

### R III

Every artist's dream is to have a Patron who collects his work. The story of how Robert A Hefner III, an American from Oklahoma, came into my life is as amazing as any path crossing could possibly be.



*JR and R III*  
*Ramiilaj, Aspen*

Our meeting was entirely due to Freeland Gallery because he happened to walk past it on his way to see a friend whose office was just down the street. Like Ronnie Brown, he was also early for his appointment so stopped to look in our window. Later he told me that he didn't notice the children as his eye was immediately caught by *Elation* at the very back of the showroom.

Robert walked in and asked Joanna to show him around. After a quick tour he told her that he was particularly interested in the nine-foot high *Elation* and the five-foot high *Eternity*. I had been persuaded by the foundry to patinate both these sculptures gloss black with polished bronze edges as a variation to the other polished gold bronze sculptures. Robert liked both sculptures but wanted them in polished bronze like the rest of the Symbolic Sculptures in the showroom. Joanna told him that this could be arranged but it would mean having them redone in Italy. Robert said that would be acceptable as he was in no hurry to receive them; however, before placing a firm order he would like to meet the artist.

Herein lay my main disagreement with Joanna as she believed that buyers should only deal with the gallery and not with the artist. I never understood this policy because I loved meeting the people who bought my sculptures. I always found that they were interesting people and we often became friends.

She told Robert that it was impossible to meet the artist, as he lived in the country and seldom came to town.

Joanna rang Agecroft and Margie told her that I was away. Not able to contain her excitement Joanna said there had been an enquiry from an American about *Elation* and *Eternity* and she needed to know how long it would take to have two new sculptures cast. She went on to say that she needed the information immediately as Mr Hefner was leaving early the following morning for Oklahoma. Margie told her I was due back that evening and would be staying overnight in the Gallery so she would see me in the morning.

When I got in that evening I called Margie and heard the whole story. She also knew about Joanna's policy of not allowing the client to meet the artist so during the afternoon she had made a list of all the hotels an American would be likely to stay at and started to ring them and ask for Mr Hefner. The Berkeley Hotel was number four on the list and when she asked they assured her that they did have a Mr Hefner staying, but he was leaving the following morning. Margie suggested I rang him immediately.

I did this and was put through to a softly-spoken American. I asked him if he was the Mr Hefner who had been to Freeland Gallery that day and had enquired about some sculpture by John Robinson. When I told him I was in London he asked me if I would like to join him for breakfast at the hotel before he left for the airport. I of course agreed and arrived at the appointed hour for our first meeting.

So began a conversation that has never ended. I found Robert was interested in all the same things as myself and that we were actually reading the same book right at that moment. Over coffee we agreed a price for the two sculptures and he gave me his card, telling me to send him an account so he could pay a deposit.

I returned to the Gallery and told Joanna that I had just met Robert and that he had ordered the two sculptures for his home in Aspen, Colorado. I believe she was a bit miffed at my having bypassed her, but I really couldn't have cared less, being overjoyed by our first sale of heroic Symbolic Sculptures. It was a 'red-letter' day for me. The gallery never made another sale like our first one to Robert.

When it was time to say goodbye and close down the contents of the Gallery were collected by Pulleyns Transport and taken to Agecroft where son Peter and I had built a conservatory against the studio, the idea being for Freeland Gallery to carry on in Somerset.

My friendship with Robert has grown into one of the most fascinating encounters of like-spirits it is possible to imagine. Having his friendship, along with that of Damon de Laszlo and Ronnie Brown, has filled my cup to the very brim and I could ask for nothing more from life. I will never be able to thank the powers that be for guiding Robert, Damon and Ronnie to the gallery. Together these three men, totally unconnected in any way, have changed my life completely and made a whole new world possible.

I like to think that naming the Gallery with my mother's maiden name of Freeland must have had something to do with it! Superstition is a powerful force and I am the last person to tempt the Fates by denying their powers exist. I keep remembering the fortune-teller!

The next time I met Robert was in New York in the spring of 1987. Margie and I were on our way to Mobile Alabama for the United States Sports

Academy Award ceremony in Mobile Alabama and the unveiling of the *Hammer Thrower* that Tom Rosandich had bought from Freeland Gallery.

When we had met in London Robert had told me about his passion for contemporary Chinese paintings and how he had collected 200 works of art to be exhibited at Harkness House off Fifth Avenue. This is no place to tell of the heroic efforts taken by him to put together the exhibition and get permission to do so from the Chinese government, but do it he did. Robert kept some of the best paintings to form the core of his incredible collection that he intends to give back to China one day. Single-handedly he introduced China's artists to the American market, several of whom are now millionaires.

This was Margie's first meeting with Robert. The exhibition was due to open next day so he was still busy hanging paintings, but allowed us to walk around by ourselves. We were bowled over by the quality of the art. The Chinese had obviously learnt a lot from the Impressionist Movement and I think that the skill shown at Harkness House reflected talent in all its glory.



*White House, Shadow of Tree*

Robert's sculptures had been delivered and we made our first trip to Colorado to supervise their placement in his garden in the summer of 1987. We arrived in Aspen and drove up to the gated community of Starwood. He had named his house Ramiilag, spelt with a G, explaining that he had been born under the sign of the Ram and he had wanted to include the iii for Robert III. Margie



spelt the name with a J instead of a G and Robert immediately said, "That's better," and so the house became known as Ramiilaj.



*Ramiilaj front drive with Ribbon Mountain central horizon*

What a joy going to Ramiilaj has been over the years. Both in summer and winter it is a Paradise. On top of all that the skiing on Buttermilk must be some of the best in the world, especially for senior skiers! The pistes are empty, groomed to perfection and queues are unknown. We take photographs of each other and not a single other person appears on the print. It is all sheer magic and on a sunny day the most beautiful winter scene imaginable.



*Aspen skiing*

In the summer time Starwood becomes even more magical. Ramiilaj is perched on the top of a shoulder of land that sticks out from an alpine meadow and looks across to both Ribbon Mountain and Mt Soporis, the latter being the sacred home of the Ute Indians' gods.

The Ribbon name comes from the fact that the mountain is diagonally cut by a giant dyke of igneous quartz, which had flowed up through the sedimentary limestone. The dyke is a magnificent sight and thought to be the largest of its kind in the world. It continually draws the eye to the horizon so it is not surprising that Robert often tries to capture it in oil paints.



