



LA FOLIE BOULART

BIARRITZ · 1881

A BIARRITZ CASTLE

SUMMARY

ACT I

THE MASTERS COME ON SCENE	2
---------------------------	---

ACT II

TO CHOOSE EXCELLENCY: THE ARCHITECTS	4
--------------------------------------	---

Joseph Louis Duc, majesty and mastery of art	4
Louis François Roux, harmony and imagination	6
Oscar Tisnès, a building site managed by a master	7

ACT III

ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMEN AT THE SUMMIT OF THEIR ARTS	8
--	---

Splendour of marbles	9
Rooftops – Monduit, from Vercingetorix to New York	11
Mosaics, the art of the Venetian master Facchina	12
Oudinot de la Faverie, stained glasses' virtuoso	16
Tony Robert-Fleury: Master's pencil	18
Hamel, sculptures and stucco, an animated world	20

ACT IV

AS THE CURTAIN OPENS: THE LIFE IN A CASTLE	22
--	----

EPILOGUE

MASKED BEAUTY, UNVEILED BEAUTY: MADNESS IS BORN AGAIN	25
--	----

EXPERTS SAY	26
-------------	----



LA FOLIE BOULART... A CASTLE WITH OCEAN VIEW...

The story of a dream palace

La Folie Boulart...

A story that started with a dream, 140 years ago.
The conjunction of a will, of means and outstanding
actors that gave birth to a unique place.

A magic place... Like fairies came to her cradle.

A story which deserves to be told.

ACT I

THE MASTERS COME ON SCENE

At every corner of La Folie Boulart, engraved on stone, sculpted or forged, the volutes of a M attract your eyes: on the pediment of a door, under the curb of a vault, in the angle of a cornice, on the top of a grid, at the center of a mosaic. Sometimes a B and a C mix with it or replace it, harmonic, necessary complements.

M is Marthe, B is Boulart, C is Charles, M, B and C, the heroes of our story: as she became Marthe Boulart, Marthe is the young spouse which Charles dedicates this palace to. The house of dreams: a place similar to none other, surrounded with nature and who sings the joy of living, loving, giving to her guests energy and pleasure to live.

Charles, the landlord is a man of action. Born in Linxe, Landes, South West of France, in 1828, doctor in law in 1852, ten years later he associates with an uncle of his, and becomes the master of forges in Castets. Influential industry man, he owns more than eight thousand hectares of pine trees between Saint-Paul-lesDax and Moliets. He is firmly established in the region: mayor of Linxe, general counselor of Landes, elected member of French national parliament in Castets from 1876 to 1881. Yet this man of power also has a passion: he loves trees, forest and hunting. Born an organizer, from 1850 to 1860 around the family castle in Linxe he creates a great park where he constitutes a noticeable collection of plants.

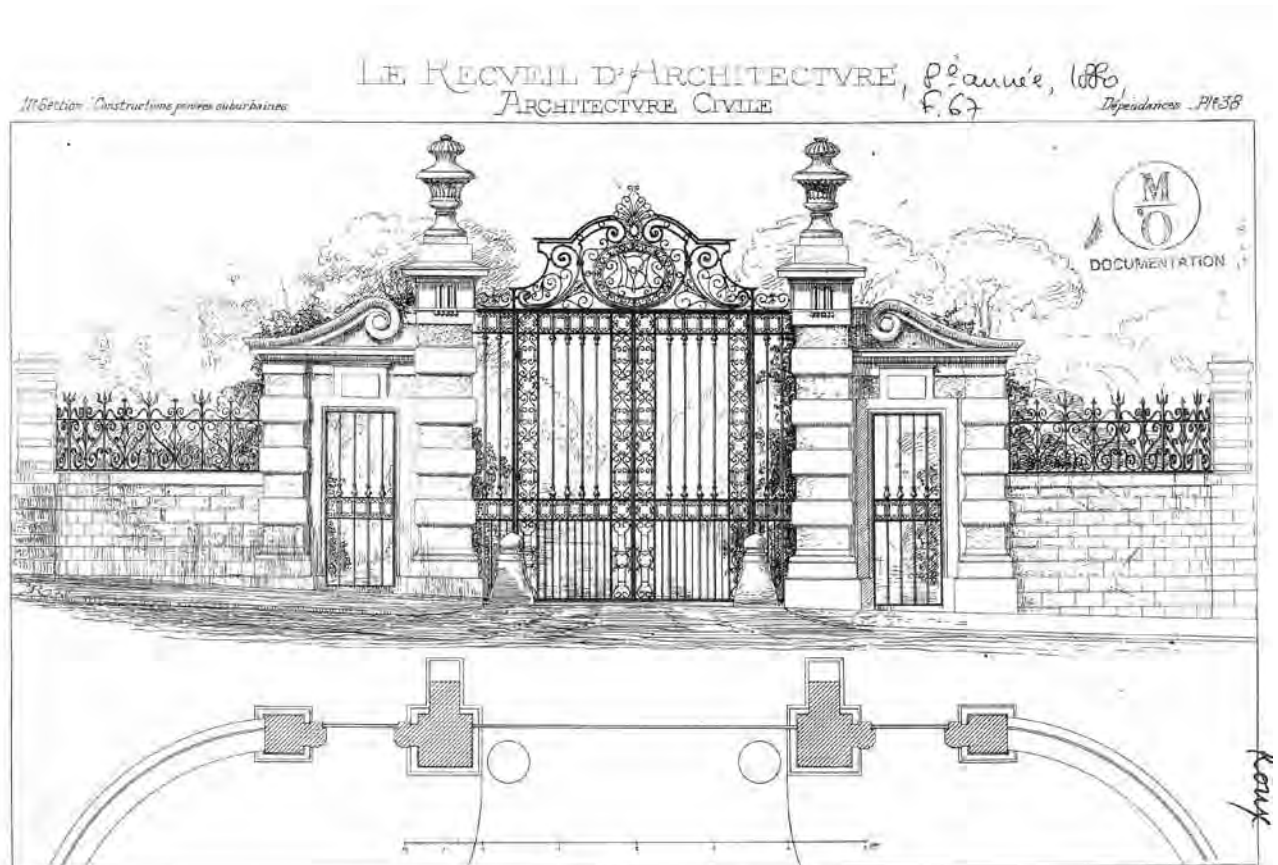
In 1865 appears the future mistress of the place. Marthe, elder of 2 daughters from a protestant family of Bordeaux, marries Charles in Paris. 15 years younger than her husband, the young woman has strong a character. From her great father Darricau, a general made baron by Napoléon Ist in 1808, and from her father, general administrator of Napoléon IIIrd, she takes part in the luxuries of the 2nd empire, then at its peak. Life in the middle of Landes seems too dull while Charles and her are close to the imperial couple. The stays of Napoléon and Eugenie in vacation at Biarritz, in the Villa Eugenie, attract Marthe. She wants to be close to this prestigious neighborhood which magnetizes a cosmopolite high society and she convinces her husband, who has a passion for building and the necessary fortune, to erect a beautiful palace by the Ocean shore. A project that will happen only after the fall of the Empire (1870).

The choice of the couple goes for a 5 hectares land, who dominates the Biarritz landscape, 63 meters above the Ocean, at the highest point in the city. The land gathers the features who seduce Charles: a panoramic view over the Atlantic Ocean and the Pyrenees mountains, forest, a lake and the surrounding landscape seem to guarantee the success of his ambitious project. The purchase contract is signed in 1872. The set of the scene is there, now they must gather actors and draw a dream.





