

Sunday Herald

Portfolio **FETE DU VENT, PRADO BEACH, MARSEILLE, 2002, RACHEL COBB**

Time for a geography lesson. "Anyone who has spent time in Provence is likely to have experienced the cold, dry wind that funnels down the Rhone Valley between the Alps and the Massif Central, gaining speed as it reaches the Mediterranean," the photographer Rachel Cobb writes in the afterword to her new book *Mistral: The Legendary Wind of Provence*.

"The Mistral is a gremlin wreaking havoc on our lives. It is everywhere. It is nowhere to be seen."

It knows no borders, she explains. It can blow all the way to Africa.

But Cobb's eye is trained on Provence and in her book she tries to capture the invisible force that blows through the region and the effect it has on the place and on its people; how it rattles trees and rooftops and now and then sends kites, and sometimes more than just kites, into the air. This image, taken at the Festival of Wind in Marseille in 2002, shows that it is strong enough to lift this man off the beach. We have take-off.



Mistral: The Legendary Wind of Provence, by Rachel Cobb, is published by Damiani, £35. © Rachel Cobb