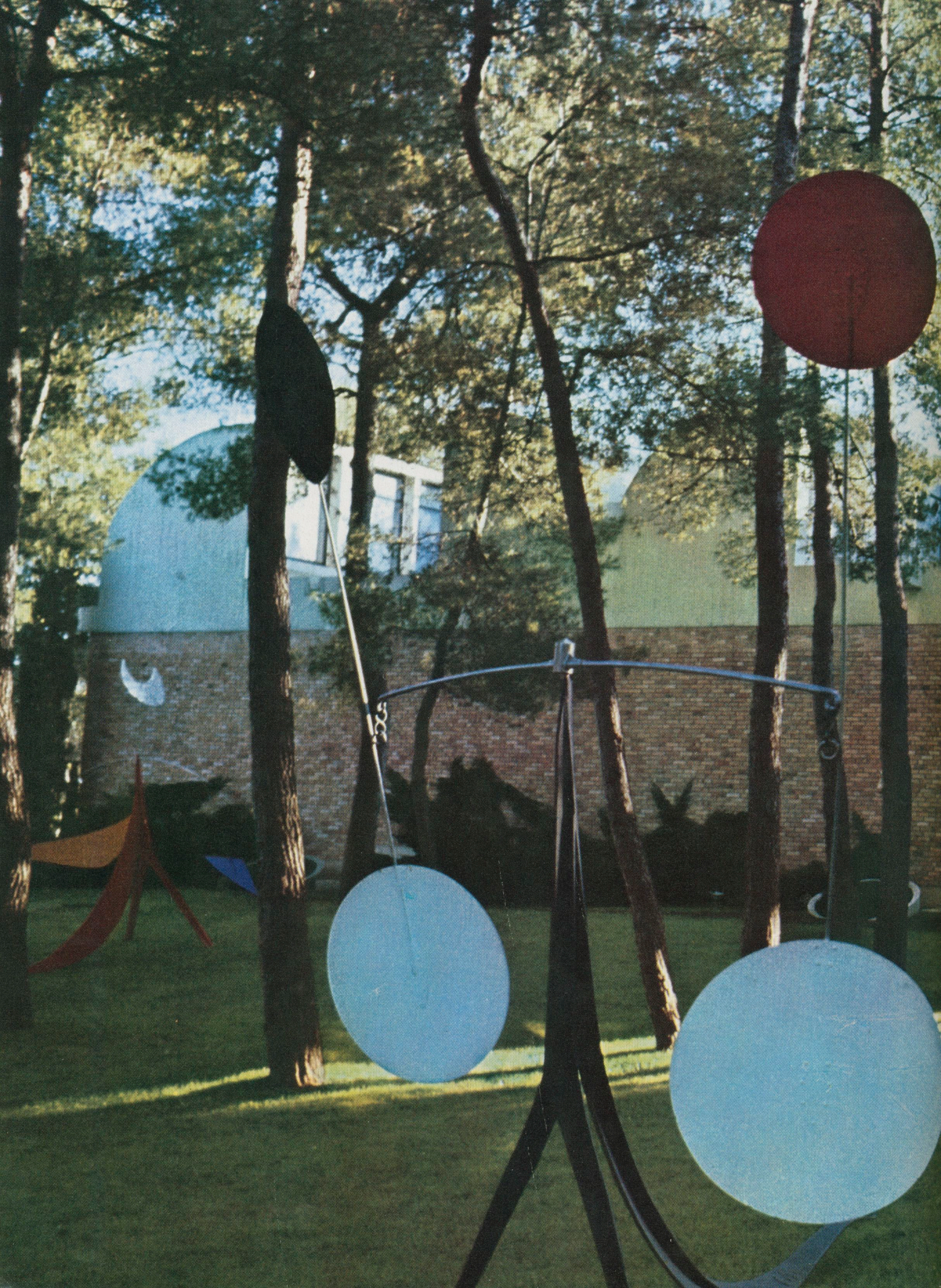
MOVING MOBILES INTO THE GARDEN

Calder can measure himself against one thing alone: nature. Nobody else, not even in the strange jungle of kinetic art that has grown up behind him, has attempted the same vast simplicity of his art. And if his stabiles and mobiles have lent certain cities a new breadth of air, it is only on soil and near trees that they themselves can fully spread their wings.