Perspective of the Castle of Biarritz, drawing by Louis François Roux, architect, for Charles Boulart, November 15th, 1874.



1880, drawing of main entrance, found at Orsay Museum

ACT II

TO CHOOSE EXCELLENCY: THE ARCHITECTS

At the heart of the land he buys in Biarritz, where plants, fences, access roads and sewers must be foreseen, Charles Boulart imagines a castle which dominates every surrounding villas by its beauty, majesty, originality, firmness and modern comfort. A building which plans and realization need an excellency that only a great architect can provide. For the master of forges, close to the political power, one man comes ahead...

Joseph Louis Duc, majesty and mastery of art

The career of Joseph Louis Duc satisfies beyond the requisites of Charles Boulart. The artist deeply imprints public architecture during the second part of the 19th century. Born in 1802 in Paris, from a father who forges swords, winner of the Rome Grand Prize in 1825 with the Paris city hall project, Duc lives in the Medicis Villa, becoming close friend with Felix Duban, Léon Vaudoyer and Henri Labrouste. During his years in Italy he walks through the Peninsula and Sicily, multiplying exquisite drawings of monuments and churches, such as the Roman Colosseum or the Florence dome of Santa Maria del Fiore.

As he returns to France, he is selected for the project of the 1830 Revolution commemoration at the Bastille place, a monument which will rise 50 meters high. 1840: the "July Column" is inaugurated, Duc is chosen as architect of the Paris Palace of Justice (see next page), a building project of unknown size for this construction which needs deep rebuilding and enlarging. Several years of a mission that will include the Court of Cassation that he achieves with great talent. Elected to the Institute in 1866, he is granted in 1869 by the Architecture Grand Prize created by Napoléon III. He will stay the only laureate of this prize that allows him to pay one of the most important competition of the Fine Arts School, the Duc Prize.

The fire of the Palace of Justice, in May 1871, during the Paris Commune revolution, forces Duc to design again the buildings that have been largely destroyed;



he brings a new impulsion in the conception of the Cassation Court or rebuilding of the Harlay hall, his architectural boldness due to his interpretation of classical orders or the witty fit of stone.

At that time the architect does no private building, except a fantasy for himself and of which nothing is left: a villa superbly decorated in Orient style, in Croissy by the bank of Seine river.

When Charles Boulart asks for him, Duc has been revealing for over 30 years his mastery of aesthetics and building, paired with his fondness of movement and assuming the high idea he has of his office: "the most immaterial act, the most poetic, maybe the most divine act that humans have done on Earth."



Project for the Palace of Justice, Joseph Louis Duc and Etienne Théodore Dommey, architects, 1844.

Charles Boulart's order is the only private mission he accepted during his whole career.

An exception in the roles of an architect linked to massive public works, an exception that offers him a freedom he enjoys. Therefore, he mixes the beauty inspired by Antiquity and Renaissance, the majesty of perspectives that he perfectly designs, the necessary strictness and the care to adapt to the boundaries of the site to his desire of animated volumes and his feeling of polychromes; he offers in this unique housing his ultimate and remarkable testimony from 50 years of architecture experiments. For this new building site, Duc, already in his 70^s, enlists his young partner at the Cassation Court, Louis François Roux.

While is present here the historicism which dominates architecture at the end of that century, notably with

Renaissance patterns, this historicism is used with great virtuosity and without any dogmatism. The complexity of the program appears through the whole building, from the entrance which opens in the sumptuous space of the atrium on 3 levels, up to the front walls where symmetry is broken by accidents, ledges, balconies, tower, steps, loggia, bow-window which animate the general cube of the volume. Unity of writing and exploration of the possibilities of architectural Art: a remarkable plan composition that is the fruit of a first-rank designer. The perfectly mastered freedom that Joseph Louis Duc proves is enforced by a rational choice of harmonic materials and the care to combine them together.

Duc died in January 1879, he only saw part of his last creation.



Roux's project for Valence's city hall, 1890.

Louis François Roux, harmony and imagination

New comer on scene: Louis François Roux studies at the Imperial school of Fine Arts when Duc notices him. Born in 1838 in Valence from a millers' family, Grand prize of architecture at the school of Fine Arts of Lyon when he is 22, in 1862 in Paris he is received first at the workshop of Questel and studies with great architects. During the Universal exhibition of 1867, 25 of his watercolours illustrate the "Park albums" offered to Napoléon III.

Working with Duc at the enlarging of the Justice Palace, Roux is designated inspector in 1868 then first inspector of the works of the Cassation Court. The fire in 1871 stops his honeymoon: he was in Italy where his pen is touching domes, columns, sculptures. He is urgently called back to Paris. When Duban dies, he works on the tomb of Duc's friend, achieved in 1872. His years of service at the civil buildings- he is the architect in chief for the National Institute of Young blinds in 1884 – grant him the Legion of Honour. Personal buildings and cooperations give him a rich experience: industrial buildings, castles, business buildings, private hotels...

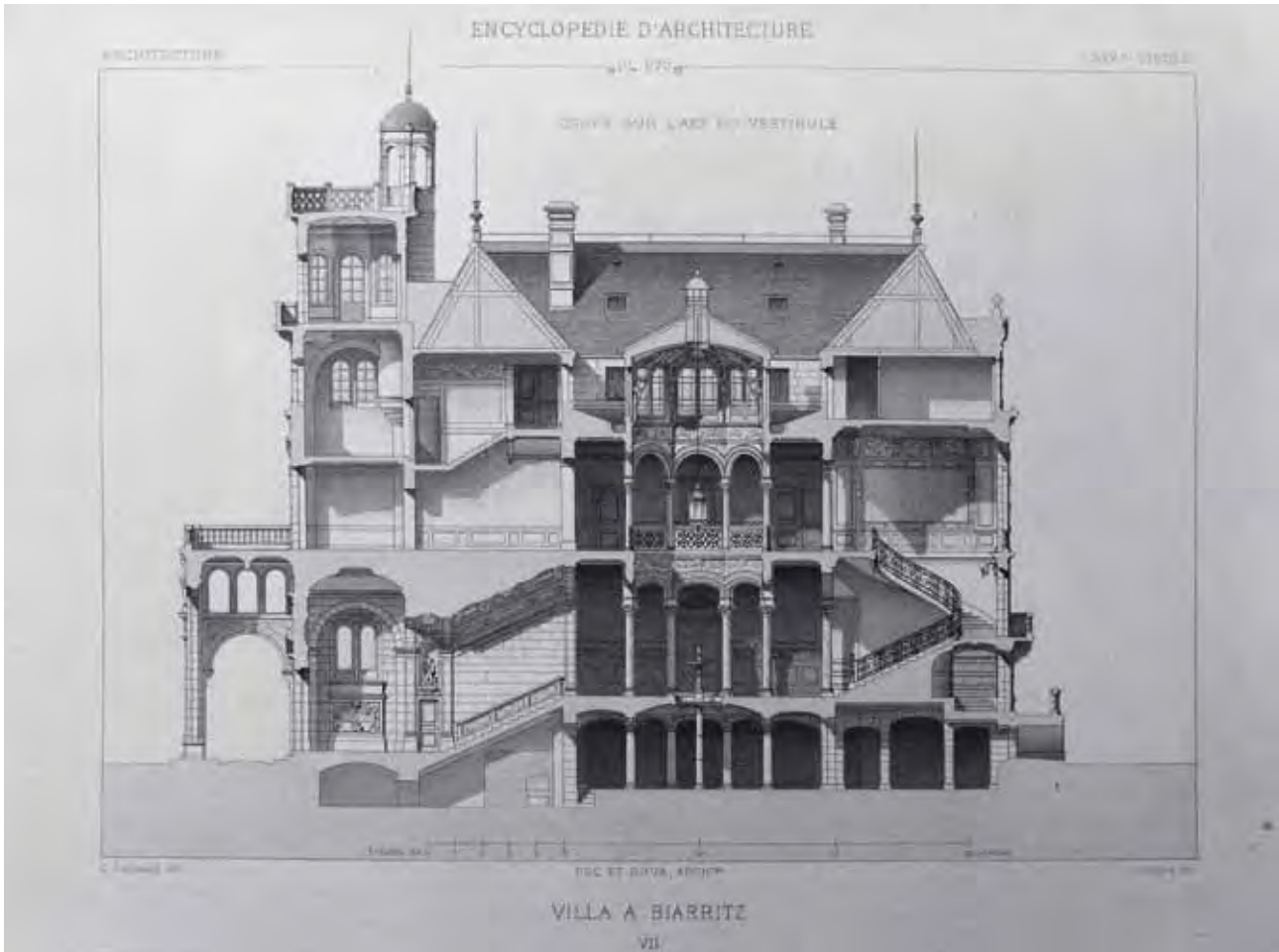
When Charles Boulart asks Duc to build his Castle, the architect bids Roux to give him a hand. His mail shows long working sessions with the forges' master in order to give a form to his dream: towers and

