Garden design and restoration - rebuilding hystorical places
Yvoire France

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Abstract The small village Yvoire, situated in France, on the shore of Lake Léman has preserved nearly untouched its image which originates from the middle ages. In the last decades it has been transformed by two activities. One of them is restoring the old buildings, the other the continuous work of gardeners and garden designers who filled the village and its botanical garden with plants. The effects of these activities should be an example for many little settlements, the history and surroundings of which create a proper basis.

During the last century, garden design and the restoration of historical places had their own development, and succeeded to give new value and atmosphere to certain buildings, gardens, villages, or entire towns. Effects were spectacular sometimes in both cases, but the two special groups of designers nearly never met. Even when landscape architects and gardeners were asked to create nice green spaces around the old castles of Europe, they rarely worked together with the architects who were restoring the buildings. Apparently there is little in common between historical building restoration and landscape design, but recent experiments show that combining the effects of an old interesting settlement with the charm of garden design, can produce unexpected effects. There is a tradition in France of using garden design for the decoration of the yards and of the neighbourhoods of ancient castles. Such an amazing example is the little French village, nearly unchanged since the middle ages - Yvoire. In this little village, which guards the atmosphere of passed centuries, and where time seems to have stopped, one can have the enormous surprise seeing plants and flowers everywhere, covering walls, streets, windows entrances. Combining the charm of old places - which symbolize the passing of time, with vegetation which obviously symbolizes life and beauty, the architects who worked on the plans and the inhabitants created together something very special and impressive. Thousands of tourists who visit the place each day, demonstrate how attractive the resulted mixture is. The old grey stone buildings match perfectly with the colourful lively flowers.

Yvoire is situated on the shore of the lake Léman, in the Rhône Alpes region of France, in Haute - Savoie county. The fortified village, preserved nearly unchanged since the middle ages, is one of the most beautiful of its kind. Today 849 inhabitants live on its 3 km² surface. Its altitude is 370m at its lowest point, which is that of Lake Leman, and 440 at its highest point. There are 440 landing stages for ships in the port. The castle occupies a strategic point on the water shore, and controlled navigation on the lake in historical times. In the XIV'th century the village became an important fortification, when in the year 1306, Count Amède V de Savoie rebuilt the walls. The walls, gates, and the castle of the stronghold can still be seen today. The settlement guarded its importance for at least 50 years, but later in the XVI'th century the armies of the town of Bern destroyed the castle. It was rebuilt partly in the XVII'th century by the Bouvier d'Yvoire family. The village continued an anonymous existence for four centuries, which helped it guard its appearance nearly untouched. Tourism began in this place beginning with the years 1950. In the year 1959 obtained its first prize at the contest of towns with the most beautiful flowers. In the year 2002 it obtained at such a contest a silver prize at European level. Other such prizes were obtained at national level in the years 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2007. For the last twenty years Yvoire is part of the association of the most beautiful villages of France. Tourists visit the place in each season of the year. In 2006 the village celebrated 700 years of existence.

In the middle of the village can be found the main attraction of the place, a botanical garden, inspired by the principles and customs of middle ages. It is in fact the old vegetable garden of the castle, transformed for visitors. In that period of time gardens contained medicinal plats, places for fun and walks, and were intended sometimes to symbolize Paradise. In the garden can be found medicinal aromatic herbs, fruit trees, rose bushes, aviaries, and fountains. More than 1300 varieties of plants change with the season. It contains a vegetal labyrinth with five saloons destined to the five senses. You are invited to smell, touch, contemplate, listen, and even to taste sometimes. The contact with the plants of the garden is direct. It gained

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the title of "Jardin Remarcable", from the part of the ministry, immediately after its creation. There is a perfume too made of the roses of the garden, which is called Aquaria, after the old name of the village in the middle ages. There are ten stages in the visit of the garden, in the following order:

1. The alpine prairie, containing plants from the surrounding mountains.
2. The plants that grow in the shade.
3. The saloon where the famous rose of the garden can be found.
4. The cloister - places of meditation, contains four little gardens with medicinal plants.
5. The garden of taste, with plants that can be eaten, but normally they are only contemplated.
6. The garden of smell, contains different plants selected for their smell.
7. The garden of touch made of a variety of vegetation that provides different sensations when touched.
8. The garden of colours, with various hues of blue, red, yellow.
9. The garden of listening, is supposed to offer the singing of birds and the sound of water.

The botanical garden and the whole village are a good example of what can produce the common effort of two sciences, considered both being secondary to architecture - restoration of historical sites and garden design. It is known that we live these days a renaissance of all kinds of design: interiors, furniture, gardens, redesigning of old buildings. It is obvious that in these fields can be found sometimes more creativity than in building architecture, in which innovation seems to be more and more rare. But it is still surprising that two different branches of design succeed to work together and create value, each guarding its principles and main rules. In Yvoire from the beginning, building restoration was conceived to be an ideal support for plants, while the botanical garden was created with regard to the historical place it occupies. The two mentioned fields complete each other, but do not compete. Gardening and preserving the monuments of the past, are two activities which in Yvoire are linked together in an original way. Studying Yvoire it becomes obvious what an enormous unexploited potential lies in many old villages and towns of Eastern Europe, which could be transformed in an attractive way using garden design, interesting furniture, pavements.

**Results and Discussions**

Design architecture and landscape design have new applications these days, and create special effects using the knowledge of different fields. The restoration of buildings combined with gardening can create unexpected results. In the case of Yvoire garden designers adapted their work to the principles needed for the restoration of historical places, while the architects prepared the ground for the work of the gardeners.

![Fig. 1 The walls of Yvoire](image)
Fig. 2 The Botanical Garden of Yvoire

Fig. 3 The Castle of Yvoire
Fig. 4 Flowers of Yvoire

Fig. 5 Flowers of Yvoire
Conclusions

The work of designers is becoming complex in the last decades. In many cases collaboration between specialists of different fields is more and more important. Experiments like that of Yvoire village are important, because they can open new directions concerning the image of historical settlements. There are many places in Eastern Europe in general, and in Romania where new ideas could create unexpected effects.

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