His sculptures are nature remade by man. Had they nature's own power, they would certainly change according to each season or migrate in whirring, multicoloured flocks to the landscapes of their choice. As it is, even in the largest and clearest gallery space, the mobiles look like so many Icaruses grounded against their will.

Last summer, however, Calder's sculpture was given a taste of the freedom in which it was conceived. At Saint-Paul, in the South of France, the Fondation Maeght filled its gardens with a huge number of his works, both mobile and stabile. *continued on page 98*

Calder's mobiles and stabiles set in a landscape (here and on third double page) and in the Maeght gallery (second double page). Photos by Gilles Ehrmann.



END

COOKING
IN AN AMERICAN HOME IN FRANCE

"Simple dishes, fresh vegetables, all the herbs," says Alexander Calder's wife, Louisa, who has evolved her own style of cooking—which turns out to be very Provençal.

The Alexander Calders live in their kitchen. "Things are so pleasant and sociable around a table, don't you think?" said Louisa Calder, as we sat down for a glass of whisky at a long table of unpolished, natural wood, in the living-room-dining-room-kitchen of the Calders' converted stone farmhouse in Saché, near Tours. At one end is the fireplace flanked by two sofas covered with Mexican tapestries and rugs in hot colours. On the floor are fluffy wool rugs by Louisa: big abstract patterns that are kin to the mobiles, in blues, pinks, oranges. Like Sandy—as everyone calls Calder—Louisa hates green, though she surrounds herself with plants.

But the star attraction—besides the Calders themselves—is the kitchen, hung with rows of blue, yellow, white saucepans; lined with earthenware pots; adorned with huge strands of garlic buds, and laced with Calder inventions, like the chandelier made with tin pudding moulds and the shiny funnel converted into an Ajax dispenser ("only there's no Ajax left now," says Louisa).

"We're building a new house right up on top of the hill, where we'll have air and sunshine and not so much dampness. Our daughter and her husband, Jean Davidson, a writer and the son of sculptor Jo Davidson, have moved out of the mill across the road to a new house up the hill. They couldn't stand the winter flooding down by the river.

"Of course, our living room will be the kitchen, and there will be a very large, spacious greenhouse separated from the kitchen by an all-glass wall.

"That way, I'll have all the herbs I use right under my nose. At the moment, I'm rather lazy and don't weed and so on. My daughter has a green thumb, though, and provides me with lots of fresh vegetables.

At home in the comfortable Calder kitchen, Louisa prepares her favourite salad dressing, while Sandy serves some more red wine.

"My philosophy for cooking? Simple dishes, made with all the herbs—thyme, oregano, tarragon, basil, onions, chives, plus olive oil and garlic, and vegetables in season. That's the basis of all my cooking; it's really Provençal, even though we live far North of Provence.

"I guess I've always preferred simple food; I was raised on lentils . . . all over the world. I grew up in Concord, Massachusetts. My mother was from Boston, my father was a wanderer, and even as a child, I travelled to Europe. Once a week I was allowed to choose the dish that I liked best to eat. It was always the same . . . macaroni and cheese. I guess I should have been an Italian."

In any case, Louisa was first initiated into the mysteries of cuisine by a Franco-American, the composer Edgar Varèse. "He used to stay with us in Roxbury after we were married. He loved to cook, and showed me a lot about it. He taught me a *daube provençal*, for instance—a wine stew with garlic, beef, carrots and onions.

"I always keep entertaining as simple as I can. We're constantly having people drop in—neighbours from around here, or old friends from all over the world—and I fix a stew and salad or a *pistou* soup (I'll let you in on the recipes later). If it's a big group, I do a light buffet supper of *rillettes*, the local shredded pork spread, meat loaf, cheese, and lots of wine. We mainly drink Bordeaux but we haven't any aversion to Beaujolais!"