*Ribbon Mountain from Ramiilaj*



*Cooking and Cooling*

*Peter Robinson's Odalisque sculpture in the background*

One year when Robert was away he allowed me to bring some of the family over for a skiing holiday. Skiing in the day, hot tubbing afterwards and sitting by a roaring fire at night was an experience none of us will ever forget.





*'Eternity', Ramiilaj*

In the summer we lunch under the scrub oaks beside the swimming pool. Ramiilaj is just below 9,000 feet, which is as close to heaven as some of us will ever get! Tiny Chipmunks play on the rock walls of the gardens and butterflies flutter about. The most beautiful humming birds you have ever seen sup nectar from the flowers as Robert's guests drink icy-cold white wine and eat succulent meals. It is almost too much to take, but we persevere!

Around the house he has planted hundreds of trees, aspen and spruce. The lawns are lush green and thread between the trees, past the swimming pool and across to the Barn House. Flower beds are tucked into this tapestry of planting adding colour.

The property is some forty acres, half meadow pasture for the horses and half native scrub oak forest that looks very similar to the Mediterranean Provençal countryside. Below the house is a grove of aspen trees that blends into firs as the ground rises to the horizon.

The American ranch-style house is built from local stone inside and out and without doubt is one of the most welcoming houses we have stayed in.





*Horse pasture and 'Mapuche'*



*Chain of Life*





*Path from the main house to the pool*



*Lunch by the pool*



The Barn House is Robert's office where he studies the seismic charts that his Natural Gas Company send him from the head office in Oklahoma City. The Hefner family has been based in Oklahoma for three generations as lawyers and politicians, but Robert has concentrated on Natural Gas exploration. He drilled his first Wild Cat in his early twenties, having left the School of Mines because he couldn't wait to become a roughneck. One night in Oklahoma I was looking out of the window at a burning gas flare and he said, "That was my first strike and it's still producing oil."

When he started to drill in Anadarko Basin, everyone thought he was crazy, but he found one of the largest Natural Gas fields by drilling the deepest well in the United States. Now he is developing another field called Potato Hills, not very far away from his first discovery, and it looks like being a great success. He has also had his down times, as working in the Oil and Natural Gas business is a bit like playing Snakes and Ladders, according to Robert. He is one of that breed of men who climb mountains, explore jungles, sail round the world in yachts and walk to the Earth's Poles.



*Innocence*

On one of my visits to put up sculptures for Robert he showed me an exercise room he had built beside his bedroom where there was a large blank wall. I had just discovered that you could photocopy a picture and print it with the same height but trebling the length. I suggested to Robert that we should try this with my favourite painting by Matisse, 'Gold Fish' now in the Museum of Modern Art NY. Robert agreed on the condition that, if it were not a success, I wouldn't mind if he painted it out.



*'Gold Fish', Matisse, MoMA, NY*



*'Gold Fish', cartoon, Agécroft*



I went home and made a cartoon from the elongated photocopy. When it was completed I rolled it up and flew out to Aspen, tacked it up on the wall and then used a dot technique transfer the image to the plaster wall. We then set about filling in the spaces with house paint. It was incredible fun, like Painting by Numbers! When it was completed we stood back and admired our handiwork and decided that it wasn't that bad.



*Amateur artists at work*

When Robert had become involved with oil exploration in Russia he had been to see Matisse's *Dancers* in Moscow. He had sent me a photograph of himself standing in front of it so I knew that he liked the painting! Margie and I had been lucky enough to see the original in Paris.



*Matisse's 'Dancers' with RIII in Moscow*

When the Barn House was completed Robert showed me the finished disco room in the basement. It was a perfect semicircle with the door set in the middle of the diagonal. "What am I going to do with this?" he asked, pointing at the 30-foot long curved expanse of white plaster wall. I suggested we paint the 'Dancers' like the 'Gold Fish' making it eight foot high and thirty foot long. If we then covered the diagonal wall with mirrors, when the double doors were closed, we would be encircled by the painting and the reflection. Robert agreed and asked me if I would do the cartoon for him.

In the basement is a wine cellar. The disco is off to one side and on the other is what the Americans call a Wet Bar. Robert had placed a panel of photographs of Epstein along one of its walls, so the little room had become the Epstein Bar! Off this is a cloakroom shaped like a slice of cake, with a black basin and loo that Robert was not that sure about, but as it was a present from his mother he was stuck with them. "What are we going to do in here?"

I suggested we carry on the Matisse theme and have 'L'Escargot' on the wall above the basin and put three stripped mirrors behind the loo for III. If he did this he would then have a painting from the Tate in London, MoMA in New York and The Hermitage in Moscow, all in the Barn House!



*'L'Escargot' cartoon at Agecroft*

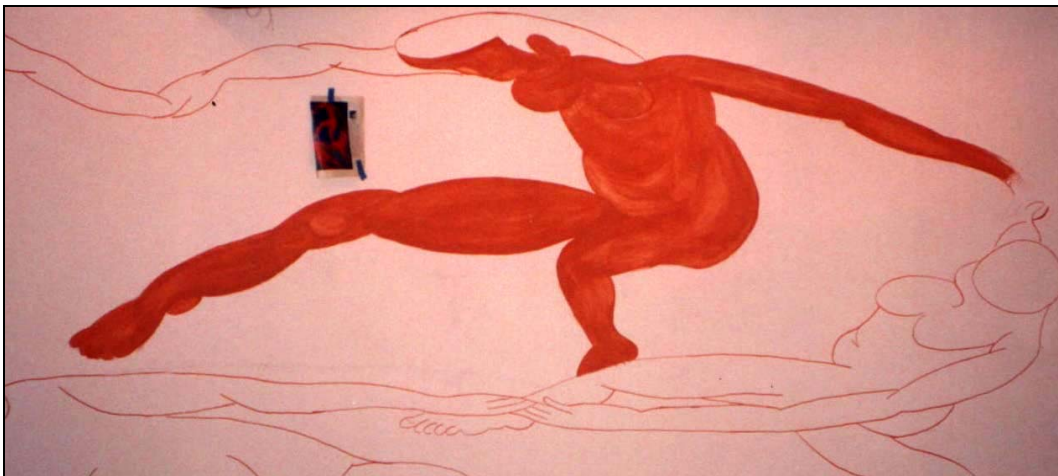
Back home again I started the cartoon for the 'Dancers' and then *L'Escargot*. I had enormous fun doing them and felt like a Renaissance mural artist. When they were finished I rolled them up in a tube and mailed them to Ramiilaj in readiness for the summer.