balconies, roofs, stairs, columns, sculptures and marbles, technical measures many sketches were found –, as well as the sending of the plans to the Biarritz architect Oscar Tisnès. He devotes nearly 8 years, during which Duc died in the beginning of 1879, to this main realization in his career, which marvels us by its harmony and mastered spontaneity. During that time, Roux also creates in Paris the Beaumont Hotel, located in Alma avenue.

Fierce protector of his profession, Roux co-founded the directory of Architects students from the school of Fine Arts, a reference that will allow, he hopes, "to appreciate the importance of their role in society, the usefulness of their services due to the depth of their knowledge, the variety and softness of their art." Competitions happened during his career, notably for the church of Sacré Cœur in 1872, 8th prize of 72, or the 2nd prize in 1890 for Valence's city hall.

Imagination, humor, subtle use of colours, such are his talents of drawer: so testify his sketches of the assault on Paris by "rifelman Roux" in 1870-71, his fierce caricatures of the 1914 war and his bright watercolours of southern landscapes.

Passionate about the beginning of aviation, Roux has an obstinate dream for 40 years: to create a plane with lifting wings such as birds. Despite unsuccessful attempts – filmed in 1904 – of his beautiful mechanic bird, he kept making new plans up to his death in Valence in 1921.



Boulart Castle, cut on the axis of the hall, 1 of the 7 drawings published in *The Architecture Encyclopedia* in November 1880 and exhibited at the 1881 Salon.

Oscar Tisnès, a building site managed by a master

The Boulart Castle is so important a project that only an experienced architect can be on site to manage and coordinate the building site.

One man is chosen who offers the necessary guarantees. Born in 1837 in Cazaubon, Gers district, Oscar Tisnès is, at the beginning of 1860s, inspector for the buildings' agency of Imperial Palaces from Pau and Biarritz. Therefore, with the architect Ancelet, he oversees the construction of Villa Eugène that the Emperor builds in Biarritz in 1854 and the maintenance. In 1870, Tisnès draws the plan of the England Hotel, a great class hotel which is opened 2 years later. He is also part of other constructions in Biarritz, including the Victoria Hotel and the British Club.

The plans of the Castle, that will be called La Folie Boulart, are finished in 1874. It is time to choose companies, to select materials and their origins

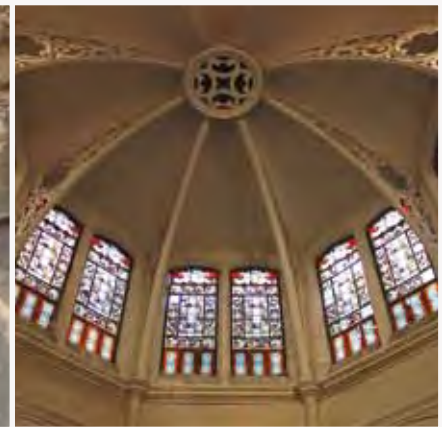
in France and worldwide to study the estimates; responsibilities shared by Roux and Tisnès in 1875, supervised by Duc, before starting to work on site. According to their profession, artists and craftsmen are mostly hired in Paris. The Biarritz architect fulfills his mission "with care and intelligence at the level of his hard task", Roux writes at the end of 1880 in *The Architecture Encyclopedia*, while the building of the Castle is nearly finished.

A later realization of Oscar Tisnès largely confirms his mastery and the qualities that he had proven on this complex building site: he is in charge for the construction of the Biarritz Orthodox Church, designed by the Saint Petersburg architect Nikolai Nikonof according byzantine norms. Only 2 years happen between the 1st stone settlement by the Great Duke Michel Mikhailovitch in 1890 and the building consecration.

ACT III

ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMEN AT THE SUMMIT OF THEIR ARTS

The huge building site of La Folie Boulart started, there is a huge activity that will last for years. The house, which massive foundations of ashlar are deeply anchored in the ground, slowly exhibits her elegance and majesty. The materials, stones, marbles, precious wood essences, come from the new world and Europe to be worked by craftsmen with experienced skills. The artists are inspired by the quality of the order and give the best of themselves. There is a permanent direction: to reach excellency and give life to each element. The La Folie Boulart, as she will be called later on, adorns herself with a refined decoration, inside and outside. Sculptures, columns, paintings, delicate woods, stained-glass windows, mosaics, coffer ceilings, gold gilts, inlay marquetry on the ground, wrought irons and art plumbing dress this refined architecture.





1



2



3

Splendour of marbles

Marble carries movement, lightness. Its texture, its reflects if it is polished, the variety of shades make every block extracted from a stone pit a unique piece. Original patterns multiply up to infinity; the mysterious character of Nature. A richness that human imagination can reach, with which Duc and Roux play through the whole La Folie Boulart, harmoniously mixing marbles to stone's wisdom and simplicity, convinced, like Charles Garnier, the architect of Paris Opera, that "marble only gives life and brightness".

Front walls are built with red marble rubble-stones (3): a luxury that at once put the construction at a level of exception. This marble is specially extracted from a stone pit in Ainhoa, 30 kilometers from Biarritz, and according the time of day marble takes different hot shades and animates the walls. Its splendor is discreetly enlightened by frames, balusters and Crazannes white stone elements, enlivened by foundations, corner chains, pedestals and belt courses in Sainte Anne Arudy marbles. Downstairs, front walls are completed with Bidache stones of small size and stairs of Belvoye stones.

Inside, materials are not less refined, starting with the underground totally vaulted with piers, heads and arches of Sainte Anne Arudy marble, or the

garden level and its Lourdes' Lumachelle marbles, sculpted with great care.