Another thing Louisa loves to cook is bread. "You know there's a kind of a mystique about how hard it is to make. Not at all! It's the simplest thing in the world. I got my recipe from an Italian woman: just a matter of yeast, tepid water, flour and salt. I let it rise for a few hours and then bake for an hour in the oven." There is a fancy loaf—all loops and curlicues—hanging on the Calder wall. "I'm afraid that's not mine. When I try something complicated like that, I'd hate to tell you what it looks like!

"I do have an occasional real disaster in cooking. Like the time I went off to see some friends and left the roast. It was completely carbonized by the time we got back . . . with our guests, who were fortunately very nice about it. We ate the vegetable stew, which was kind of a mush by that time, and nobody complained.

"As for decoration, I don't do anything special for guests. We always eat on the one big table, and I keep it clean with *eau de javel*. I couldn't stand to have a nasty, dirty tablecloth. We used to like linen napkins, but now I've given in to paper.

"And then décor is whatever

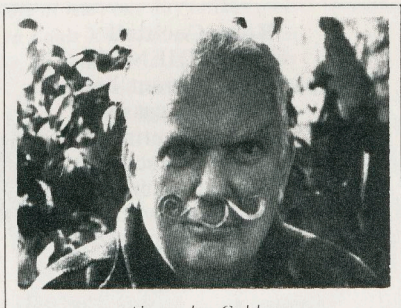
COMMENTS
by Monique Théret

Although it's called soup, this is a very substantial dish, and needs little else to complete the meal, except dessert and possibly cheese. If you cannot find fresh white beans, substitute 2 cups of navy beans.
PREPARATION TIME: 25 minutes.
COOKING TIME: 1 hour 45 minutes.

Monsieur Cruse recommends with dinner:
A Rosé de Provence

With the dinner, I have chosen a *rosé* produced in vineyards situated between Marseilles and Nice and not far from the sunny beaches of the Côte d'Azur. It is said, in fact, that it was Middle Eastern merchants who brought the first young vine plants to Marseilles and that the vineyards of this region are the oldest in France.

Rosé wine has a particular character. It is sold in specially shaped bottles and should be drunk well chilled. This is a clear, good quality wine with a relatively high alcohol content which will go perfectly with the *pistou* and the cheese. Because of its pleasant freshness, you should provide more than usual. END



Alexander Calder, interviewed by Suzanne Patterson

STRICTLY FOR MEN

There's no point in asking Sandy Calder what he likes to wear. His friends will tell you that just about every day of his life he puts on a red or red and black checkered lumberjacket, and blue jeans—just the thing to make mobiles or stabiles in. And in the picture above he sports a metal moustache, one of his own creations.

"Shirts come from a little place near where we used to live in Connecticut, Roxbury," he'll mutter (he is famous for his lack of enunciation in all languages). "And the jeans are Carter. I don't think they make Levis in my size," and a big grin breaks out on his large, generous, puckish face. "These shoes?" (A pair of serviceable suedes with thick rubber soles and decorated with a few daubs of paint.) "My shoes are always covered in paint. They're *fin de série*, you know, oddments, and I get them mainly 'cause they go around my foot." (A growling laugh.)

"Sandy has a very square foot," explains Louisa, "and it's very difficult for him to find shoes that are the right shape."

He wears bright woollen ties like the ones that used to be signed "Calder"; "but now my daughter makes them for me," he says. "I lost interest."

How about face care? "Sandy never washes his face," volunteers Louisa. "He does wash behind his ears, though."

"I think there's something growing behind my ears," says Calder, tweaking his ear. Whenever he does wash, he uses Yardley soap.

He has lots of unruly white hair. "I have plenty of it because I don't cut it." In razors, he prefers the electric kind—"I have two Remingtons, a German razor, and another American one; I don't remember the names. I use whichever one works. And then I have used a Gillette injector which I borrowed from a house guest."

Calder's only problem is weight. He loves to eat Louisa's Provençal dishes (see "Cooking"), but he has to watch the effects. "I like desserts, but I don't get 'em much when I'm home," he remarks mournfully. However, drinks are not watched so carefully, and the Calders are especially generous to guests—journalists have been known to slug down a fifth of Johnny Walker during an interview. "We also drink vodka sometimes," says Sandy. "But it's Smirnoff. None of that fancy stuff. Smirnoff plants are near where we live when we're in Connecticut." And a big drink around the Calder house is wine, mainly red and mainly Bordeaux.