### *Joining up the dots*

I put up the cartoon, transferred the lines to the wall, took down a print of the 'Dancers' to the Aspen and asked them to mix up the three colours Matisse had used, and couldn't resist painting one figure straightaway!



### *The first figure*

The finished result of the background was not good; in fact, it looked awful. Flat and blotchy was the only way to describe it. The problem was the plaster sucked the paint in so fast it dried immediately. I remembered reading that Michelangelo had had the same problem when painting the Sistine Chapel ceiling! My problem was I was not a Michelangelo, so I didn't know what to do! I decided to do a second coat to see if that would improve things.

I slapped on the paint as quickly as possible praying something good would happen. Someone was looking after me from above, and I like to think it was Matisse. As the second coat dried it left almost the same effect achieved by the Master himself, or at least I like to think so!

I then started on the figures and Robert came to help me. To finish the figures I gave them an outline with a wide-nib black marker-pen which separated the figures from the background quite successfully.



*R III and his dogs*



*Adding the final touch*

When we had nearly finished the figures Margie wanted to have a go, so we had a little party of celebration, followed by dinner in the room. The funny thing about the elongated painting is that it emphasises the fact that the man on the left of the paintings, whose right hand reaches back to



the left hand of the woman in the foreground, are not touching. You don't pick this up when you look at the painting in a book; the space between the hands is just too small. The other thing that our painting showed was that the woman in the background is concentrating on the same two hands. I believe this is the whole point of the painting. *The circle has either been broken or is it about to be joined.*



*Reaching out or letting go?*



*Dancers reflected in the diagonal mirror*



*Bandit howls approval*

I had asked Robert to have the cloakroom walls and ceiling of the room painted out in black, but to leave the wall behind the basin white. I put up the cartoon and transferred the outline with dots.



*'L'Escargot', Ramiilaj*



That was the easy bit. Matisse cut his 'L'Escargot' out with scissors so all the edges are knife sharp. Painting the edges was a nightmare and took longer to do than the 30-foot long 'Dancers'. I spent three days in the Black Hole to complete the job by which time my eyeballs were leaping out of my head. However, when done it was magic to step into the little room and shut the door. Everything is black except the painting and reflection of the 'L'Escargot' in the three strips of mirror behind the loo and the painting itself. I don't believe there can be another cloakroom like it in the world!



*Planting Rocks and placing sculptures*



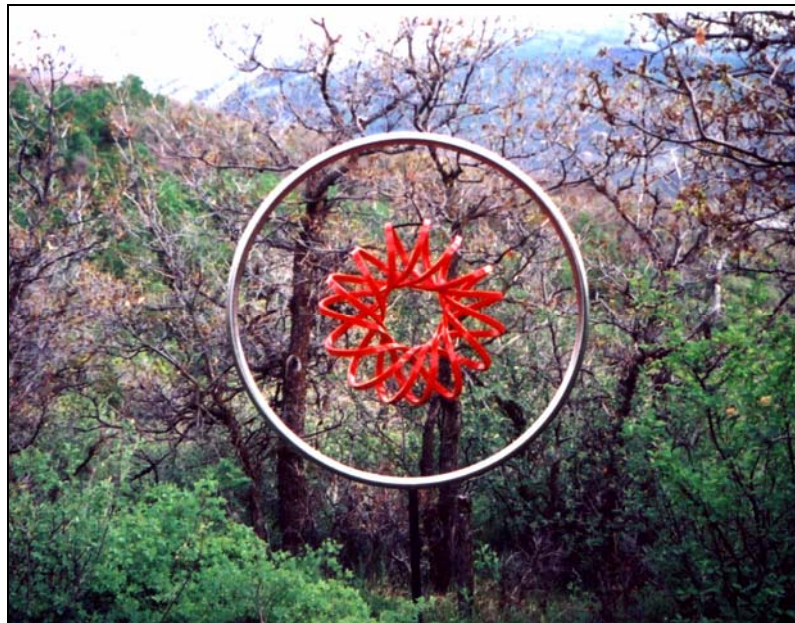
*Bonds of Friendship*

Between painting sessions we moved eight-ton rocks with giant cranes and placed the Symbolic sculptures in the gardens. As the obvious sites for sculptures around the house got used up we spread out into the woods and across the pastures to the valley below the house. To gain access to some of these areas Robert decided that he would like a path that followed between the natural spacing of the trees. So began the famous Coyote Trail, named because we often heard them howling during the night.



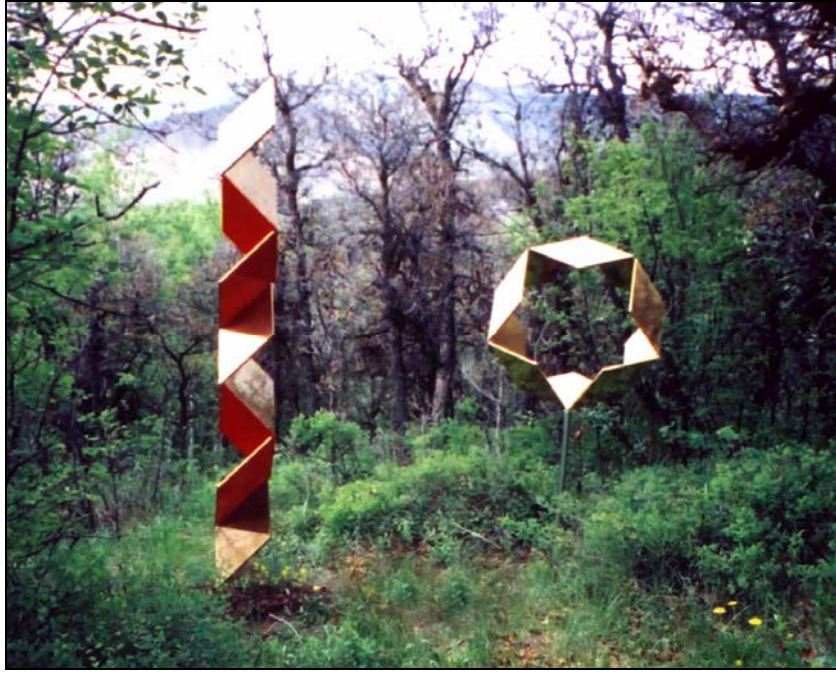
*Oracle*

The trail leads away from the front lawn over a little bridge that spans a stream and begins with the *Oracle* hanging amongst the Scrub Oaks. It then snakes its way down the watershed, passing sculptures as it twists through the trees, to where the plateau ends in a sharp-drop off down into the valley.



