

FALL 2008:

The Opera House You
Can Walk on, and Other
Nordic Sagas

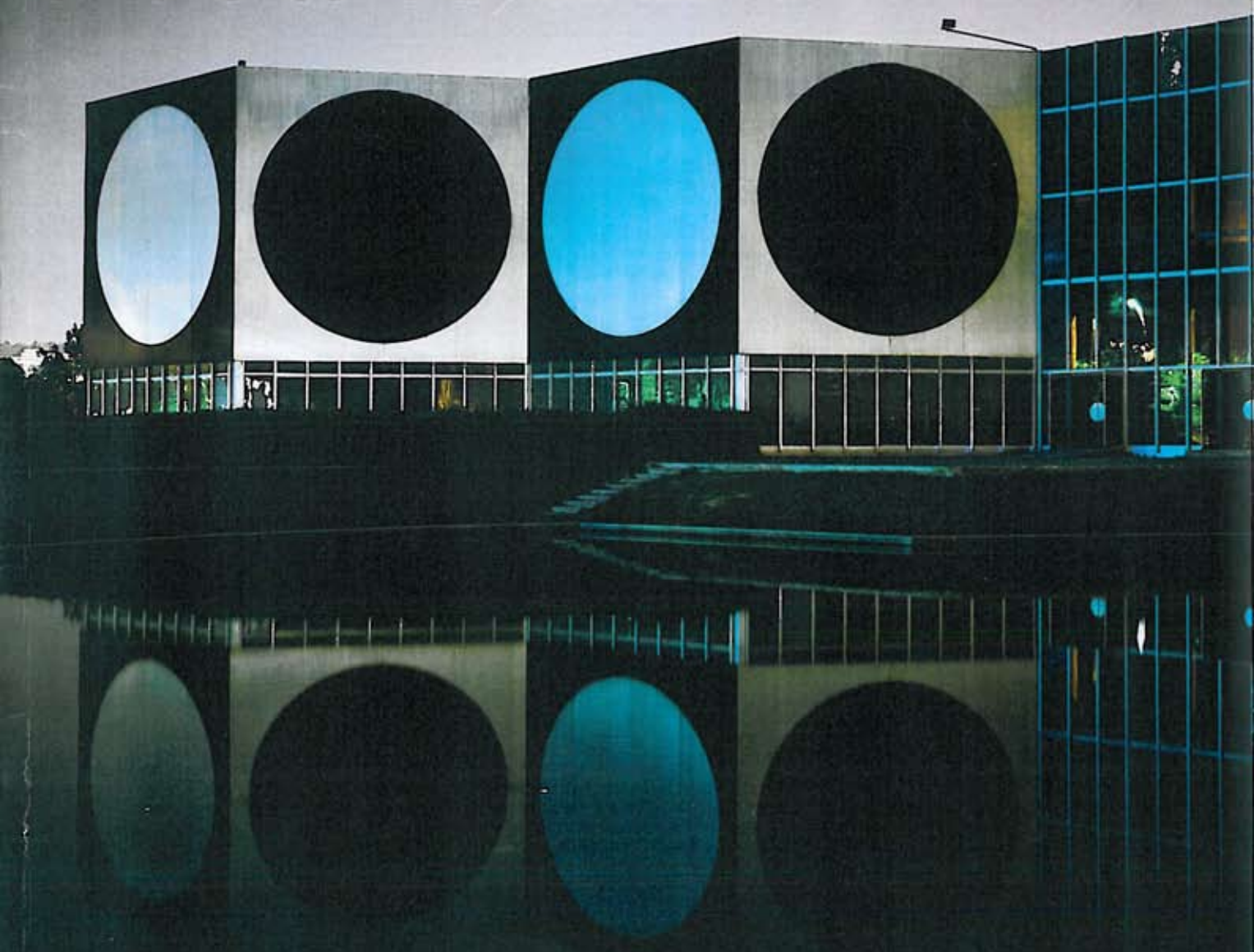
New York City Is the
Grand Central Terminal
of Cutting-Edge Design

Vasarely's Utopia Was
Ruined by His Sons,
Saved by His Grandson

Hermès Evolves.
Never Mind the Birkin,
Here's the Art Scarf

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THE DESIGN ISSUE

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"THE AIX FOUNDATION DETERIORATED AROUND THE 42 INSTALLATIONS AND A HANDFUL OF MOLDY VELOUR SOFAS." PAGE 5

COMPASS: AIX-EN-PROVENCE

Go:

TGV

There are about a dozen daily TGV trains that travel from Paris to Aix in just three hours. raileurope.com

TOURISM OFFICES

These three offices can help you book tours of Cézanne sites like Bibémus, and much more:

AIX-EN-PROVENCE

aixenprovence.com

BOUCHES-DU-RHÔNE

visitsprovence.com

REGIONAL TOURISM

discover.southofrance.com

Stay:

HÔTEL CÉZANNE

Just a short stroll from the restaurants and shops in central Aix, this 55-room hotel interprets its namesake with bright, arty, and sometimes gaudy decor. The rooms are quite pleasant, however, with modern amenities and comfortable furnishings. A champagne breakfast is available for \$30. 40, AVE. VICTOR-HUGO 33/442-911-111 RATES: \$265-\$450 cezanne.hotelaix.com

HÔTEL LE PIGONNET

Located in the hills outside the city center, this grand 18th-century maison was purchased by the current owners in 1924 and opened as a four-room hotel. Today there are 50 rooms, yet the charm of the garden

and the adjoining dining rooms hasn't faded at all. 5, AVE. DU PIGONNET 33/442-590-290 RATES: \$270-\$500 hotelpignonnet.com