Sandy Calder used to smoke. but stopped it to combat coughing. "It's like acquiring a third hand," he says. Fortunately, he has "three hands." It takes at least that many to balance the mobiles, make the ties and objets d'art, and the fabulous gold and silver jewellery he's given his wife.

Any exercise? "Absolutely none, except walking around." But just try to make a mobile or one of his house-sized stabiles, and see if it doesn't give you a workout! END

STRICTLY FOR SERIOUS DRINKERS

Say "The Ritz Bar" and you've said everything. Say "Bertin" Azimont (known throughout the world as plain Bertin) and you've said the Ritz Bar.

His headquarters is the Petit Bar on the Rue Cambon side of the Paris Ritz. It used to be reserved strictly for women, while the larger bar, opposite, was even more strictly a male preserve. Then, in 1936, when it became evident more and more people were wanting to drink with members of the opposite sex (women had been permitted to bring men with them into the Petit Bar), the position was reversed. Anyway, that has all ended now, to the relief of all concerned, and anyone can drop into the Petit Bar and be sure of a warm welcome, and an excellent cocktail.

The bar itself is warm and comfortable, with wood panelling, leather upholstery and mirrors. Bertin himself came to the Ritz in 1925, having been born in Toulouse, where he studied at the École Hôtelière. From there, he went first to the Restaurant Paillard, in Paris, and then to two others before eventually landing up at the Ritz. His real name is Jean, but they already had a Jean in the hotel; Bernard, his second name, was also being used by someone already there. Eventually, Joseph, the second barman, suggested he be known as Bertin, that being the name of his dog back in Italy. Bertin accepted, recalling that he had had a donkey in Toulouse called Joseph. It was put to him, not very gently, that if he wanted to keep his job, he could forget that. Fortunately, he knew when to stop.

Knowing when to stop, he considers, is tremendously important if you are to enjoy your drinking, too. "One or two cocktails is fine," he says, "but the more you drink, the more you'll end up just feeling ill." He mixed me a Strawberry Cocktail of his own invention. "I tried fifty different combinations before hitting on this one. I used oranges, grapefruit, Cointreau—the lot. Then, at last, I hit on the winning formula, which all my customers seem to like, especially the English.

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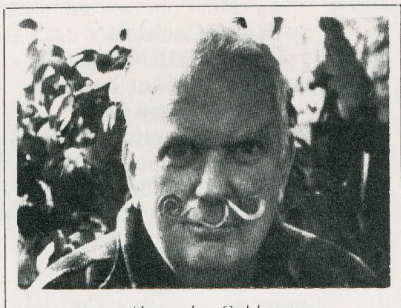

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You need five large, well-flavoured strawberries, lemon juice and cognac. Mix it all up in the mixer, with plenty of ice cubes, and then top up the glass with champagne. If the strawberries are not perfectly ripe, you may want to add sugar to taste. You can also make it with peaches instead of strawberries, using sliced peaches. But always remember, a good cocktail—like good cuisine—requires the best ingredients." The drink was delicious, with a delicate flavour of strawberry suffusing the mixture.

"You may notice," he went on, "I've put in rather a lot of cognac this time." I nodded knowingly. "In the next one, however, I'm going to make it with less cognac, the way I usually serve it, and you can see which you like better."

A sign of the popularity of this drink is that, last year, he used 400 lbs. of strawberries and 200 lbs. of peaches. The strawberries come, by preference, from Orléans, the peaches from Provence. "California strawberries look great, but they don't taste like very much. America's great contributions in the realm of food are the turkey, the Maine lobster and beef—all of which are delicious," he said.

Sampling the second Strawberry Cocktail, we both agreed, against opposition from others at the bar, that it was better with more cognac. It gives the drink more "body."

He has also developed a drink for children: "After all, they are tomorrow's customers." It is lemonade with strawberries. You use the same number of strawberries as before, mixed with orange and lemon juice, plus lots of ice, and sugar, to taste. Then, when mixed, top up the glass with water or Perrier. "I came across it three years ago, when a client asked me for a fresh fruit cocktail. I thought first of the Gin Fizz with peaches or strawberries, then it was only a short jump from the gin to either water or champagne."

