

CLASSICAL INTERIORS

Historical and Contemporary

ELIZABETH MEREDITH DOWLING

RIZZOLI
NEW YORK

BRUNO AND ALEXANDRE LAFOURCADE

Bruno Lafourcade is the founding partner in an international design practice located in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, France. Founded in 1968, the firm specializes in the restoration of farmhouses, country manors, castles, hotels, and wineries. In the 1960s, when Lafourcade decided to pursue his passion for working with older buildings, architecture programs did not offer the training needed for skillful restoration and additions to historic structures. Through self-education and apprenticeship with an elderly mason, Lafourcade gained the knowledge and experience needed to work with the traditional materials of masonry bearing walls, carved stone, stucco, and heavy timber framing.

In 1970, his firm received the high honor of the Prix Nationale de Restauration for the restoration and renovation of a seventeenth-century Carthusian monastery in the Périgord region of France. Recognition of the quality of this project set the tone for the young firm's future work in restoration as well as new construction.

His approach to restoration involves careful study of the site—its microclimate, landscape features, and the character of the existing buildings he will work with—all concepts that have been the domain of architecture since the Romans inhabited Gaul. Concerning his approach to design and its difference from the approach of modern design, Lafourcade has said:

What we do is not the kind of thing they teach at the universities. At the universities, architects learn how to use computers. They do not learn taste, they do not learn charm, they do not learn culture. We build with the images we carry in our heads. We must know how the local winds blow, how a tree will protect a home in the summer, and how the mistral will blow off the surrounding hills in winter. Then we must listen to the client as carefully as a doctor making a diagnosis. Do they have dogs? Do they love music? Do they love flowers? You are not merely designing a residence, you are creating a way of life.¹

The firm's work has been the subject of numerous awards. In 1989, Jack Lang, the French minister of culture, awarded Bruno Lafourcade the title of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres for his contributions to the arts of France. In 2010, a client of Lafourcade in the north of Europe received the Prix Prince Louis de Polignac for the brilliant restoration of his Château de France, a restoration by Bruno Lafourcade and his son, Alexandre.

Alexandre is now Bruno's design partner in the firm, while Dominique Lafourcade, Bruno's wife, is a recognized landscape designer and collaborates in the creation of the setting of their work. Their teamwork is evident in the projects that follow, including restoration of and additions to a manor house near Aix-en-Provence; a redesign and restoration of and gardens for a manor house near Saint-Rémy-de-Provence; and the extensive renovation of a château in the South of France.

FRENCH CHÂTEAU

South of France

Original building: Eighteenth century

Restoration and renovation: Completed 2008



New stuccoed walls and a decorative cartouche accenting the entrance introduce a refined quality to the original building. In the music room, an ancient stone fireplace in keeping with the original chateau was added. In the southern dining room, the original rotunda shape and woodwork have been restored and a marble fireplace added.

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COUNTRY MANOR

Near Aix-en-Provence

Original building: Eighteenth century

Restoration and renovation: Completed 2003



An elegant new staircase fits harmoniously within the existing building. The large salon is organized around a massive stone chimneypiece.

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COUNTRY MANOR HOUSE

Near Saint-Rémy-de-Provence

Original building: Eighteenth century

Restoration and renovation: Completed 2003



These original farm buildings from the eighteenth century were transformed into a stately residence through the reworking of the facade with a pedimented entrance, new windows, and shutters. The south facade of the farm building before its transformation is seen above.

