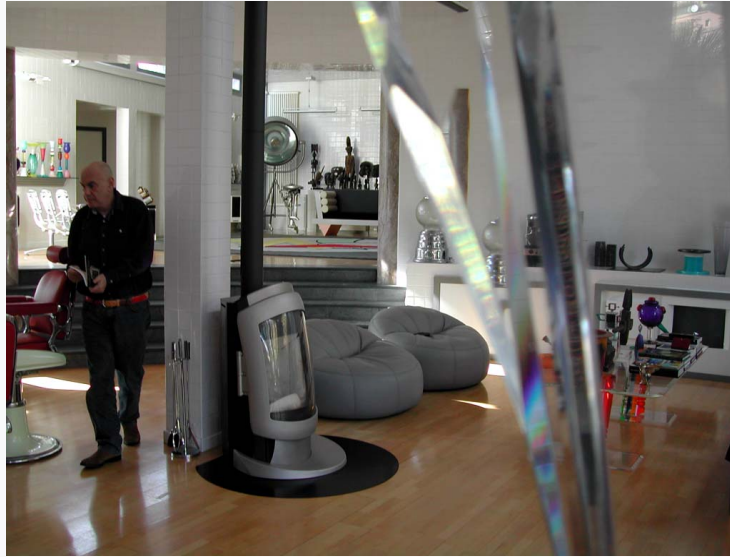


FARHI'S HOUSE: "HOME MADE"



Like his sculptures in the shape of columns, Jean-Claude Farhi's house in Tourrettes sur Loup is a model of rigor and cheerfulness mixed together.

By Florence Canarelli

A strong, original, open and cheerful personality, who is not afraid of loneliness. This is the portrait of the owner that you want to do when you visit Farhi's house in Tourrettes sur Loup for the first time. Long lost in the olive trees, at the very end of a tiny path, far, very far from any inhabited land, it is in his image, since it was he who carried out the entire design, only having the plan validated by an



architect.

It was in 1968, the year when Jean-Claude Farhi exhibited his sculptures in the famous Parisian gallery Iris Clert. For several years now, he has been working with metal combined with Plexiglas - motors welded together presented on Plexiglas bases - which have met with some success.



A year earlier, Farhi participated in the first retrospective of the School of Nice at Alexandre de la Salle, in Saint Paul de Vence.

He does not yet earn a lot of money: it is by chance, by exchanging it for a work, that he becomes the owner of this lost land, far from civilization, without water or electricity, the value of which was then... one franc per square meter!

And he begins to draw, "without asking any questions", a house that looks like him.

“Farhic” columns

“Beautiful, cheerful, healthy works... A lesson in rigor and self-control, order in disorder” in the words of art critic Pierre Restany.

Like its sculptures in the form of columns, Farhi's house is a model of rigor and cheerfulness mixed together.



He who recognizes himself as “a bit of an order freak, who likes to see everything in its place”, wanted for example this white, luminous and clinical tiling, which covers the walls and the ceiling. “Tile 10 by 10 centimeters, without black joints, practical to clean”, warmed however by a parquet floor.

On a plan in the shape of an “eight”, it is a house composed of two large round rooms supported by a few pillars, between which you have to climb five steps. Round with “nothing that catches the eye”, it has since been enlarged, but by other perfect circles, just punctuated by a few partitions.

Open to the outside thanks to gigantic bay windows, portholes and high windows, all in transparency and plays of light, it "does not tell lies", according to the wishes of its designer.

Not the soul of a collector but...

He claims not to have the soul of a collector, only a taste for technical objects, diverted from their function: an outboard motor placed on a base, a scooter from the 1920s, an enormous steel hospital lamp or barber chairs from the 1950s found at flea markets and used as office furniture.



If it's not a "collection", what to call these dozens of chrome toasters lined up on a shelf, bakelite radio sets from the 1930s, perfume lamps or glassware of all colors?

And especially the 1500 Japanese robots from the 1950s to the 70s which occupied entire walls and which he recently sold: hadn't it been called "the largest collection in the world"?

One certainty: Jean-Claude Farhi likes beautiful, cheerful and colorful objects with a timeless design, such as a multicolored jukebox or an old almond-green fridge, a Sotsass vase or a sofa signed Memphis. Section in which we could classify, why not, the dozens of African statuettes that adorn a whole section of the wall.

And, not only does he like objects but often draws them himself: like this carpet with geometric patterns in bright colors signed "Farhi, 1997", a copy of which is at MAMAC in Nice. Or this transparent Plexiglas coffee table that rests on two "Farhi columns" that look leaning.

The only collection, or even "fad" that he recognizes, is his "palm grove". To realize the dream of this miraculous oasis growing in the middle of the desert, Jean-Claude Farhi moved the olive trees from his park to plant palm trees there, which he brought at great expense from Africa, China, Latin



America. or from Australia.

The high point of his "collection" having been reached the day he brought from Argentina an extremely rare variety which has a gigantic trunk of 15 tons: a "lighthouse" column in all its splendor, which he can contemplate from the bay window of her ultra-modern stainless steel and aluminum kitchen, while feeding his cat.

And it is true that a surprising impression of travel and exotic scenery emerges from this palm grove, lost in this land of Provence.