*Rhythm of Life*





*Evolution , I and II*

As we snipped away at branches and cleared the undergrowth Robert's Jack Russell would hunt in the bushes around us. Bandit was one of the friendliest and most intelligent little dogs that I have ever met. He was devoted to Robert and slept on his bed and, because his master believes in wide-open windows even in the middle of winter, sometimes crawled under the blanket!



*Totem*



The trail passes by *Totem* and then reaches the edge of the plateau where we discovered a fabulous outcrop of granite, and christened it *Power Point*, as we could see Mt Soporis, the Mother Goddess Mountain of the Ute Indians.



*Prometheus' Hearth*

The following year we extended the trail down into the valley that the coyotes use to reach the mountains above the house on their way from Aspen valley.



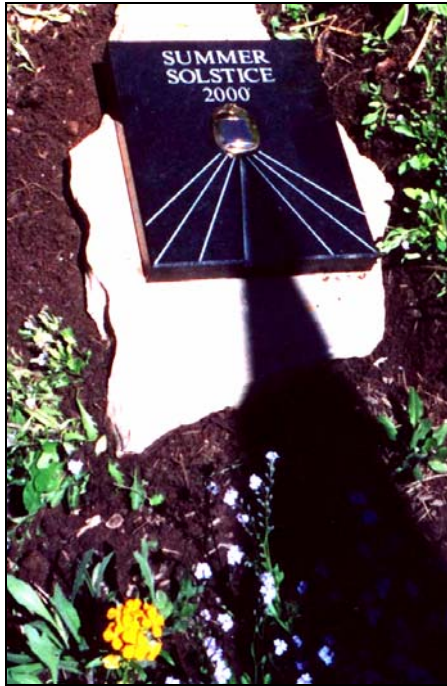
*Flight of Imagination*



Robert was always frightened that Bandit would take on the coyote pack, which is of course exactly why the brutes were howling, having learnt that pets made a good dinner. However, Bandit was too wise for that and lived to a ripe old age and died peacefully much to the sorrow of all who knew him. Robert did a drawing of him the day before he died and engraved onto a slate memorial plaque.



*Earthtime*



*The tip of the shadow of Earthtime on the Solstice of the year 2000*

Connected to the Barn by an arch is the horse stable. On the lawn in front of this building Robert has placed a super-size *Immortality* that he commissioned especially for this spot. The sculpture looks complicated but in fact can be cut into six identical parts.



*'Immortality', Margie and Bandit*



*Immortality* is the perfect example of how supremely skilful the Italian artisans are. Many of my friends have heard me complaining about the Italian Foundry, not because of the standard of their work that cannot be bettered anywhere in the world, but about how they never keep their promises on delivery dates! Once you come to terms with this impossible situation and start thinking like an Italian, you can get along with them, but it is very hard and drives me crazy!

You can enter Ramiilaj by a front gate or a back one. The front gate opens onto a panorama of Aspen's breath-taking mountains. Just inside the gate we built, with the aid of a pair of *Heath Robinson* cranes, a wooden version of *Creation*, which Robert raised on steel legs so it floats above the winter snow.

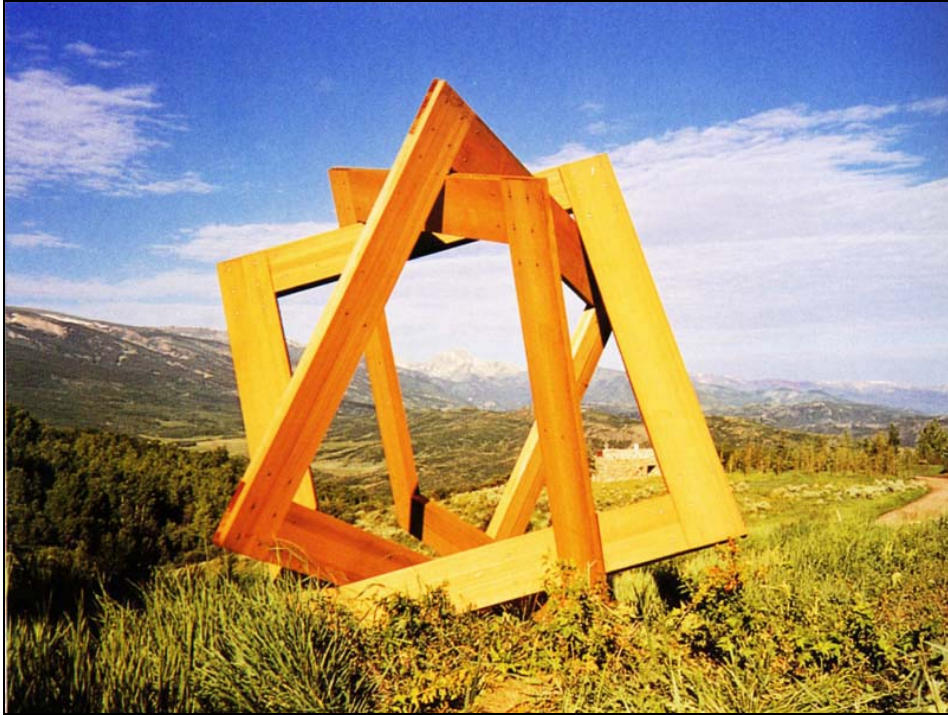


*'Heath Robinson' cranes*



*'Creation', floating on three feet of snow*





*Creation*

Near the Barn House there is a grove of aspen trees. It is here that son Peter's Egyptian *Lion* is placed to guard the entrance to the Homestead.



*Peter and the 'Lion'*



The *Lion* is a story all on its own, and this is as good a place as any to tell it. Robert had taken Margie and me and his friend Caroline to explore ancient Egypt. I will tell that story later, but one of the outcomes of that incredible eye-opening journey was Peter's *Lion*.