At the first floor, a portico made of eight columns 2.6 meters high confirm the majesty of the atrium (2 and 6): these magnificent monolithic Sarrancolin "Fantastico" shafts, 1.1 meters round, come from the stone pit of Ilhet in the High Pyrenees – stone pit from where the Opera Garnier columns also come from. Two of their sisters also frame the arrival at second floor.

A true marquetry of marble, each casing is a refined assembling of colors and varieties. Some evoke the Hercules lounge at the Versailles castle.



4



5



6



7



8

Here (5), six different colors mix, from French, Italian and Belgian origins: blue Turquin Bardiglio dove marble, black marble from Mazy, Belgium, green and red cherry Campan marble, both from High Pyrenees, Brocatelle of Sienna and Sarrancolin of Ilhet marble. Varieties which, mixed one to the other, create unique paintings (4 and 8).

For each room there is a chimney, for each chimney its marble. Fascinating travel through the stone pit universe: antique red of Villerambet (7), red of Caunes-Minervois, Brèche Alep, Enjugerais pink, green Campan, red cherry of Belgium, black Marquiña, Campan ribbon, Sarrancolin of Ilhet, violet Brèche, intense pink of Pyrenees, red cherry of Campan, Lourdes' Lumachelle, Bilbao cock, white veined Carrare, black Sainte Anne Arudy and green Maurin columns framing a wooden chimney...

From the imposing basement of Bidache marble stones and the garden level columns – underground echo of the atrium's peristyle – the magic of marbles at every floor is such that the naming of the 34 stone pits where it was extracted may seem overwhelming. Yet, you must note one of the Treasures: after the polychrome richness of the atrium, rising up to the dome of Crazanne white stone, the eyes are attracted by the white light at the 2nd floor and the purity of its 8 column shafts in white veined Carrare marble from the region of Massa (1). An assembly completed by a magnificent balustrade sculpted in Carrare Arabescato marble from the town of Seravezza in Italy.

Rooftops – Monduit, from Vercingetorix to New York

At first made to protect from rain, cold, storms and ocean spray, rooftop is also the signature of the house character. By its high volume and decoration, the castle of Biarritz exhibits its pride. Adapting with softness to the complexity of the building, this rooftop, with multiple elements animated by skylights and bull's eye windows, affirm her rise to the sky: she does not crash but lifts up. She keeps on in her main parts with elegant festoon crests, lead flowers that ornate the ridge tiling and stamps with original drawings. Indeed, a protection, marrying the square plan of the castle, with a remarkable balance.

Essential to reach the perfection of the castle silhouette, art plumbing is made by Monduit workshop. This Paris company is at that time the most famous, notably because its mission of restoration for historical monuments, which started in 1845 under the impulse of Viollet-le-Duc is on the rise.

Created for the Biarritz Castle, the stamps have on their base 4 lions heads, directed to the compass

points. Monduit workshop made them according to Roux's drawings. They were judged exceptional and representative enough to be illustrated in the 1802 catalogue. In its "museum of master pieces" for the universal exhibitions, which will win prizes and medals, gold medal in 1878^s, the company also created a full-size replica of the roof tiling and a lead spike from Biarritz – replica visible in the Monduit collection at the Pierrefonds castle in the Oise.

Other stamps of art plumbing made by Monduit during the same years 1879-80: the hotel Beaumont, Alma avenue of Paris, with Roux as architect.

If Monduit accepts private orders such as the Castle of Biarritz as well as works such as the Justice Palace, he also conducts monumental buildings of art ornamentation: his workshop dresses Vercingetorix with lead, on the statue by Aimé Millet at Alesia in 1865, he dresses the Statue of Liberty by Bartholdi, offered by France to America, which penetrates the New York in 1885, or Michel Archangel, by Fremiet, raised in 1895 at the summit of Mont Saint Michel abbey.



Mosaics, the art of the Venetian master Facchina

Mosaic expresses a glitter of lights and richness of patterns sublimated by the marble at columns' bases, stairs or marble casing and the whiteness of Crazannes stones. Such luxury, combining the right proportions of rooms and their plans, fitting the light and the refined decoration of ceilings and walls, accomplishes the inside harmony of the castle. Next to wood, in the bedrooms and halls with inlaid floors of walnut and oak, mosaic – which radiance survive centuries – paves open spaces such as the entrance hall and atrium, or transition spaces such as doorsteps and stair levels, or rooms with particular vocation such as the chapel and dungeon. The castle is adorned by more than 290 meters square of mosaics.

In the middle of XIX century, a mosaicist dominates every others, the Venetian Gian Domenico Facchina. His ornamentation of the loggia which overhangs the Paris Opera's great stair gives him worldwide reputation, and his workshop a must for each prestige order. In 1848, he brings to this art craft a considerable innovation: mosaic is not directly put on site by the artist, but first created at reverse on Kraft paper, then shipped for an "inverse" pose. A school opens in Venice, and an important workshop in Paris. Mosaics by art workshops supervised by Facchina's comrades multiply: Bordeaux, Lille, Marseille, Orléans and even Biarritz where Fostante Lizier and his son settle. Yet their workshop is not enough to create the mosaics of La Folie Boulart.

Masterpiece of the mosaics, the central pattern of the atrium (2): 8 arcades draw a perfect harmony with the columns in Sarrancolin Ilhet marble. Acanthus leaves, rinceau, fire scepters evoke stylized armorial bearings. Even if the Antiquity reference seems clear, the symbolism remains a Mystery.

Echo of roman geometric patterns, a red and green frieze, with black distinction, surrounds the atrium. His curls create a movement supported by 8 splendid medallions in the angles, with heater (4). His shadowy volutes give perspective.

Other Treasure, a flower carpet (6) at the stairs level, a rich and colourful pattern: green Acanthus leaves, yellow rinceau, black and yellow strips. At the center, the stylized B monogram. A bright and warm composition. So is the center pattern, arch volutes around a flower, exquisite art visible in the secret boudoir at the upper dungeon. (3)

A refined frieze (5) runs the 2nd floor: volute rinceau and Acanthus leaves, 3 black strips, 3 lobes leaves. This subtle decorum surrounds a beautiful white mosaic, flowered with small red and black crosses, which pave many other parts of the castle.

At the center of the chapel, a smiling lamb (1), symbol of Jesus Christ in christian iconography, evokes innocence and humility. All around small Templar crosses are dispatched on a white ground, which makes them appear first place.





