

MUSEUM
BAR
HRIGIGER

SNAPSHOT



Panic Room

The new Giger Bar in the Chateau St. Germain

HR Giger - undoubtedly, most people associate this name to dark horror scenarios and obscure surrealistic landscapes and objects like no other. It has been almost 5 years that we visited the master of fantastic art and presented him to our readers. Back in June 1998 he had just opened the "Museum HR Giger". This installation in the Chateau St. Germain in Gruyeres, Switzerland, has the largest and most comprehensive collection of known and unknown works of the Swiss artist on show since then. Large format pictures, sculptures - every art object that the master himself had created or collected until then.



However, those who believed that Giger had fulfilled his life long dream and would draw back to be a satisfied pensioner were completely wrong. Let us look back:

After young Hans Ruedi's main teacher at the art college in Zurich had told him many times "Giger, stop doing such ill shapes that look like cow's throats!", the career of the Swiss artist could almost be guessed already. "I already had a preference for organic Art Nouveau shapes back then",

the artist smiles naughtily, "which resembled some kind of twisted bone constructions." At the end of the 1970s Giger finally worked on designs for the movie "Dune" and short time after that he founded an atelier for furniture construction with a partner. At this time he cre-





One vertebra after the other was modeled on the ceiling and adapted to the colors of the castle walls. In the background you can see Giger's Chovel Chairs of 1999 as well as one Harkonnen table with glass top



Inviting... or rather not? 8 Harkonnen chairs are standing guard at the bar

ated the famous Harkonnen chair, a piece of furniture that looked as if it were made out of skeletons but which could be used as a chair. The rest is history. On 14 April 1980, about 2 years after he had been given the order to work on a Science Fiction horror movie that was to become a worldwide success, HR Giger was granted



The fibre glass skeletons adapt seamlessly to the historical masonry



It took three years of work until this unique work of art had been finished

the Oscar in Los Angeles for "Best Achievement for Visual Effects" in the design of the "Alien" for the cult movie of the same name by director Ridley Scott - and HR Giger became a cult person himself. He did designs for Poltergeist II, Alien III and Species, the record covers for Debbie Harry and Emerson, Lake and Palmer were elected among the 100 best designs of musical history. In the meantime, his work fills almost 20 books, there are sculptures, lithographs, furniture and the designs and projects that have not been implemented yet are filling many files.

One project that had been sleeping in the "safe of ideas" of the Swiss artist for long was the implementation of a bar designed in the typical Giger style. 1988 the project was to become reality and the first HR Giger Bar with 4 floors was to open in Tokyo. Unfortunately, due to strict building legislation, many designs of the artist could not be implemented and so the bar was not licensed to use the name "HR Giger". In the meantime, the bar is closed. It took four more years until the first official Giger Bar opened in the home town of the Alien creator. We were there for the opening and saw the designs of all the rooms. Everything is made in the biomechanical



Each detail shows the master's hand



On the right side you can see the famous Harkonnen chairs - the wood framed window almost seems like a alien object



"Alien Fondue" - rather rare guests in HR Giger's bar... zinc lithography, 25 x 33.5cm, 100 copies



The drawing shows how the works were implemented exactly according to HR Giger's plans this time, pencil and felt pen on paper 21 x 15 cm

cal style, you feel as if you were entering another world. However, this bar was still something of a compromise, because the master had to stick to the requirements of the given facilities - and Giger wanted more.

The almost 400 years old castle of Saint-Germain where Giger opened his museum almost at the same time offered much better opportunities to realize his ideas. . It

The associated shop offers everything to fulfill your dreams of your own "Giger"



took 3 years, from the planning stage to the opening celebration on the 12th of April 2003, until the "Museum HR Giger Bar" had been completed which offers an ideal completion of the museum itself. Giger has skillfully managed to fit all components to the vaults of the

400 year old historic castle and to integrate them.

Right from the start the whole project was conceived to form a coherent looking integrated whole. In order to implement this, all elements of the bar had to be made out of a material that would look like gray stone. In the end, the decision was made to use a mixture of fibre glass and cement. As HR Giger had already completed the designs, the workers started to implement the first mould for the rooms as well as the new furniture. Months of intensive work went by before the first piece of furniture could be integrated with the help of Ronald Brandt and Wolfgang Holz. Roger Cottier, the architect of the museum, assisted in the whole process.

who may sit down in those not so inviting chairs with their high, skeleton-like back-rests - called Harkonnen-chairs. They will be astonished about the fact that these are quite comfortable and really make you want to stay, while your eyes constantly find new details on the walls, the ceiling and the floor.



What is now waiting for the visitors is the probably most perfect entrance into the world of HR Giger that exists at present. Skeletons cover the walls up to the 4 meter high church-like ceiling. You get the feeling that you have landed right inside the stomach of some beast, because the bones look so realistic. No trace of warmth, everything is cool gray that fits perfectly to the rest of the walls. No carpet to disturb the eye, but there is a stone floor with typical Giger ornaments. Everything fits together and it feels like the monster could come dashing around the corner at any moment. The room is 70 x 100 meters large and can hold up to 70 Giger fans

HR Giger has certainly made one of his dreams (or should we say nightmares) come true here. For the first time, there were no deceptions or limits like when he worked at the "Alien", when he often sat in his hotel room frustrated because once again one of his designs had to be changed or completely reworked. Also, there were no problems with building regulations this time - this Giger Bar has been created exactly according to the master's plans.

And now? What is coming next? HR Giger will certainly not stay idle - he never has. He has always worked on sculptures in parallel, like the huge shoes on the miniature island Harakka in front of the coast of Finland or the biomechanoid sculpture that he has created as a trophy for the Woodstock Body & Arts Festival. Moreover, there is his own jewelry series and he is also working on the designs for a new European movie. In the second half of the year, a new exhibition is going to captivate visitors from near and far.



