

Palais Ideal in process of restoration.

"Since nature made this sculpture, I will be her architect and mason."

FRANCE - PALAIS IDEAL - FERDINAND CHEVAL

(source - Art Brut - English version) + Le Palais Ideal, le Pt du Faucou, Charnas

1836 Cheval was born at Charnas, 15 km. from Romans

For a number of years he was a postman in Houtevines, Drôme. During his postal duties he dreamed of creating an "ideal palace". For 12 years he continued to dream and not to build because he believed the task was beyond his skill, occupation and caste.

1879 Inspired by the patterns worn by nature in a piece of sandstone he found, Cheval began to build.

For the next thirty years he collected oddly-shaped stones, while making his 32 km postal trips. His activities aroused village suspicion and criticism. Continuing his duties as a postman, Cheval worked in his spare time on the Palace, using only rudimentary tools (i.e. a trowel and basins in which to mix cement). The North and west façades alone took 12 years to complete.

Apr. 33 years (10,000 days or 93,000 hours) He finished work on the Palace which was ultimately 85 feet long, 45 feet wide and 33 feet long.

The inside is a gallery (20 m long x 2 m wide) which ends in a kind of labyrinth. A terrace (23 m long, 7 m wide) spans the entire length of the Palace on top. The inside and outside of the Palace are decorated with reliefs, sculptures, shell mosaics, stones, grottoes, etc.

Influenced by Dali, his travels to Algeria while in the military and pavilion of the Paris World Fair (1878) Cheval constructed images of druids, Sassanid tombs, Hindu monuments, the White House, and "figures of antiquity".

1922 He completed the "Tomb of Silence and Rest without End" at age 86.

1924 Cheval died. after working on it for eight years. The tomb is found one kilometer from the village of Houtevines (2.) # 10.

1969 Mon. André Malraux, Minister of Cultural Affairs, classified le Palais as an "Historic Monument", recognizing this work as a masterpiece of art.

1867 He became a postman after serving as a bricklayer's apprentice.

east façade 26 m. long  
west façade 26 m.  
width 14 m  
south 12 m  
height 8-10 m

(fr. P. Renaud 1986)  
26 m long,  
14 m wide,  
12 m high.  
(requiring 3500 tonnes of lime, 1000 cubic meters of masonry).

1914 Once his wife died he had the building turned to ash.

His work was kept regarded by the Surrealists. (12.)

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Contacts / sources

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Restauration

Monuments Historique

Avignon

90-82-11-14

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(see Jankovský, A)

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