3



4

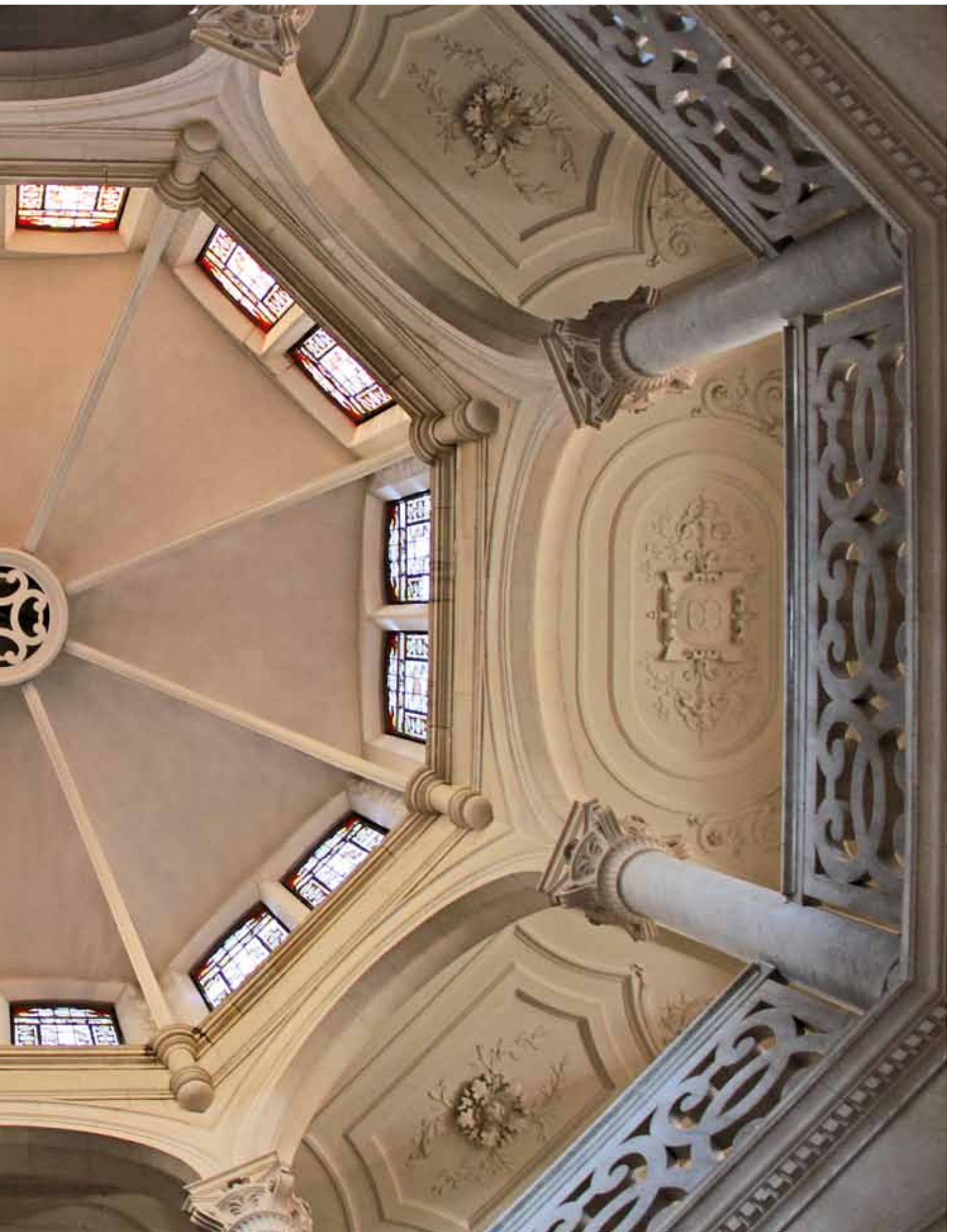


5



6





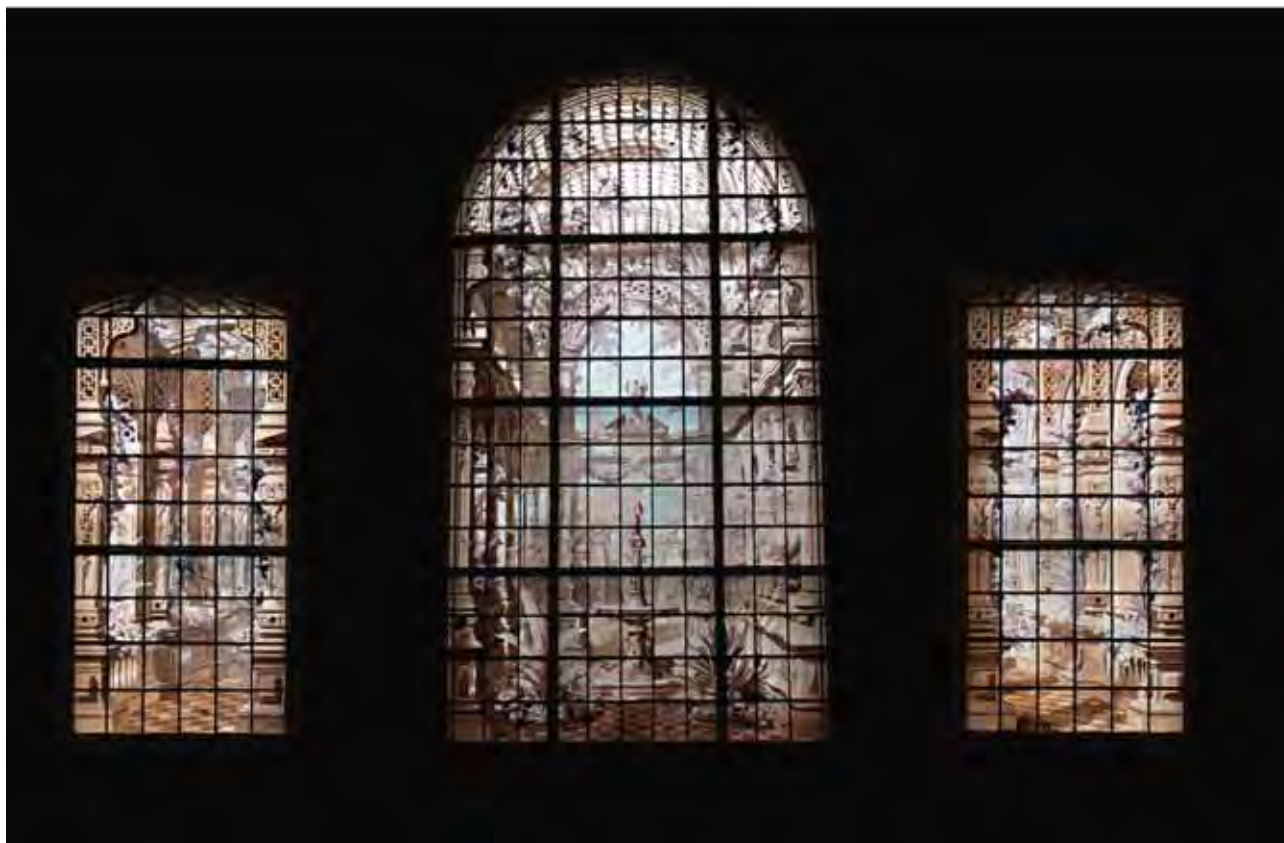
Oudinot de la Faverie, stained glasses' virtuoso

Dream landscape... An amazing perspective opens at the heart of the stairs of Boulart Lunacy. A triptych stained glass. Renaissance garden or Grand Siècle trees, a dreamlike decorum... what images inspired the drawer, who might be none other than the famous American architect Richard Morris Hunt? The sight, by the magic of a refined trompe l'œil, wanders in the illusion: a trellis garden with flower garlands, arches and plants. At the center of the patio, a fountain; fantastic fantasy or sublimation of the atrium fountain? Treating in such a way the drawings, the stained glasses artist that Duc selected for this extraordinary building site– Eugène Oudinot de la Faverie – proves in this unique masterpiece his perfect skills.

