



■ Guffroy's studio-château consisted of a series of oversized rooms, built on a large scale in order to facilitate camera and actor's movements (sketch 2).

● *Le studio-château de Guffroy consiste en une série de pièces de taille exagérée, fabriquées sur une grande échelle de manière à faciliter les mouvements de la caméra et des comédiens (2).*

▼ Guffroy's Studioschloss bestand aus einer Reihe uebergrossen Raemen, die in dieser Grosse gebaut wurden, um den Bewegungen der Kamera und Schauspieler Raum zu geben (Zeichnung 2).

award's inception.

Wearing green corduroy trousers, a black pullover and docksiders, Guffroy blends with the many technicians on the *Valmont* set. A stolid, steady man with a large curved nose, ruddy complexion, white hair and an informal but guarded manner, he listens intently to his long-time assistant, Martine, who he introduced as "in charge of payroll." This is no joke, as his construction team (the only French in the production) consists of some 75 artisans. "An enormous amount but that covers everything—set construction, photography, research, carpets, furniture, panel paintings," says Guffroy. "We do all by hand as artisans because we have the means. We try everything in advance—changing, modifying." As for the massive budget this must entail, Guffroy pleads ignorant. "I don't know what the budget is. I thank the production for that. I work as I wish and I find that good."

"I'm glad you're here," Martine asserts to Guffroy, conveying worries that Mirek Ondricek, the director of photography, is having about the lighting. Guffroy is obviously comfortable with the sparring inherent between DPs and production designers. "Tell him to wait till it's finished before he starts worrying. It's like worrying about the cooking while the kitchen is still being built," Guffroy replies. He expounds, "We're all victims to some extent. Decor is victim to the DP and for the director it's worse. There could be problems of sound, light, camera, actors." For this reason he downplays personal favourites among sets. "I don't have any decor that I favor more than another. Generally, the more difficult the work, the more interesting it becomes."

More than just Mme. Accounts Payable, Martine is a vital link between the Czech and English-speaking Forman and Guffroy, who speaks only French, as she converses for them in both Czech and French. This sounds more strained than it actually is, as the two work more or less independently of each other. Guffroy explains, "It's an approach more than a discourse. There has to be a good marriage between the director and the chief decorator. The accord is implicit, after that I don't believe in lots of discussion. It's a question of choosing people well in the beginning." Of this autonomous method he says, "A few years ago it would have bothered me to work without feedback from the director. Now I prefer it. Each does his own work."

During a tour of his set, a faux country manor, Guffroy chats about how the rooms were created and about his manner of working. "I'm a

film decorator. I'm not interested in the theatrical side. I reproduce all I can from my own life. Cinema is a reflection of life—a document of passage on earth. Personal details show what you loved, what you hated, I translate all I know into the decor. It's nothing to do with good or bad taste."

The results are not static as Guffroy explains, "I have to watch the actors on the set; I change the decor to suit their personalities through changes in volume, colour, to reflect how they act a role—sad, serious."

At least 30 separate sets, interior and exterior, were involved in the making of *Valmont*. Exterior sets of several châteaux in Bordeaux and near Paris were used but few actual interiors, as it was not practical. Guffroy explains, "I don't believe in using real sites. My little house (in studio) corresponds to the needs of the camera and actor. Studios are organised—one can circulate in an ideal environment without the hazards of reality."

The interiors are of a larger scale than the rooms would have been originally in order to facilitate camera and actor's movements. Colours used were those typical of the epoch—mint green, light yellow, grays and white, contrasted with violent blues and reds. Woods were either painted or natural for a provincial look. No particular season was in mind, says Guffroy. Architectural details like walls, floors, moldings and chimneys as well as art works are reproductions based on original patterns. In lieu of marble is trompe l'oeil painted wood walls and composite floor tiles, white plywood stands in for ersatz parquet floors. Furniture and furnishings, however, are real in most cases. Antiques were furnished by Parisian antique stores. Stunning silk brocades, velvets and jacquards—all original fabrics—were bought from sources in Lyons. "You can't get such folds with imitation materials. It's all original silk brocade. There's several thousand dollars worth for this bed," says Guffroy, pointing out the red velvet drapery and gold filigree coverlet of an imposing four-poster canape bed. It dominates an intimately sized, exotically decorated bedroom, which lies beyond the rough wooden double doors of an antechamber, a slip of a space with a slim yellow faience stove. Within, the bedroom is a deliberate, unabashed love nest—a faux Carrachio of a reclining nude woman dominates the far wall; gold ormolu cherubs curl around the room's corners; Watteau-like amorous panels portray erotic love beneath a trompe l'oeil sky ceiling that is ringed with an open colonnade, rather than entirely closed. A black slave cast iron floor lamp stands