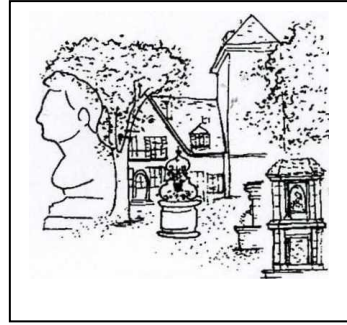


Bread in TRESSERVE



Bread has always been a staple of the French diet, in the same way as pasta for Italians and rice for the Chinese.



Photo J. Collaudin

The aim of this report is to preserve the memory of how bread was produced in Tresserve and to pay tribute to all the people who made it possible.

Up until the French Revolution bread was baked in “banaux” ovens. The feudal lord, the 'seigneur', had a duty to build and make available to his subjects, facilities such as bread ovens. The villagers were obliged to use these facilities and pay a fee to the lord for using

them. Both the building and the fee were called a 'banalité'. If the inhabitants did not use this oven they were subject to a fine known as a 'ban'. At the end of the Middle-Ages the ovens were leased to individuals or a group of the inhabitants. Additionally, if the bread thus baked was sold outside of the commune, the buyer usually had to pay a fine.

After the Revolution these ovens were managed by the village council, the 'commune'. The communal ovens were places where bread was baked but also where villagers met together and exchanged gossip, as were the wash house and the water sources... In 2002, the Savoie Heritage Services carried out a survey of the ovens around Lac du Bourget: 293 communal ovens were identified. The commune of Vimines had the largest number (22). Some communes no longer have any ovens (Barby, Bassens, Challes les Eaux, La Ravoire, Barberaz). Only one remains in Tresserve and we need to keep it in working order.

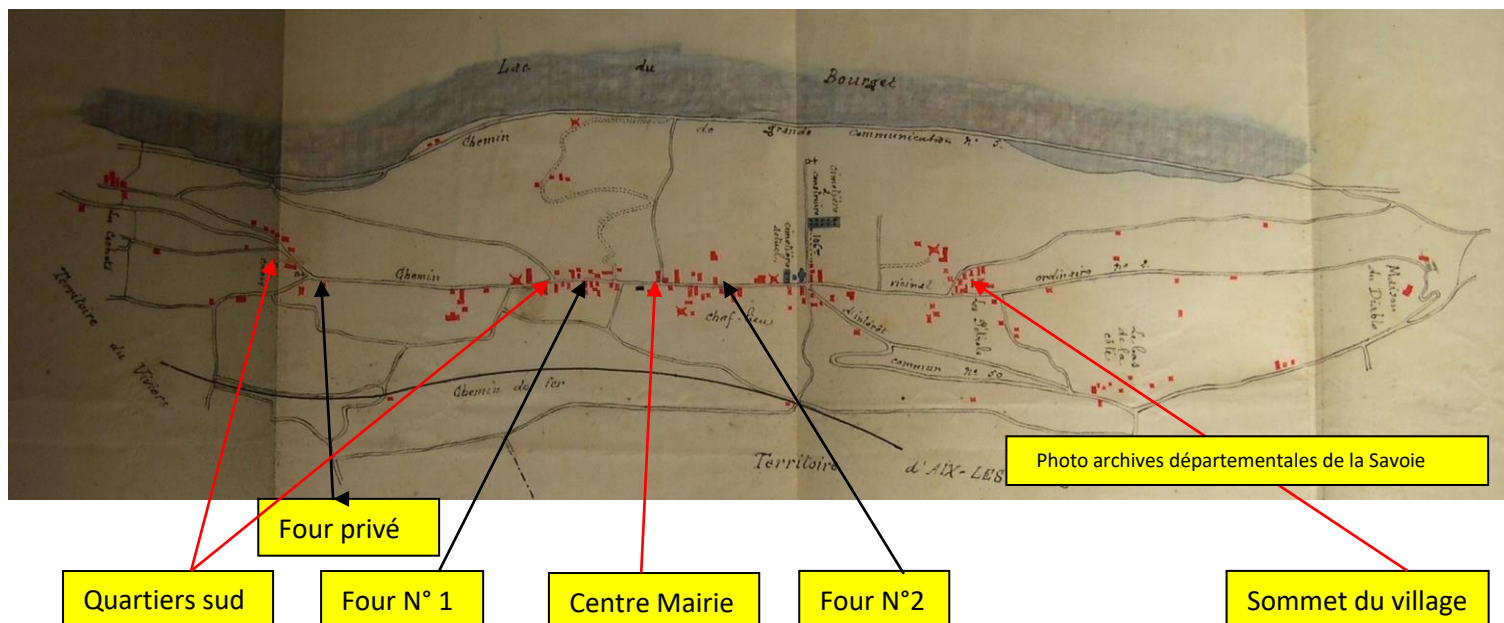
History of Tresserve's communal ovens:

