different cultures," she says. inboul.com

Urbanoid

This industrial design studio is run by husband and wife team, Cyril and Nathalie Daniel. They design functional, fun products for homes and gardens. Clients include Paul Smith, Nina Ricci and Roger Vivier. "After both working in Paris

we decided we wanted to put the quality of our life first," says Cyril. urbanoid.fr

Three more we rate:

- 01 Stoa Architects** – Three-man practice specialising in public transport and urban spaces. stoa-architecture.com
- 02 T3** – A firm of architects set up a year ago by three well-travelled thirty-somethings. t3architecture.fr
- 03 Arm Architecture** – A nine-man operation responsible for renovating a huge industrial wasteland. corso70.com



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