Jean Marais, man of many talents

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Born on 11 December in Cherbourg, Jean Alfred Villain Marais, man of many talents came to live in Vallauris in 1980. A dauntless stuntman in cloak and dagger films, a man of the theatre, a painter and sculptor, his artistic leanings led him to dabble in the art of pottery.

It was in 1973 that Jean Marais, who then lived in Cabris (a village in the surrounding area of Grasse), came to Vallauris and bought 200 kg of clay from Union-KPCL (a clay conditioning factory) much to the amazement of the merchant that sold it to him.

With the help of books alone, his beginnings were comical not to mention unsuccessful and he was advised to take a course in using the potter's wheel. Jo Pasquali was introduced to him. After spending hours in front of and behind the potter's wheel, with the help of his technician, Jean Marais discovered new techniques.

His courage and daring soon led him to have his own workshop and in 1975 he opened a gallery in Vallauris with the help of Jo and his wife Nini, who became his closest friends. Next to his gallery stands the statue known as La Rebellissière*, which he donated to the town in 1991.

A prestigious occupant and freeman of the town since 1997, he was a warm man who brought his enthusiasm and talent to Vallauris. Every year since 1986, he participated in the Pottery Festival notably creating the posters for it. Jean Marais died on 8 November 1998. His funeral took place in Vallauris on 13 November and he lies in the old cemetery.

* In the past, throwers of pots for cooking purposes were helped in their work by slip applicators that glazed the pieces and by the "rebellissières" - the people who made the finishing touches before firing.

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