The village archives record the existence of 2 ovens in 1829:

Various reports of Town Council meetings suggest that the ovens are located on either side of the Town Hall.

18 March 1829: " The dwellings which constitute this commune of Tresserve are almost all concentrated at three points; one in the south, one in the centre and another to the north. There exists in one of the first two a communal oven marked on the map as being in communal ownership and for their sole usage. Poor condition. Repairs at their cost. in the centre reconstruction of a public building on land belonging to the commune."





Various reports of Town Council meetings suggest that the ovens are located on either side of the Town Hall.

23 Feb 1836: *there are 2 communal ovens owned by the commune, situated roughly in the centre, one used by the inhabitants to the north and the other by those to the south. Repairs are the responsibility of those concerned. The one to the north is insulated and in good condition. The one to the south, leaning against the gable of a thatched barn, is at risk of fire and in poor condition. A tiled roof and a gable were needed... 300 pounds to be divided between 30 inhabitants who had already paid in 1828. Tresserve has neither forests nor wooded communal areas; the few trees are scattered in the hedges which divide the properties and are not sufficient for the consumption of those to whom they belong... this obliges the greatest economy in the use of this fuel. The southern oven, where there are more trees, is heated more often than the other...*

Town Council deliberation of 10 June 1900

Reconstruction of the communal oven in the centre of town: a budget of 450 frs has been set aside, but this will be greatly exceeded as, when the roof was repaired, it was found to be in such poor condition that it had to be completely rebuilt. A further 350 frs was taken from cemetery concession receipts.

As the cost exceeded 300 frs, the limit for a direct agreement, the authorities refused to give the go-ahead to pay for the work! Mr Michaud, the mayor at the time, had to argue to obtain an exemption from the authorities:

- *There is only one oven builder: (Terrassier), who has made an acceptable offer.*
- *The work was carried out by Tresserviens at an unbeatable price due to the off-season and unemployment.*

Town Council decision of 18 May 1901

Work to rebuild the oven, south of the town hall. Estimated cost: 700 F. Detailed work: 70x35 tilting door, sheet metal valve, cast iron sides, 2-slope roof with Montchavin tiles.

The work was completed in May 1902, financed by revenue from cemetery concessions (a small overrun of €100).

Josephte Vallier, who lived in the south of the village, remembers :

"To the south of the village there used to be an oven. It was replaced by a building used to house the fire brigade's motorbike pump, and then in the early 1960s the building was demolished to make way for a car park."