Eat:

BISTRO LATIN

This charming little restaurant has excellent nouvelle cuisine at remarkable prices. Go for the mussels and spinach in saffron sauce, roasted pork loin with honey and garlic, or savory lamb stew with herbs. 18, RUE DE LA COURONNE 33/442-382-288

CHARLOTTE

Owner James Attali is a longtime friend of Pierre Vasarely, who has been coming here regularly for decades. Named for Attali's late wife, the restaurant serves up daily specials of fresh fish and meat and the special Charlotte banana pudding for dessert. Expect to see Attali bantering with the regulars who congregate on the rear terrace during the warmer months. 32, RUE DES BERNARDINES 33/442-267-756

LA CHIMERE CAFE

This dinner-only establishment offers an excellent \$45 menu that changes nightly. Expect whimsical concoctions of local, fresh ingredients with drizzles of sauce and garnishes like shaved fennel. The atmosphere is a rococo mix of gill

and crimson, with angels throughout. 15, RUE BRUEYS 33/442-370-900

LE PASSAGE

Opened in 2004, Le Passage's mission is to be young and hip. Though it probably tries a little too hard, it's still a notable addition to tradition-steeped Aix. The multilevel space has cooking classes (taught by chef-owner Reine Sammut), a tapas bar, and several dining options—including a leafy terrace. Try the foie gras with kumquat chutney or the catch of the day with fresh thyme and market vegetables. 10, RUE VILLARS 33/442-370-900

LA VILLA GALLICI

A bit of a hike from the town center, this 9-room, 13-apartment Relais & Châteaux hotel feels like an illustrious country home. The three-course dinner (\$90-\$140) from chef Christophe Gavot may include pan-fried John Dory fillet served with cumin-spiked eggplant pudding or a crispy lamb tenderloin pie served with aromatic fresh goat cheese. AVE. DE LA VIOLETTE 33/442-233-923 \$340-\$600 villagallici.com

See:

BIBEMUS

The Roman quarries known as Bibémus, in the hills of Aix, are where Cézanne made some of his most important artistic discoveries.

Already overgrown when he arrived in 1895, the vision of nature reconquering a man-made landscape appealed to him deeply. The quarries were cleared in 2006 for the centenary of Cézanne's death. The views of Mont Sainte-Victoire are not just iconic, but truly moving. Arrange for a tour with Loni Benoit through the tourism office in town. 33/442-161-161

GRAND THEATRE DE PROVENCE

The fall program at Aix's new theater will include an evening with Steve Reich (October), Schubert chamber music (November), and a performance of Mozart's *Requiem* by Cappella Amsterdam. 380, AVE. MAX JUVENAL 33/442-916-969 grandtheatre.fr

MANOR OF JAS DE BOUFFAN

Cézanne devotees will cherish the rows of chestnut trees, farm buildings, and fountains at the Bouffan estate—he painted them all. The artist was 20 when his father bought the two-story manor in 1859, and it was opened in 2006 for the centenary. Cézanne look over the main drawing room, painting directly onto the walls, and a film recreates the effect. More renovations here are on the horizon. Arrange a visit through the tourism office. 33/442-161-161



Take the champagne breakfast at Hôtel Cézanne.

MUSEE GRANET

Aix's main museum will never cease paying for the mistake of not embracing Cézanne during his lifetime—the dearth of works by him in its collection is a constant reminder. The city compensates by scheduling an exhibition of the artist's work every few years—and by talking about it constantly before it opens and after it closes. The effect is a bit of revisionist history. "Picasso Regarde Cézanne," scheduled to open in June 2009 with some 70 works by Picasso and 30 by Cézanne, is what all the current chatter is about. PL. SAINT JEAN DE MALTE 33/442-528-832 museegranet-aixenprovence.fr

VAUVENARGUES

The 14th-century château outside Aix where Picasso's buried—and which is owned by his stepdaughter Catherine Mutin—will open to the public for the first time next year for six months to coincide with the Picasso-Cézanne exhibition at Musée Granet. Picasso bought the place in 1958, after learning that it sat on the slope of Mont Sainte-Victoire. "I have just bought myself Cézanne's mountain," he told his agent, who in turn asked, "Which one?" Picasso replied: "The original." For information about arranging a visit, contact the Aix tourism office. 33/442-161-161 -K.Y.



VASARELY'S EMPIRE

INSTITUT HONGROIS

The Hungarian Institute in Paris will mount an exhibition of work by Vasarely in November. 92, RUE BONAPARTE 33/143-260-644 instituthongrois.fr

Victor Vasarely in 1978.

LA FONDATION VASARELY

The foundation is on the mend. Though it still shows decades of neglect, the efforts of Pierre Vasarely, the artist's grandson, are improving it. Through October 30 a traveling exhibition of 60 works by Vasarely (from the Pecs museum and private collections) will be on view.

1, AVE. MARCEL PAGNOL, AIX-EN-PROVENCE 33/442-200-109 fondationvasarely.fr

BUDAPEST VASARELY MUSEUM

In 1987 Vasarely established his second museum in Hungary. It has some 400 works, all donated by the artist. III. SZENTLELEK TER 1, BUDAPEST 36/12-50-15-40

PECS VASARELY MUSEUM

In 1976, the same year as he opened his foundation in Aix, Vasarely established another museum in the town of Pecs, Hungary, where he was born. Its collection remains intact, with some 400 works on display. KAPTALAN UTCA 3, PECS 36/72-51-40-44 -K.Y.