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The Monegasques in their summer quarters at the Olympic village



Located in the North West section of the Olympic Park and bordered in the south by several event areas including the National Stadium, the Olympic village has been built to the extreme north of the Chinese capital's link road, where many historical and cultural sites are found, such as the Imperial Palace and the Temple of Heaven.

The summer quarters of the Monegasque athletes, their trainers, the physiotherapist and the head of mission are located in the D2 building. On the 6th floor (with Spain below, France above and China just opposite), the Monegasque delegation (who have decked their balconies with large red and white flags) has three apartments. Parquet flooring, spacious rooms, large marble bathrooms...: everything has been thought out with a very "zen" attitude – green spaces, flowers, fountains...).

Since they arrived, the Monegasques have been getting used to their daily routine. In one apartment, Jean-Philippe Ringwald has installed his massage table and is ready to treat the Monegasque athletes. In another flat, there is a common room with a TV. Last but not least, the third is focused on sport. "The atmosphere is excellent!" says Sylvie Bertrand, head of mission. Life as a group has started off well. "The closer the day of competition, the more training slots are scheduled and focused". Catching a glimpse of each other as they pass by during the day (due to the requirements, they all have to train in areas that are sometimes diametrically opposed), the Principality's athletes still manage to share some quality time together, particularly in the evening when everybody meets for dinner in the main restaurant (a huge canteen serving various types of cuisine 24 hours a day). The evening meal also provides an opportunity not only to talk about the day's happenings but also an opportunity for each athlete to get to know the others better...

It is in this highly secure "town within a town" that houses the needs of 17,200 athletes and officials (accommodation, daily life, training, leisure and cultural activities) that the Monegasques by chance (either when walking or on the bus – there is a regular shuttle service that features three bus routes) bump into other athletes from 204 countries. Famous and not so famous champions either within immediate proximity (like the "neighbours" in the building, the Iberian tennis man Rafael Nadal and the French cyclist Florian Rousseau) or further afield.

But where everyone sleeps under the same roof – whether champion or not – with no discrimination of any kind and in a wonderful multicultural environment which discounts both race and religion. That's also what is so magical about the Games...