Eugène-Stanislas Oudinot de la Faverie was born in Normandy in 1827. He learns stained glass art thanks to Georges Bontemps and the art of painting thanks to Eugène Delacroix's workshop. His brother Achille-François is a painter, student of Corot. In 1862 he is selected window painter for Paris city, Eugène Oudinot creates stained glasses for worship places: Saint Eugène Sainte Cécile, Notre Dame des Champs, Saint Pierre de Chaillot... Also: the Beauvais cathedral, the Dijon synagogue, pieces inspired by Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Civil stained glass recently appeared in decoration arts: it is present at the 1878 Universal Exhibition and grants Oudinot a gold medal. The artist is made knight of the Legion of Honour. Since there is a flow of private orders such as Maupassant's house in Etretat, La Guillette, or Marcel Proust's house. Boulart Castle is one of the most striking example, preserved with magnificence in its original place.

Innovative spirit, Oudinot studies American methods and creates an enamel technique, patented in 1879, which gives stained glasses a precious and unique aspect, transformed in a translucent screen that hides from outside, but let's light flows. In 1881, the artist uses this technique for the full arched bay windows on the West front wall of Biarritz Castle. Surface is divided in 4 rectangles of same size, without delimiting the colours' zone, differently from Medieval stained glass, and is adjusted with lead. After the drawing is transferred, the glass, painted in ochre grey, is heated a first time; after the installation of a blue enamel, stained glass takes an ice and powder aspect, promoting light dispersal. An ice blue enamel that can be found in the Eu castle.





During the same period – 1879 – Oudinot creates a stained glass for the private hotel of Camondo in Paris. More realistic, it represents in Renaissance costume “The count of Camondo receiving the plans of his hotel by the architect Destors” under a grapevine garlanded arbour. Differently, in Biarritz there is no human, only plants landscape with trellis structures in the air that fill the stained glass, as if the artist is in an imaginary world, maybe influenced by his Montparnasse workshop surrounded by ivy and wisteria. He said: “Stained glass painting is complex an art. So few people understand it!”

The milky aspect of glass, the delicate precision of perspective gives depth and relief to the triptych. This type of drawing, trompe l’œil, is then quite fashionable: in 1860, Napoléon III orders such a wall decoration for his Louvre’s apartment.

Other great contribution by Oudinot is the glittering light filling the hall: 8 pairs of stained glasses on the dome. Drawing and shades are totally different, with a medieval pattern in “cut leather”. Much favoured during the Renaissance – in the stucco of Fontainebleau castle - it becomes fashionable again during the 19th century. With this choice, the glass master enforces the Renaissance style of the architecture.

He exported his technique to the United States, where it is patented in 1882; Oudinot created there other masterpieces, including 5 windows in trellis architecture for the house of banker Henry Gurdon in New-York, drawn by Richard Morris Hunt.

These jewels of La Folie Boulart are unique in the whole world because of their composition, author, conservation state and because they never left their original place in the castle.



1



2

Tony Robert-Fleury: Master's pencil

One of the Folie Boullart's mysteries... finally understood. 4 mythology actors ornate the great hall's ceiling. Lying down, they very naturally emanate in long paintings, sublimated by gold stucco frames. Their author is a master of pencil, a scientist of right attitude, an innovator of color. Who painted the architects' order?

Only a sensitive artist, of great talent, may compose these paintings inspired by Theocritus, Virgil or Ovid. Diana lies down giving up to her desire, head

on quiver (1). Diana or Diana's friend, in a sensual pose rests, offered to voyeurs (4). A shepherd, playing with his flute, guides the 2 women in a sleep orgy (2). The hunter Acteon is discovered while in sacrilege he contemplates Diana, terrified, he lets go his knife (3).

Hidden for several decades by a thick blue-sky paint's coat, these four delicate paintings were recently discovered, revealing initials that allowed assigning them to Tony Robert-Fleury (1837-1911).



3



4

Son of the painter Joseph-Nicolas Robert-Fleury, who was responsible for the Roma's Villa Medici in 1865, the artist was a student of Paul Delaroche and Léon Cogniet, a familiar of Léon Bonnat, who was also a student of Cogniet. He regularly exhibits at the Paris' Salon, notably *The old women on the Navone place* in 1866, and he specializes in great historical and mythological compositions. His work *The last days of Corinth*, a brilliant canvas, deserves him an honor medal in 1870 ; he receives the order for a panel, *The architecture*, in 1892 for the arts

salon of Paris' town hall. After several compositions in the classical tradition (*Washington's resignation*, *Marie-Antoinette at the Conciergerie...*) and portraits, his painting turns into more intimistic and melancholic a tonality. With Bonnat, he is member of a very active fraternity; Tony Robert-Fleury will be president of The French Artists' Society and of the Taylor Foundation.

Hamel, sculptures and stucco, an animated world

An animated world inhabits the front walls, doors, pediments, chimneys, cornices of the Boulart Castle. Duc and Roux like to introduce life and nature in the house. Inspired by Renaissance architecture, they order many sculptures: heads, mythology persons and antique deities, fantastic animals, smiling or sometimes grinning faces, lions heads, shells, flowers, branches, corns of abundance... Are they all by Émile Hamel, also sculptor for the Bordeaux Medical faculty, by his brother Ernest or by their workshop? We do not know yet, but the choice of artists was a certainty for the architects: Émile Hamel, mastered by Duc, is one of the great decorators of the Cassation Court.

Small masks – sculpted faces – appear on many parts of the front wall, up the windows or doors. (7) Rooftops are also enlightened by shell windows. The sculptors demonstrated in each of these patterns high talents.

Smiling welcome for the guests of the castle: 2 women faces (1) in front of each other in the entrance hall, up a pattern of Saint Pons de Thomieres Kuros violet marble. Their beautiful faces, their curly hair, diadem, necklace, flowers garland and volute strips are sculpted in Crazannes white stone.

Homage to life and friendliness, appear in Dionysus' head, surrounded by grape, or in Pan's escort which dominate the stairs.

Renaissance style for Hermes in a sculpted wood medal of the great hall.(4)

A phantasmagoria in action: winged lions sculpted in the doors' wood, female sphinx (6) at the window, lion head with huge fangs at the door's pediment.

Sculptors and stuccators display their talents in each room: Moorish or Renaissance ceiling, chimneys' framing, walnut (5) or oak doors. Materials - stone, wood or marble – are always moving.

The hall's coffer ceiling (2,3,8) with its exuberance reflects the time tendencies and a taste for polychromes, dear to Charles Garnier, the Opera architect: "Indeed, a building can not appear as a meaningless gaudy colour scheme, yet it is good that its great masses have monochrome and pale shade, so the figures are clearly distinguished on the sky and backgrounds. Why would it be shocking that different parts are bright and hot in shades, cheering up, giving life to the general mass, in the same way that hair, lips and, first of all, the eyes, cheer up and give life to human face?"



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

ACT IV

AS THE CURTAIN OPENS: THE LIFE IN A CASTLE

Artists and craftsmen left the building site, marbles, woods, mosaics, floors shine; lights are on, at sunset stained-glasses take bright colors and mirrors reflect the fires kept in each room. At the center of the atrium, the fountain makes hear her subtle tune; trees, shrubs, flowerbeds just planted already take roots. The wines cellar has cautiously selected "grands crus" and the office is full of food. Horses neigh in the stables. The sumptuous castle is ready, the Boulart family can settle. Their arrival is blessed by a happy event: the birth of Olivier, the 3rd son of Marthe and Charles.