His advice to the amateur barman is fairly straightforward. "Always use the best ingredients, and never mix too many of them at the same time—the simplest mixtures tend to make the best cocktails. A cocktail must be frank, leave a good taste, and not leave the drinker ill." For parties, where one may want to serve only one drink, he recommends a Rose Cocktail: blackcurrant liqueur (crème de cassis), kirsch, dry vermouth and gin. It should be decorated with a maraschino cherry and chilled with plenty of ice. "A drink should always look good. However good it tastes, if it doesn't look attractive, people won't bother to try it."

His most famous drink of all, though, is the Martini—à la Bertin—very dry, as drunk by Graham Greene when he comes through Paris. It is also the most popular, along with Scotch. He explains this by saying that most other cocktails are so likely to go wrong in inexpert hands—one ought not to go far wrong with a Martini (people have done it, though), but a badly made Sidecar, for instance, can wreak havoc on the stomach.

At the end of the week, after making so many cocktails, his greatest pleasure is to disappear into the Dordogne for a spell of fishing—"real fishing." Which, for the only barman in Paris who can boast a year-round stock of limes for his gin and tonics, is well-deserved relaxation.

Here are some of the drinks which he has perfected over the years. Unlike some barmen, who say there is no point in inventing any new mixtures—there are so many around already—Bertin is a firm believer in the process of continual experiment and discovery, in order to tempt his regulars with new tastes.

Rose Cocktail
INGREDIENTS
1 part blackcurrant liqueur (crème de cassis)
2 parts dry vermouth
2 parts kirsch
2 parts gin
Serve well chilled, with plenty of ice and a maraschino cherry.

*

Strawberry Cocktail
INGREDIENTS
5 strawberries
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 1/2 fluid oz. cognac
Champagne
Sugar (if strawberries are not perfectly ripe)
Mix strawberries, lemon juice, cognac and ice in mixer, pour into large cocktail glass and fill up with champagne.

*

Lemonade and Strawberries
INGREDIENTS
5 strawberries
Juice of 1/2 lemon
Juice of 1/2 orange
Sugar (to taste)
Water or Perrier
Mix strawberries, ice, lemon and orange juice in mixer. Pour into tall glass. Fill up with water or Perrier. Stir in sugar. END

NORMAN HOUSE

continued from page 74

Charles Wheeler again recommends a trip to France if possible. "You can still find beautiful old stone fireplaces over here for relatively cheap prices (around $300, say), and then ship them back to America. But it is worth the investment, because you won't find that kind of fireplace in America."

Once your type of construction has been decided upon, you'll be concentrating on the details. "There are thousands of designs possible for *colombage*," says Antoine Berge. "The architect must feel the mood, the proportion and personality of the house, in harmony with its owners.

"The surrounding area is extremely important as well. The countryside should be green and slightly rolling . . . just imagine this kind of house in desert country! It simply wouldn't do at all. Or imagine a Byzantine villa with minarets in Connecticut. Mad! You should have at least a few acres of fairly isolated property, since it might look odd to be jammed in between two Georgian-style houses.

"Around the house, you should keep the garden situation fairly casual-looking, not too organized in neat little paths like at Versailles. You don't have to hire an up-and-coming Le Nôtre. After all, you shouldn't forget, the inspiration was from peasant people. A few big trees, if possible . . . weeping willows, yews, oaks, fir trees. And riots of flowers: climbing roses, daisies, zinnias, sweet peas, what have you. It really depends on what you like. Around the outside, there's often a gravelly area. This is obviously practical if you want to drive all the way up to the house, and it's also more useful than having a lawn right up to the house. On sunny days you can use it as a terrace and on rainy days you won't get mud all over your feet.

"And as for furnishings, that's a whole new problem," says Berge. "But it's completely mistaken to think only French provincial will do. Remember that even avant-garde can harmonize with good antiques, as long as proportion and grace are respected."