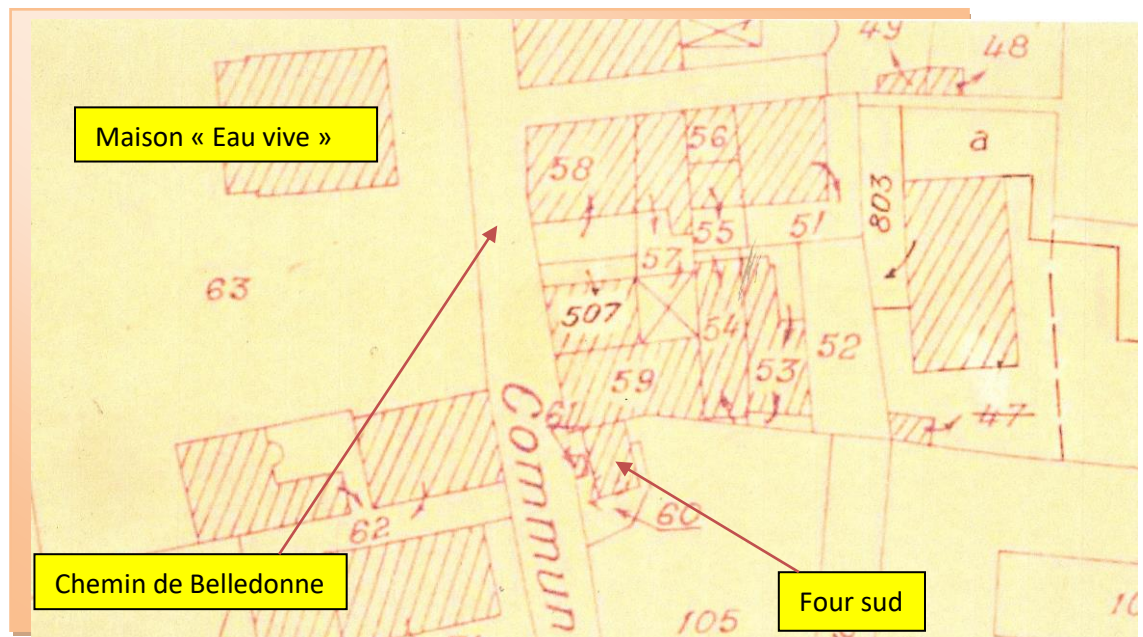


Photo archives
départementales
de la Savoie

Cadastre 1934

This old photo shows the south oven building, set against a house, and the tower containing the village's first electricity transformer.

Voir photo de droite

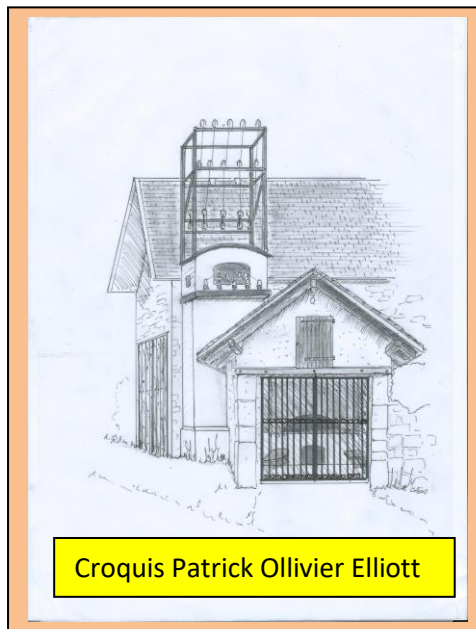
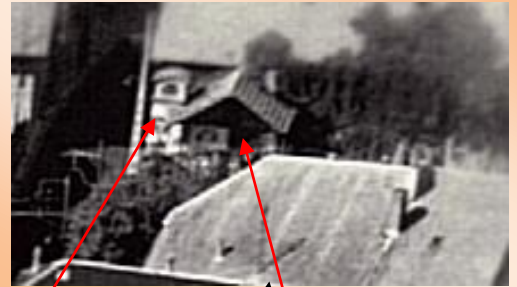


Photos Coste Bellingham

Riantmesnil

Poste de transformation 5000/125V

Four à pain côté sud N°1



Croquis Patrick Ollivier Elliott

Marine Faure remembers:

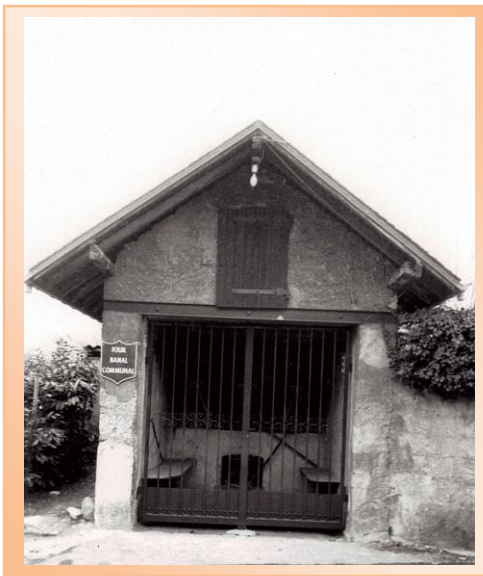
"Local residents would bring in their bread, ready to bake and leavened at home, and it was a place of conviviality and social organisation, totally essential for everyone.

The bread was preserved and consumed for several weeks. When it had become hard, it was soaked in soup, wine or milk and ended up in the chickens, but "hard bread makes a household that lasts".