For months, the city gossiped about the fascinating building and the hectares around. Each dream to be one of the first guests. Due to Charles Boulart's fame, the boulevard that crosses the property and reaches the next door Grammont's castle is named "Boulevard Boulart" since 1884. The landscape is present, unchanging and moving, like Charles' dream. He can contemplate it from the panoramic view point at the top of the 63 meters high land: "North, the beaches of Landes continue until the horizon, West, surrounding Biarritz, the Ocean with its changing reflections and its variety of shades, South and East, the Pyrenees mountains with their faraway summits and the Asturias mountains melting in the Ocean mist", as Roux writes in 1880.





2



3

Parties, receptions, fox hunts in the neighboring woods (2) are permanent. Biarritz is not eclipsed by the fall of Napoléon III in 1871, the city is an international attraction point. Crowned heads and nobility meet for the summer season in Biarritz. Edmond Rostand can write: "At tea time, in Miremont there are fewer cakes than Queens and fewer rum babas than Great Dukes". Personalities from the whole world take their winter residence in Biarritz, have villas built, sometimes spectacular ones, yet none can challenge the Castle of Boulart family. Queen Victoria (1) knows it and when she comes with her escort to Biarritz in 1889, she visits the castle several times very carefully.

When Charles dies in 1891, Marthe decides to return to Linxe where she manages the forges after her husband. Rented, the castle attracts prestigious residents and this exceptional art set is the place of an intense high society life.

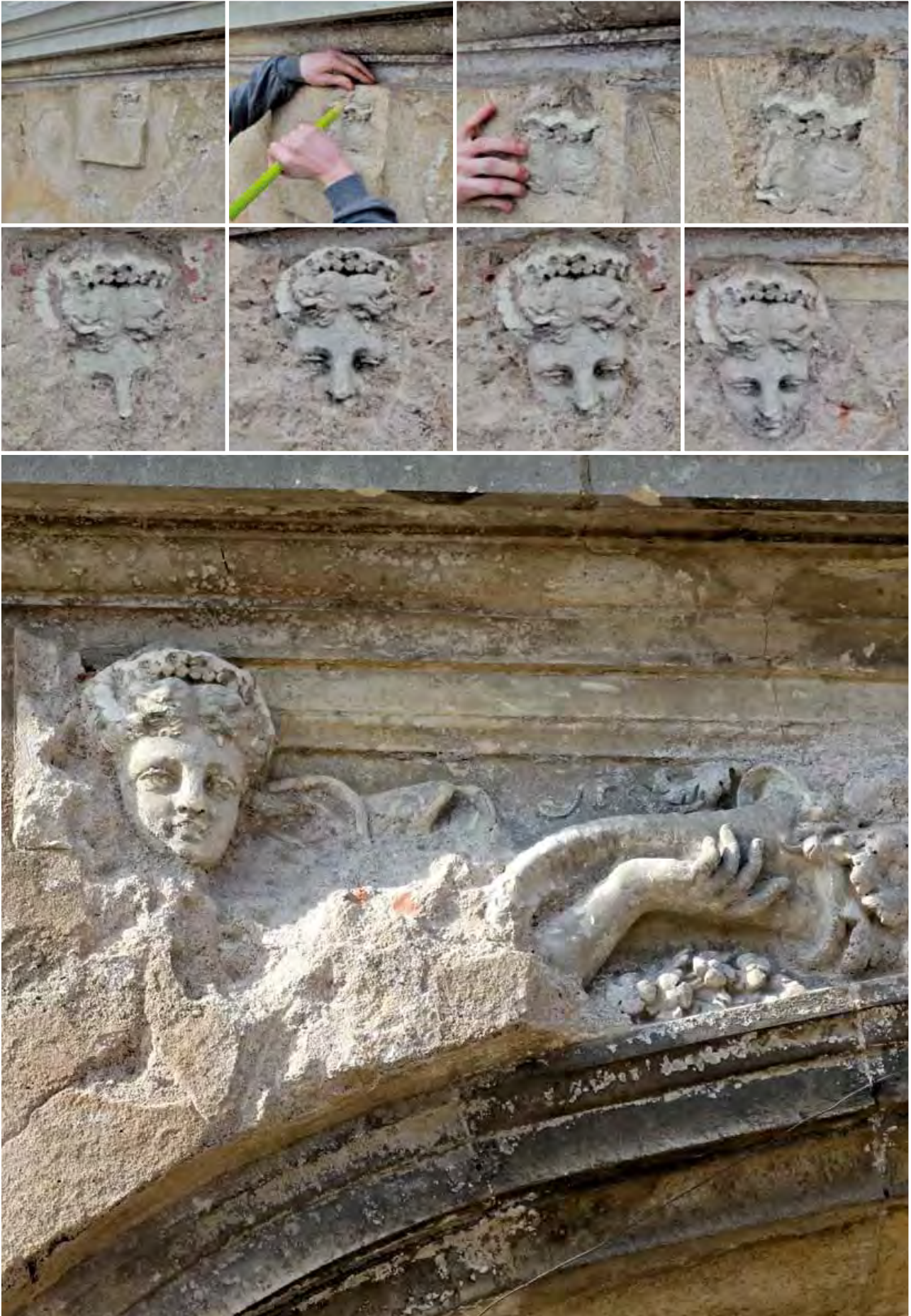
An English historian, friend of Oscar Wilde, JE Courtenay Boodley lives there from 1902 to 1904. He writes there *The Coronation of Edward the Seventh*. Mr. and Mrs. Boodley receive the king of Sweden Oskar II, godfather of Oscar Wilde, a lover of Biarritz, author of history novels and translations.

In 1905, a new tenant, the American industrial John GA Leishman, ex-president of Carnegie Steel Comp, ambassador of the USA in Constantinople, Rome then Berlin moves in. His son-in-law, the count Louis de Gontaut-Biron, is very acquainted with the Russian princes staying in Biarritz, and is the officer for fox hunting. During a diner offered

to king Edward VII by Mrs. Leishman, in the dining hall decorated by rose garlands, there are quality guests: Grazioli Duchess, Manchester Duke and Duchess, de Pourtalès Countess, Larish Count...

In 1908, a rich American, Mrs. Moore occupies the castle: her eccentricities fill the society newspapers, *The Biarritz Gazette* of course, and even *The Washington Times*. Gossips tell how she managed to invite king Edward VII, nicknamed "King of Great Britain and Biarritz" because of his faithfulness to the Ocean station. Mrs. Moore convinced the driver of his Majesty to simulate a car break down while coming back from San Sebastian, she arrives at the right time and drives back Edward VII to Biarritz. Since then, the king often takes part to lunches and entertainments that she organizes, where the Russian Great Dukes also take part.

Among the prestigious owners: from 1915 to 1924, a Francophile American, L.R Wanamaker (3), heir of a department stores group. He builds in Philadelphia and then in New York the greatest department stores in the world. This great man, made knight, officer then commandeur of the Légion d'honneur, is also an important mecene. For music he builds organs, including the greatest organ of the world in his Philadelphia store – which became Macy's –, for the beginning of aviation, he funds photo expeditions over Native americans, or for the support of art students in Paris. He buys more than 400 paintings at the Salon of 1903. Main contributor of the American war effort in 1917 and 1918, for the Red Cross he opens the castle to women and children refugees.