When we arrived back in London Robert wanted to visit the Egyptian treasures in the British Museum and asked me to come along. Peter was in London so he joined us on our tour of the superb collection. When we came to the pair of seven-foot long and three-foot high pink granite Lion carvings from Nubia, Robert, in one of his typical *think big* moments, said, "I would like one of those in my garden." Peter and I agreed it was magnificent and would look good in any garden!

We left the museum, dropped him in Chelsea, and headed for our train. During the two-hour trip back to Somerset Peter asked me if I thought he was serious about a *Lion* in his garden.

Knowing that Robert never says anything he doesn't mean, I replied that I thought he would love a *Lion* and if Peter wanted to make him one, then the first thing to do was research its history, the project's feasibility, material to be used, time of delivery, cost, and put it all together in a dossier and send it to him. I suggested that he had nothing to lose and if it was presented properly my bet was that he would get the job.

Peter spent hours in the museum measuring and sketching the *Lion* and prepared a impressive presentation. He got a rough idea of costs from the people in Pietrasanta who had done the carving of *Dependent Beings* for me as he planned to use the same coloured granite for the *Lion*.



*'Dependent Beings', Ramiilaj*

The plan was that Peter would sculpt the *Lion* in clay, take a waste mould, and produce a plaster for the Italian carvers to copy. The costs for this were fairly easy to work out so a total was achieved and added to the dossier and sent off. The answer arrived back giving the go-ahead and Peter set about the work that would take a year to complete.

The year after our trip with Robert to Egypt, Damon had insisted that Margie and I should repeat the journey with him and Sam and their twenty-year-old son Robert, so we were extremely fortunate to do the journey twice running. That story will also have to be told later, but I have to mention it here because it has a bearing on the *Lion*.

While Peter was working on the clay in Somerset, Damon happened to visit Robert on his way back from Los Angeles. While he was there he saw Peter's dossier and asked what it was all about. After Robert had explained Damon asked him if he would mind if he also had a *Lion*! Robert kindly agreed to this request so when Damon arrived home the first thing he did was ring Peter and put in an order and asked if he could come and see the clay model.

By this time Peter had blocked out the *Lion* and was working on facial details. Damon was dying to do a bit of the modelling with Peter's permission. When Robert arrived in London there was another visit made to the museum, this time with Robert, Damon and Peter. I went along to listen to what sounded like the plot of a third grade movie in which the three of them were planning to steal the original. Robert also came down to Peter's studio to look at the clay and couldn't resist getting his hands dirty with a bit of modelling.

When the clay was finished Peter took a mould with the aid of Beth, a girl from an English foundry we used for casting children. Fortunately she was petite so she was able to dig her way inside to remove the clay when they found they couldn't open the cast! When the plaster cast was finished Peter shipped it down to Italy to be copied.

The next problem was to find a suitable lump of granite. As both sculptures had to be of exactly the same material, Peter had to find a block big enough to house two *Lions*! The final choice was a colossal rock from India that weighed ten tons, about the weight of a double-decker bus!. It was moved to the carvers' studio, cut in half and work commenced. Robert's edition was to be delivered first as he had started the project and Damon's was to follow six months later.

Peter came with me to Aspen to supervise its placement. Robert had chosen a spot for the sculpture and on my visit the previous Autumn I had installed a giant concrete plinth for it to rest on. The finished granite weighed three tons.

Robert placed his first two sculptures from the Freeland Gallery by the house, *Eternity* near the pool, and in pride of place on the front lawn, *Elation*. When I see these sculptures I have to pinch myself to make sure I am not dreaming.

Around the Barn House are the heroic sculptures of *Force of Nature*, *Immortality*, *Genesis*, *Pulse* and *Evolution*. In front of the stable is *Music of the Spheres* and if you look across the valley you can see *Janus* in the trees.

The homestead is surrounded by the most beautiful scenery you could imagine and to have my sculptures in such a setting is quite beyond belief.