What I remember best is what my grandmother and her sister Franceline told me about what happened at the end of the baking of all the breads, when the oven was not so hot; the women would then

bring the pies they had prepared ... apples or plums and the children would first feast on the remains of the golden dough ... before the little piece of crusty bread all hot and crusty".

Four du nord



Photos J. Collaudin



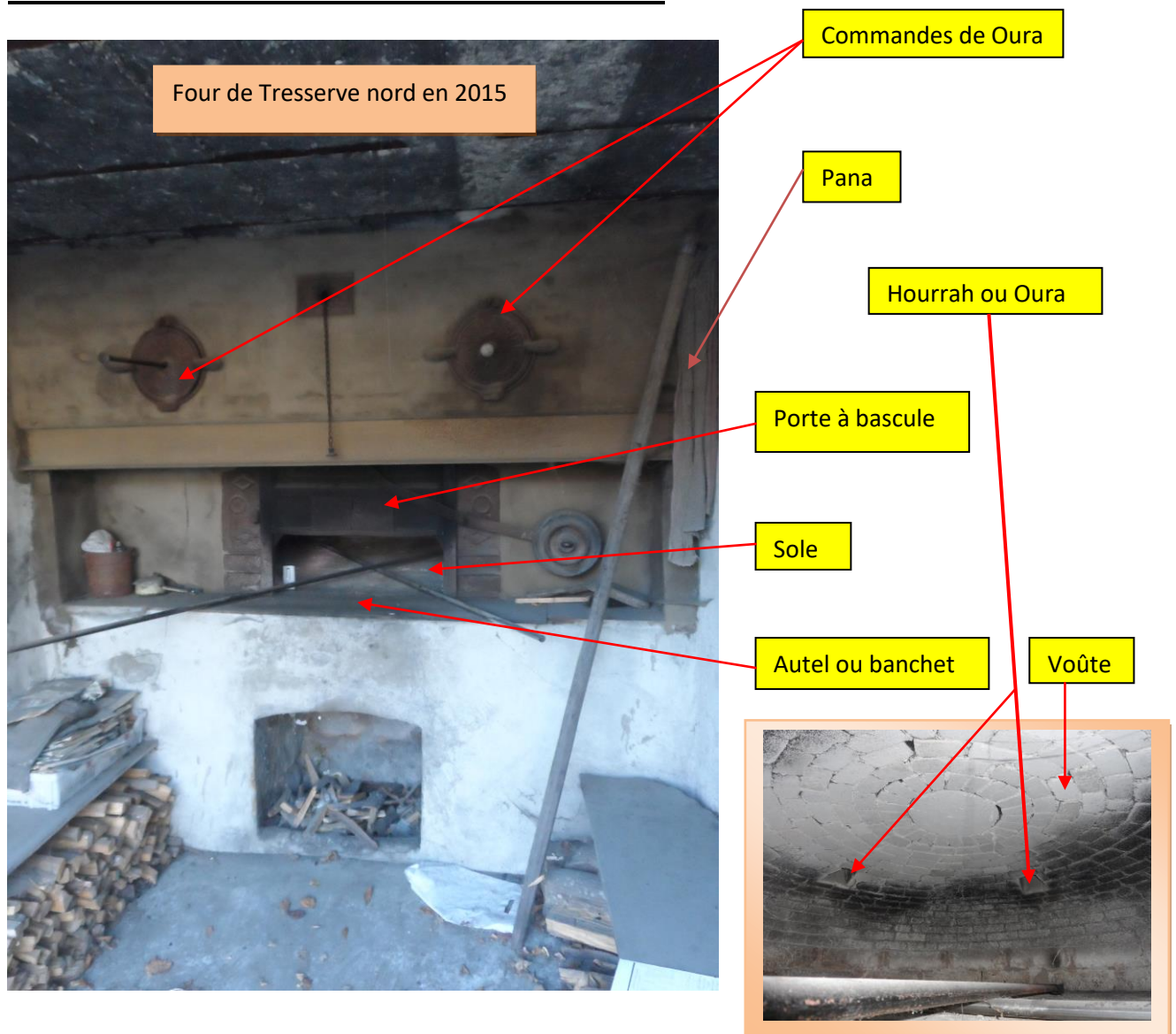
There were also private ovens.