So you've assembled your land, your materials and your ideas. What about your architect? "Just make sure," cautions Berge, "that—even if you've imported him from France—he is sensitive and understands the underlying harmonies of Norman architecture. Without this understanding, he might serve up something not only impractical but unbeautiful. And 'getting back to the country' in your cozy Norman house might make you feel downright uncomfortable. If you find the task too Herculean in America, you could just resign yourself to buying or making your house in Normandy. There still exist any number of rapidly-decaying Norman farm houses on sale anywhere from $5,000 to $25,000. But just remember: it's cheaper to build from scratch with used materials than to renovate an old wreck."

SUZANNE PATTERSON

DALI

continued from page 80

pretty strange objects find their way into it, they find their way out just as soon as they have served their purpose. Passing from painting to painting, Dali works in a slow and precise manner, taking a long time over each work. Nothing disturbs him in his Spartan dedication.

The windows are so placed that he is not distracted by the sea. All day long he works, stopping only for lunch and a siesta—without this traditional break, some of his most useful thinking would not get done. Gala, his wife, may tiptoe in, no one else. The two swans he keeps in the bay keep intruding boats away. The rooms are always fresh and cool; dried plants cut by Gala on the hillside hang in great bunches from the ceiling or along the tops of windows to keep the flies away. But in fact Dali and flies have excellent relations; to improve them, he has a habit of emptying the oil left in a tin of anchovies on his head.

From time to time, he sallies forth to Cadaques to savour the fishermen's colourful language and nicknames (two have been dubbed Jesus Christ) or rows off with Gala to the delirious rocks of Cap Creus. Occasionally he paints on the spot without an easel, propping up his canvas on a foot or with a stick, before returning home to eat.

Most meals are taken in the patio, which keeps the heat long after the sun goes down. Bill of fare is often, obviously enough, seafood, of which he is very fond. In his youth, he would down some three dozen sea urchins at a time, but his tastes are more sober generally—though he is known to have once eaten a glass cabinet, or at any rate to have gnawed away a whole corner of it.

Since his imagination never stops, scarcely has he had one idea than he is off on another. But Gala looks after the more practical details of life and sees that the house is simple and in good taste. Most of the flooring is raffia and cord carpeting; most of the furniture Spanish or Catalan—much of it picked up by Gala in the neighbouring village of Olot. There is little luxury as such. The beds that look gloriously luxurious are two fishermen's beds in black wrought iron with copper motif, covered in red and blue jute cloth with drapes in the same colours.

It is difficult when crossing the house to know where one is exactly or which room leads to which because they all lead into each other, linked by a few steps, pin-sized corridors or narrow openings without doors. The different levels disorientate, the different objects fascinate, the light has a special limpid quality; a pure and mysterious atmosphere bathes the whole . . . Sometimes one has a feeling that one is inside a Dali painting—and it's a delightful place to be.

GILES ALLEN

MOVING MOBILES

continued from page 85

Against this background of a smooth and tamed nature, the extraordinary play of their shapes and colours took on a new intensity. The mobiles that remained inert under the respectful gaze of gallery visitors now moved to all the caprices of the Provençal air.

The Fondation Maeght exhibition proved once more that Calder's work can be fully appreciated only in such a setting. The playful allegory of nature which all its forms contain is muted without the presence of other, living forms. And his abstraction of the sun, moon and stars, kept in cunning suspension, is cut off from its real dimensions under anything other than the open sky.

But even more unconstrained are the sculptures which Calder himself has placed at odd intervals around his house and studio deep in the rich French countryside around Tours. His studio lies long and (from a distance) low on the top of a hill which dominates a valley full of moving green forms. Perched just over its downward slope, in full view from the studio itself, are two black-painted stabiles that look as though they were sprung for imminent flight. They might be seen as a symbol for Calder's creativity: the constant desire to set all forms free.

Lower down, in and around the Calders' present house, the atmosphere changes to one nearer carnival. The brightly-swaying mobiles have little of the hilltop stabiles' monumentality. Gusts of wind keep them in perpetual dance, their vivid reds and yellows contrasting strongly with the surrounding green of the grass and trees.

All the joy of life and art is here. Suspended between earth and sky, the sculptures give man a new place in nature.

MICHAEL HENRY

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