*Genesis*



*Pulse*

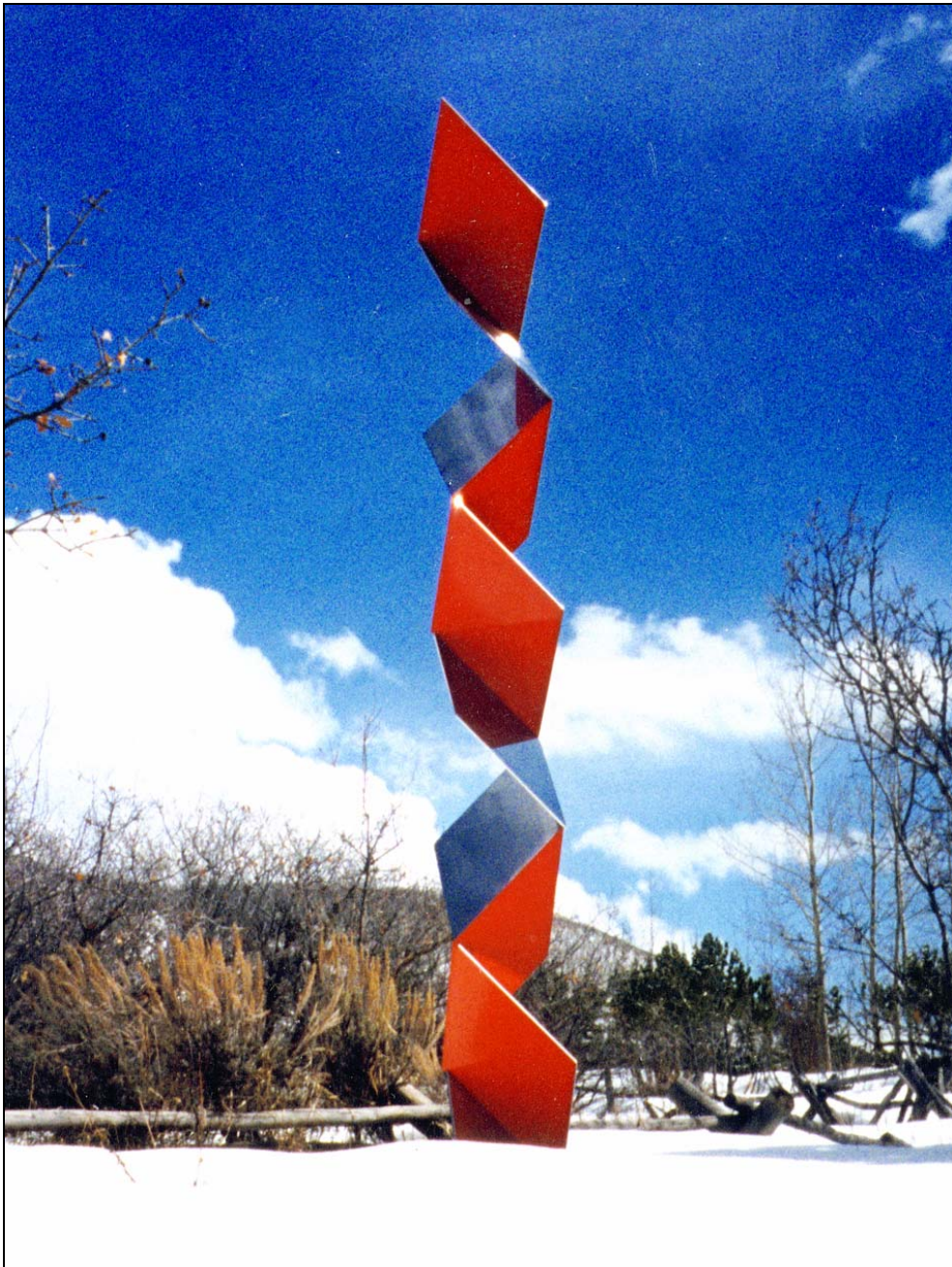


*Music of the Spheres*





*Force of Nature*



*Evolution*



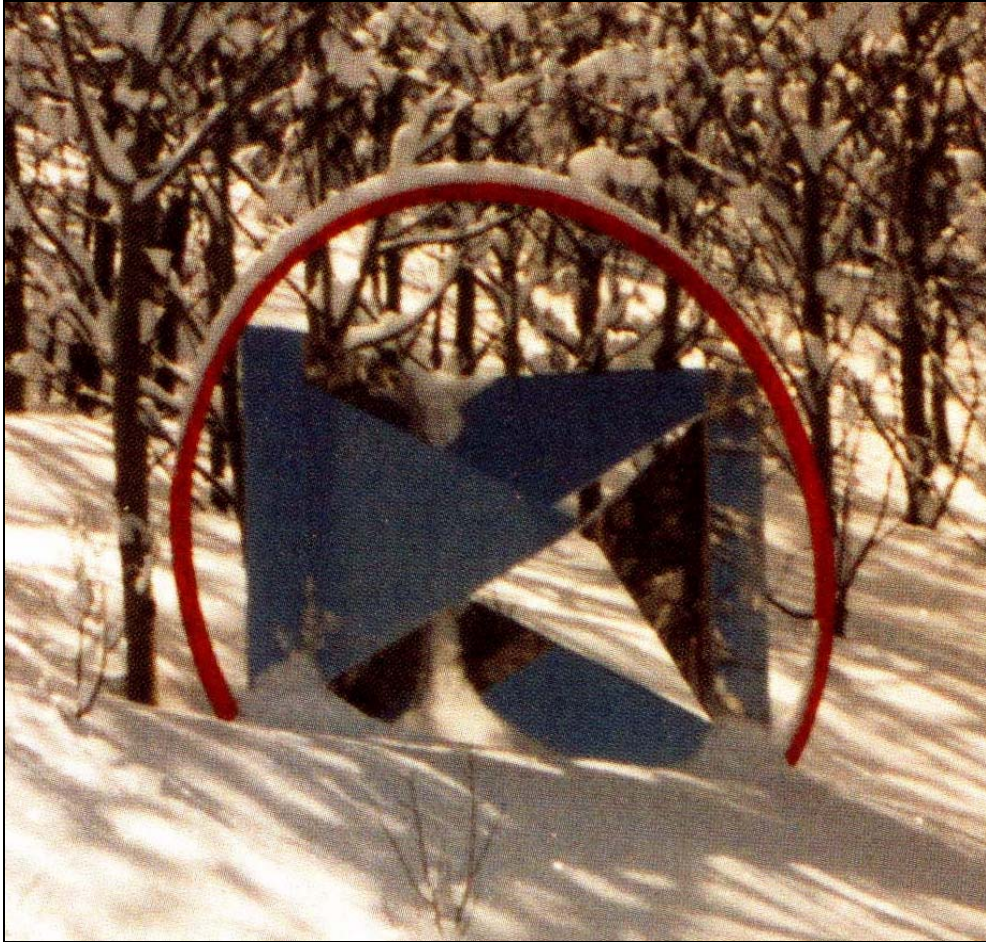


*Elation*



*Eternity*



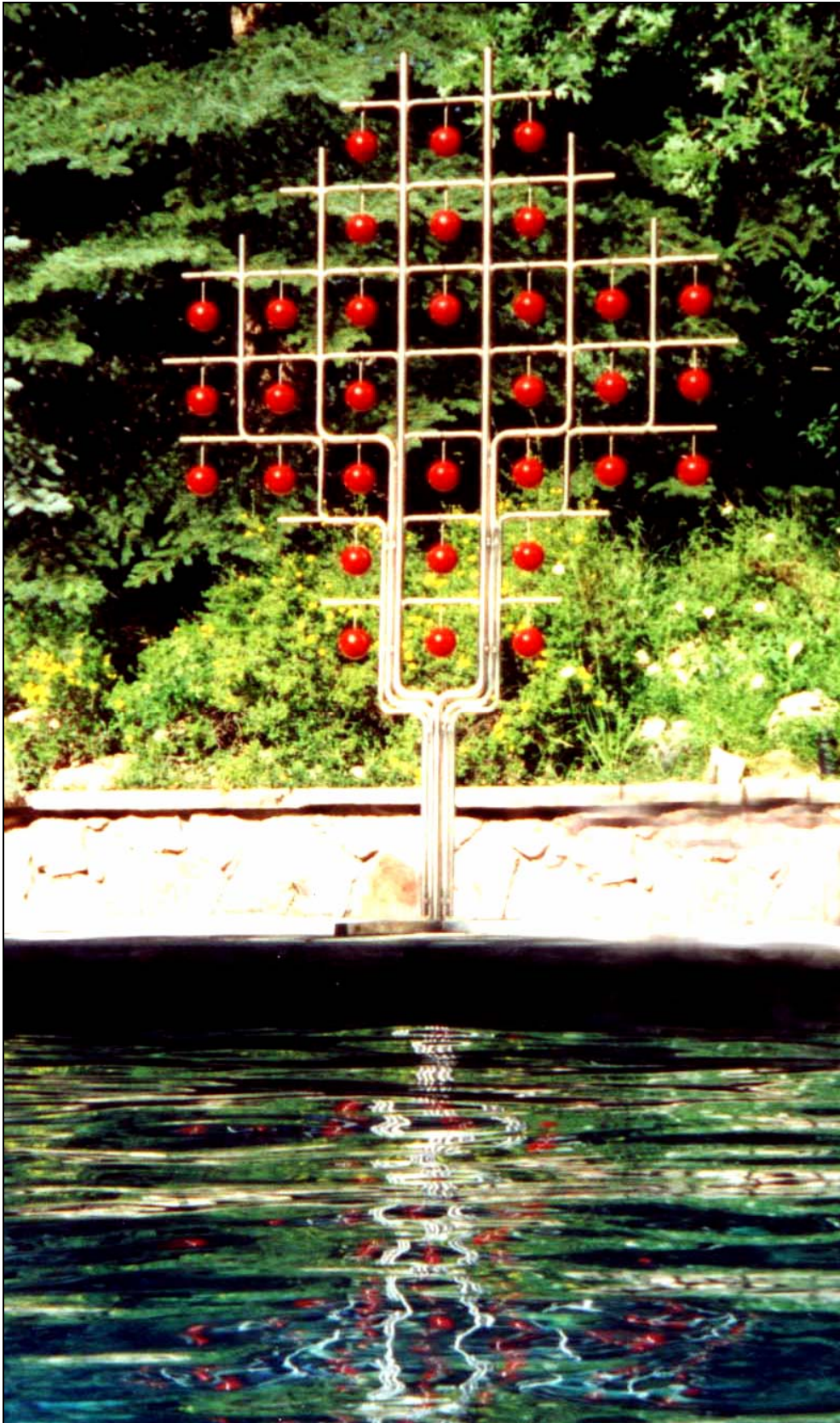


*Janus*



*Gordian Knot*

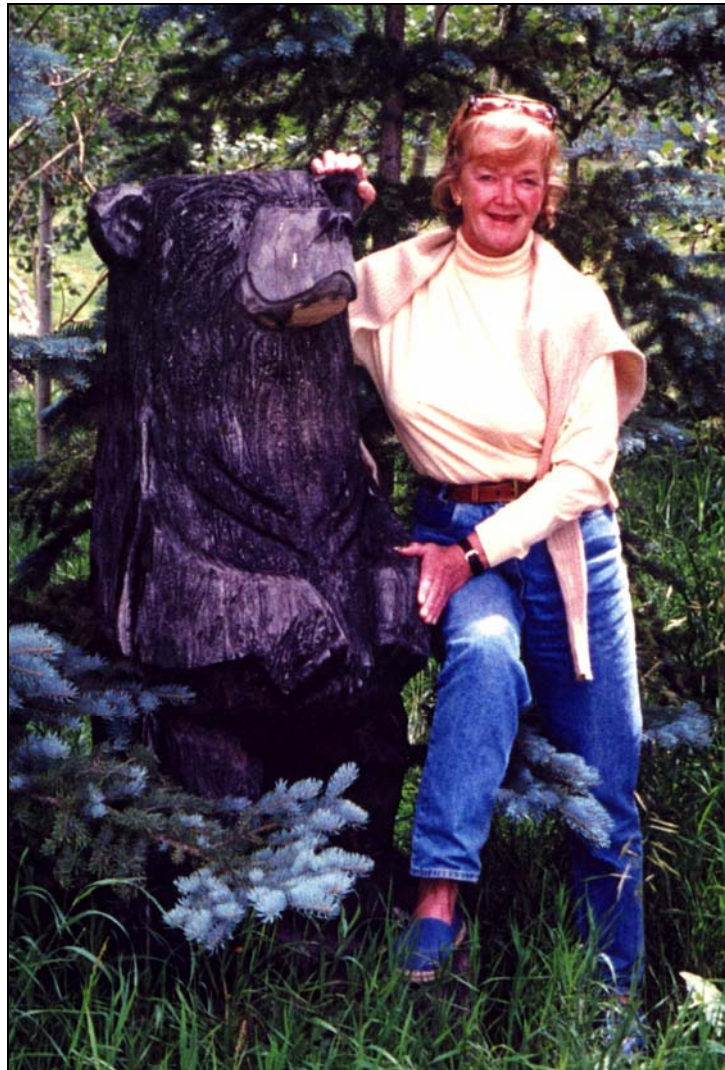




*Culture*

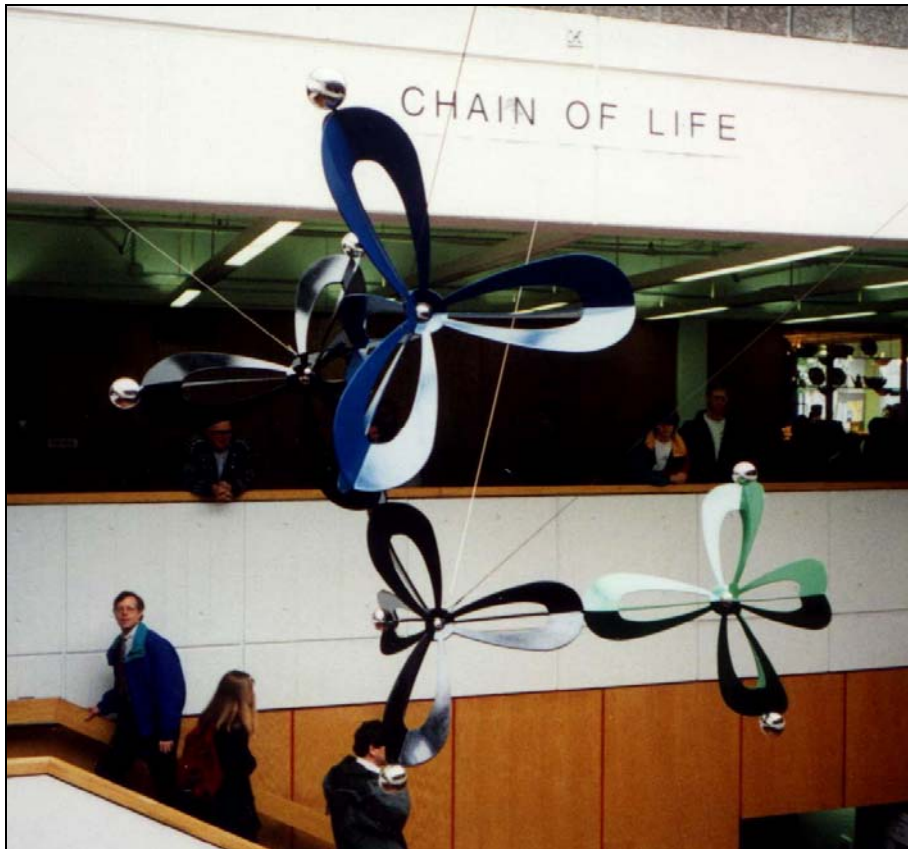
The mountains around Aspen are home to the brown bear and a few of them seem to have taken a particular liking to Ramiilaj. Often they have been seen around the property and occasionally force their way into the house. One night a particularly cheeky bear eased open the large sliding door into the sitting room and waddled through to the kitchen where it ate a full bowl of pistachio nuts, scattering the shells all over the floor. Having had its fill of nuts he then opened the deep freeze and ate a whole tub of chocolate ice cream! The squeak of the kitchen door woke the gardener, Orlando, just in time to see the backside of the bear as it was on its way out.

