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SUMMER 2016

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A scenic view of a stone path leading through tall, slender cypress trees towards a valley with a town and mountains in the distance. The path is made of irregular, grey stones and is flanked by lush green bushes. The cypress trees are tall and thin, creating a natural frame for the view. In the background, a valley with a town and rolling hills is visible under a clear sky.

**REDRAWING
ANCIENT
LANDSCAPES**



JEAN MUS & COMPAGNIE BRING THE ESSENCE OF PROVENCE TO ANDALUSIAN PARKLAND AT SOTOGRANDE

Since 1966 Jean Mus has taken a keen and active interest in the art of landscaping. His work as an internationally revered landscape architect is evident the world over, from the exotic and seductive climes of the Mediterranean and mainland Europe, to Qatar and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East, as well as the UK, United States and Japan. Now he is turning his vision to La Reserva, the next chapter in Sotogrande's 54-year history.



Jean Mus & Compagnie, based in Cabris on the French Riviera, is bringing their united passion for integrity and authentic landscape architecture to La Reserva, creating a new parkland and master-plan within which will be dotted exceptional new homes, a three-hectare lagoon structure, wellness centre and spa. Jean Mus' visionary creation, which combines the scents and allure of his native Provence with Andalusian topography and ancient landscape, will preside and unite the vision for La Reserva. It will create a breathtaking backdrop for the seven unique residences which will sit high in the community of La Reserva and Sotogrande as well as for the other first-class amenities being planned.

True to the spirit of the landscape with astonishing views as far as Gibraltar, Morocco and nearby hills, Jean Mus' work at La Reserva will respect the history of the site and the natural vegetation to which influences from the Orient and ancient Greece have been imported over centuries. It will rework the Spanish traditions of stone and retain indigenous species such as pine, oak, myrtle, thyme and sage while imbuing it with the scents and textures of orange blossom, Cypress tree and lavender of his native Provence, the climate of which shares similar topography and planting.

He says, *“When visiting Sotogrande for the first time, I realised immediately that I was having a rendezvous with the moon and the sun, the wind and the sea. This was the very moment that a sense of delight, of dream and paradise embraced my soul and my creative energy could unfold.”*



Born in Grasse, a village in the Alpes-Maritimes on the French Riviera, Jean Mus continues the legacy of his father who was head gardener at the Villa Croisset in Grasse. Here the 20,000 sq m gardens of this imposing villa were originally conceived in the early 1900s by the popular writer and cartoonist turned landscape gardener, Ferdinand Bac who, inspired by the great gardens of Antiquity and the Renaissance, wanted to reinstate the natural vegetation of the region in place of the abundance of exotic plants that had been fashionable.

The work of Jean Mus and his established team encompasses the restoration of historic garden parks from Villa Fiorentina in St Jean Cap Ferrat and the Paul Ricard Chateau and Museum in Marseille to specific installations and landscaping for hotels, public and museum gardens.

For these diverse projects Jean Mus has been awarded some of the world's most respected commendations among which are the Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite, Chevalier de l'Ordre de Saint-Charles and Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite Agricole, L'Arbre d'Or 'Jardins Privés', He is also affiliated with the Federation Francaise du Paysage.



For over 30 years, Jean Mus' gardens have been inspired by the tangible sensuality of the Mediterranean and the ancient memories and customs of the land itself. He and his team approach landscapes with a strong classical discipline as regards the location, native plants and history.

No matter whether the brief is to create something extravagant or minimal, the result is a landscape that has integrity and looks as though it has always been there. Respecting existing landlines, the presence or absence of a water source and playing with the balance of light and shade, the outcome is always natural, undoctored and intrinsically imbued with his passion for nature and authenticity.

Larger than life with a natural exuberance deep at his core, Jean Mus takes the most delicate approach to each element and species, moulding native vegetation into a pattern and form that is always coherent and relevant. His desire is to share his love of scent and sensuality, of touch and colour to create settings that appeal across several dimensions. For one client he recreated memory of scent so that even with eyes closed, the client was transported back to his childhood.

Clearly, though, the skill in creating such visual verdant richness relies on the strict learnings of science, geography and ecology, and the knowledge and expertise of highly trained professionals in landscape architecture, surveying, project management, and civil and hydraulic engineering. Sciences aside, Jean Mus also has recourse to the inspiration and imagination of artists, painters, sculptors, scent-makers and lighting designers who use the landscape as a canvas to which they add their own imaginative sprinkling of gold-dust.

As one of the world's most important professions, landscape design and architecture is said to knit the fabrics of built environments. In the case of Jean Mus, his work is the seamless stitching of gardens and parks into the wider landscapes. "As humble servants of nature," he says, "our work must ensure that gardens above all must live and prosper within the landscape and with the architecture." Combining botany, horticulture, fine arts, architectural industrial design, soil sciences, environmental psychology, geography and ecology, landscape architecture has its roots in ancient cultures from Persia and Egypt to Greece and Rome, where central courtyards created the balance between built and open spaces.

It was during the Renaissance that interest in gardens was revived, which gave rise to ornate villas and piazzas, and the great tradition of urban gardens in 17th century France. In this period figures of landscape architecture became widely recognised such as André le Nôtre, Capability Brown who rejected symmetrical formality in favour of natural forms, and Sir Humphry Repton.



A lush garden scene with a large tree in the foreground and a gravel path leading into the distance. The tree's shadow is cast on the path. In the background, there are stone pillars and more trees.

A lover of music and passionate and spontaneous
jazz singer, Jean Mus says:

*“Creating gardens is like conducting a symphony, where
each plant, each shape has its own part to play, but the
greatest effect is when they all work in balance together.”*