



# AZAZ

THE SCULPTED WALL, in the lounge of the new Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv, is a strikingly original work of art by an Israeli artist. Azaz, who is in his early thirties, is of Russian parentage and worked as a potter for some years in England. He had long cherished the idea of working in abstract symbols over a large flat area and produced a number of machettes. One of these caught the imagination of the interior designers of the hotel who needed to solve the problem of eliminating four huge structural columns in the main lounge. These created two areas, one narrower than the other leading into the dining room.

In Israel nothing is done at leisure. Originally Azaz was given a year to complete this tremendous commission and he planned to carve in stone. When cut to six months he thought of casting in concrete. Finally he was given three months in order that the hotel could be ready for the Spring tourist season. He solved his problem by building a wall from 160 aerated concrete blocks, such as are used in Israeli domestic building, to make a wall 11 metres long by 3.80 metres high by 1.40 metres thick.

*Opposite: Two views of the sculpted wall in the lounge of the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv*

*by Charles Spencer*

The wall was built to a design which already created a basic overall pattern. This left cavities, open spaces and masses in given positions. Once the wall was erected Azaz sculpted by hand. The final work was white-washed.

Despite its size, the wall gives the impression of amazing lightness. In daytime it has a golden, honeycomb appearance reflecting the sunshine streaming through the windows. The shapes relate to a wide variety of objects in the Israel landscape and natural scene. One can recognize the cubist-like compositions of Arab villages on the Galilee hillsides, the ruins of Crusader castles, the arches and curves of Moslem Mosque architecture, the minarettes and domes of old Jerusalem, the fantastic rock formation in the Negev Desert—and so on. The more one knows of Israel the more one will recognise.

There is no doubt about the fact that this creation is entirely successful in every aspect—as an architectural device, as an interior decoration, and as an evocation of the Israeli visual scene.

Since completing the wall Azaz has received commissions which will occupy him for at least the next four years. A similar construction is now being completed for the interior courtyard of the new headquarters of Tel Aviv Engineering and Architectural Association, and an interior decoration has been commissioned for the new hotel at Beer Sheba. Commission have also arrived from America and Great Britain. □