All these stories had made Margie a little wary as she had already had a fright when she came across the wooden carving of a bear that is hidden in the trees behind Peter's *Lion*. One day she went for a walk along the drive, arrived at the front gate and was about to pass through, when she was confronted with a brown bear on the other side. Luckily she was on the outside of the gate so was able to run down to the guardhouse where she threw herself in the arms of the policeman on duty. He was not at all keen to leave his post so rang Orlando for help in the form of a car and a lift back to safety. Later I couldn't resist taking a photo of Margie placating the wooden bear.



*Margie making friends with a bear*





*Chain of Life*

*Chain of Life* was donated by that Robert and Damon to Harvard and hangs in the atrium of the university's New Science Building. This sculpture came into being through my meeting Professor Bob Williams, Fellow of Wadham College and Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University.



*Tommy Gold and R III*

Exciting things happen at Ramiilaj. Robert often had the famous Astrophysicist Tommy Gold to stay, sadly no longer with us. I first met Tommy when he was 75 and still a champion skier. To listen to Tommy tell stories about his WWII experiences with Herman Bondi and Fred Hoyle fascinated me. Between them the three men developed Radar, the early warning system that enabled our fighters to intercept the German bombers during the Battle of Britain thus saving England and World Democracy.

It was a treat to ski with Tommy. When he got tired we would retire to a bar at the bottom of the run and order a Dry Martini and a dozen fresh oysters. If you asked the right question he would dive into long intriguing stories about his scientific discoveries. To meet such men is one of the great joys that sculpting has brought to my life.

While I am writing about Academia I should record one other facet of Robert's remarkable life. He was educated at Webb Schools in California and was taught biology by Dr Ray Alf. Ray was the son of an American Missionary and born in China. Robert claims that Ray opened his eyes to life with the words, "And what are you going to do with your moment of time?"

Robert has become very involved with Webb Schools and has supported their growth with generous gifts. One of the things he wanted to do was to set up an award for *Forward Thinking* and with this in mind he asked me to make a maquette of *Creation* as an annual award. He also wanted to give the school a museum-sized edition of the same sculpture and a table edition as a gift to his old master Ray who was then well into his nineties.

We flew out to California for the unveiling of the edition of *Creation* that was to be placed outside the Ray Alf Museum, which he had started and now has the largest private collection of fossils in the States.



***Ray Alf and 'Creation' at Webb School***

Robert gave an address and then I had to explain to the students how I saw the sculpture in the environs of a school. One of the fascinating thing



about Symbolism is that it can mean different things in different settings. Luckily I had just read a quote by Einstein and this helped me come up with a suitable explanation for the occasion. The sculpture is made of three parts, all the same, but quite separate. The intriguing thing about the Borromean Rings is that if you cut one the other two fall apart, unlike the Russian wedding ring. The structure forms a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Leaning heavily on Einstein I explained that for me here at a school the three separate parts of *Creation* stood for the following values: *one Square represented Knowledge, another represented Concentration and the third represented Harmonious Personality*. I see these three things as essential lessons to be taught to and learnt by students if they are to become worthy citizens of a society.

I am delighted that *Creation* has been used by other schools as well as Webb. A state school in Penola South Australia had their students build a wooden edition, while Trinity Grammar in Melbourne made a stainless steel edition of the sculpture to mark the hundredth birthday of their founding. The Universities of Wales, Barcelona and Zaragoza also have *Creation*.

Robert has played an enormous part in my life and over the years I have got to know him extremely well. During that time I had been introduced to various girl friends as he strived to find the right woman he could truly have a loving relationship with and share his beautiful home.

Last year he introduced me to MeiLi. Robert has always had a fascination with China and for him to fall in love with a Chinese girl seemed to me to be a heaven-sent end to his search. Margie and I got to know MeiLi well because Robert asked us to travel to Italy with her to rent a villa for their honeymoon. We discovered a wonderful spirit who was perfect for Robert.

They asked us to their wedding at Ramiilaj and what a party it was. The blessing was performed by Jean-Pierre, their Martial-art instructor, on the front lawn of the house where they train. All his family were there, the sun shone and emotion ran at fever pitch. It was a joy to see my friend so happy.



*Robert and MeiLi*



*Adagio*





*'Janus' , JR looking at all points of the compass with Bandit*



*RIII and Bandit at 'Power Point'*

*SOLITAIRE SOLUTION*

The aim of Solitaire is to leave one marble in the centre  
at 44 at the end of play

Board Layout

37 47 57  
36 46 56  
15 25 35 45 55 65 75  
14 24 34 44 54 64 74  
13 23 33 43 53 63 73  
32 42 52  
31 41 51

Remove 44 from centre

Start

46-44, 65-45, 57-55, 45-65, 25-45  
44-46, 47-45, 37-35, 45-25

Left hand

Right hand

15-35  
34-36  
14-34  
33-35  
31-33  
36-34-32  
13-33

75-55  
54-56  
74-54  
53-55  
51-53  
56-54-52  
73-53

Finish

43-63, 33-31-51-53, 63-43, 42-44

One marble should now lie at 44 in the centre!