EPILOGUE

MASKED BEAUTY, UNVEILED BEAUTY: MADNESS IS BORN AGAIN

Several celebrities occupied this wonderful Castle: happy times and war times mingled through the history of XX century, which last pages are now ended. Today, this magnificent domain created 140 years ago comes back to life. Even if the exceptional quality of his architecture and decoration kept visible, the house was hiding Treasures kept under paints, fitted carpets, cements and floors in order to protect them... Incredible! Recently, hard jobs uncovered wonders: paintings, frescoes, mosaics and stones. By the bed of Sleeping Beauty came experts to have her enlightened after diagnosing her with surprise and great emotion.

In 2020, the Castle has recovered its original sumptuosity.



Experts say...

ARCHITECTURE

“Boulart castle, built in Biarritz by the architects Louis Duc and François Roux at the end of 19th century, is clearly a manifesto: a unicum among unicums, an important element to understand French architecture at that time”

Cl. Laroche, Le Festin, n°61, 2007.

“The designers seem to worry only about composition-particularly refined, playing with brio at the same time of grid plan and its transgression, of balance between symmetry and asymmetry –, the effects of spatial display and the design, delicate variation of the French Renaissance model. The whole gives form to a building which is worth private hotels and castles, developing at the first floor vast reception halls, letting go the service in the underground.”

Cl. Laroche, Liénart, 2016.



MARBLES

“Realized at the end of 19th century, Boulart Lunacy can only be compared, by the abundance and quality of his marbles, to Paris Opera Garnier.

Indeed, I could count 34 different marbles, mostly from Pyrenees stone pits, and of course Italy, some from Belgium and Spain; they mostly create the 32 columns and 20 chimneys of the building, they also form pediments, marble cases and decoration panels. 32 marbles columns for the decoration of a private house is an exception of highest rarity. With remarkable production and refined color shades, the patterns of marble cases, some visible in Versailles castle, is still in perfect conservation state.

Chimneys, mostly from Bagnères de Bigorre’s workshops, were realized with marbles used in Versailles castle: Carrare white marble, violet Brèche, Campan marble, Sarrancolin, Languedoc red...

With Garnier Opera and Valmirande castle, La Folie Boulart Castle is one of the high quality buildings of 19th century: best architects, best decorators, best craftsmen worked on the best materials”.

J. Dubarry de Lassale, éditions VIAL, 2000.





STAINED GLASSES

“This stained glasses group – the stairs triptych, dome and chapel – created by Oudinot is striking for two reasons. First, for her exceptional quality, which needs to be called a masterpiece from French stained glasses, second, because she was preserved in her original architecture surroundings, that is truly exceptional. The window group, located full West, is the masterpiece of the honor stairs’ decoration. When guests came into the bedroom at second floor, received by master, they discovered this great composition in glass. 3 bay windows in full arch structure the group, a trellis garden in trompe l’œil.”

Duntze-Ouvry, La Revue de l’Art, june 2016.



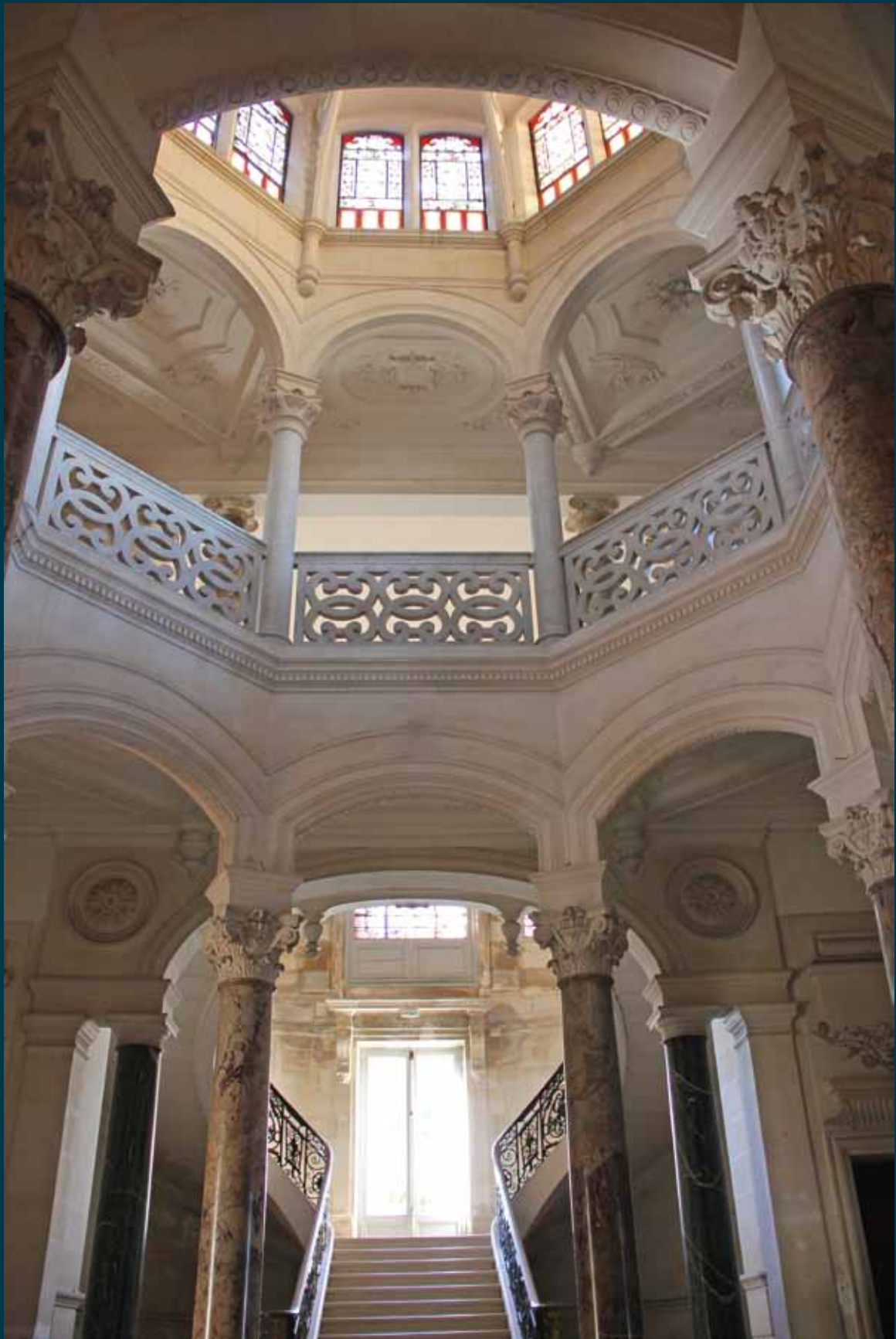
MOSAICS

“Mosaics indeed are from the castle construction time. The patterns are those in favor during the years 1880. No doubt about this. Considering their manufacture, they were made by Italian mosaicists, from Friuli and Venezia regions. At that time, they were the only ones able to make such a high quality work... These mosaics are magnificent, I am astonished by their conservation state. I have seldom seen mosaics in such a beautiful conservation state.”

M^{rs} Andrys, Le renouveau de la mosaïque monumentale en France Actes Sud, 2007.









LA FOLIE BOULART

BIARRITZ · 1881

LA FOLIE BOULART

12, ALLÉE DU CHÂTEAU · 64 200 BIARRITZ · FRANCE

www.lafolieboulart.fr