Josephte Vallier also remembers:

"There was an oven attached to the "La Vigie" house and owned by Miss Cachoud. She made it available to the residents of the southern quarter. This oven has been replaced by a garage."

Only the northern oven is still visible today.

Construction of « Banaux » ovens



Photos J. Collaudin

Construction materials used:

Until the end of 19th century ovens, like dwelling houses, were built from locally available materials.

In Savoy a sandstone known as 'molasse' was used for window and door frames (as can be seen today in the Mairie). This material was extracted from the quarries of Forézan at Cognin and Vars in Chindrieux. It is a soft sandstone which also has refractory properties (it retains its strength at high temperatures) which accounts for its use in the building of chimneys and, naturally, bread ovens. Molasse hardens when in contact with fire. Around the shores of Lake Bourget, most ovens were built this way. Since the stone is very fragile it required frequent repair. Today there are only a few ovens surviving. In Savoy buildings were generally roofed with thatch (in 1932: 40% thatch, 20% tiles, 20% slate and 20 % wood).

Thatch, being highly inflammable was not the most suitable as a material for roofing a bake house.

In Tresserve thatch was replaced by Montchavin tiles and the molasse built oven by a Terrassier oven, made from sandstone from Larnage (near Tain in the Drôme).

Records of this refurbishment can be traced from the minutes of a municipal council meeting held on 10th June 1900. The work was carried out under the control of the council by villagers, who were free because they had no seasonal work on or because they were unemployed.

At a council meeting on 10th February 1901 the mayor announced that the refurbishment of the oven was completed but that the budget had been exceeded because the roof had had to be completely remade.

At the end of the 19th century, Alfred Terrassier took over the company founded in 1840 by A. Robin, which produced refractory clay products in Larnage near Tain in the Drôme.



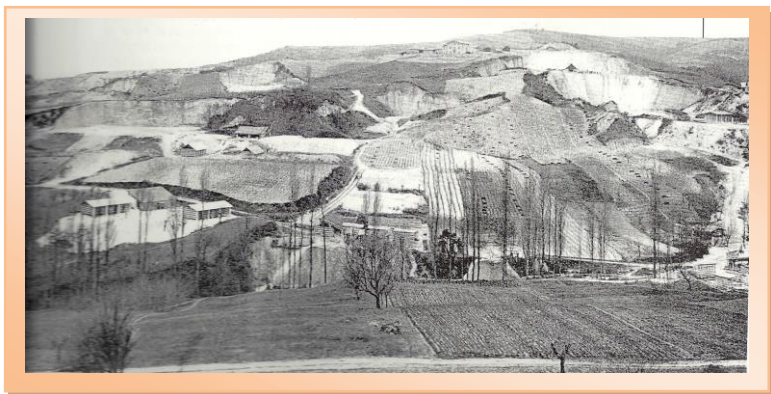
Document « Fours Fayol »

At the beginning of the 20th century Alfred Terrassier designed ovens in kit form, which were very simple to assemble. He took advantage of railway expansion to sell them far and wide, including abroad (Switzerland, Algeria, Syria, Tunisia...).

The Larnage sandstone (called 'white earth'), used for their manufacture, was extracted from a quarry owned by the company.



Usine Terrassier au début du XX e siècle



Carrières de Larnage en 1930

FOURS ECONOMIQUES
EN PIÈGES RÉFRACTAIRES

DEUX GRANDES USINES
D'HERMITAGE
ET DE
TAIN

MAISON FONDÉE EN 1840

ANCIENNES MAISONS
A Robin Pere & Fils & C^{ie}
A Pascal
Rozier & C^{ie}
MAISON FONDÉE EN 1840

EXPOSITION INTERNATIONALE UNIVERSELLE
PALAIS ROYAL - PARIS 1889
MÉDAILLE D'OR ET D'ORFÈVRE
pour des appareils au bois
et divers accessoires de fours.

DEUX MÉDAILLES D'ARGENT
au Concours régional de Valence, Juin 1883

TROIS MÉDAILLES D'ARGENT
au Concours régional de Grenoble, Mai 1884

PREMIER PRIX
au Concours de Saint-Denis, 1887

MÉDAILLE DE VERMEIL
à l'Exposition nationale de Valence, 1895

MED. en BRONZE & MED. D'ARGENT
au Concours régional de Valence, 1895

ALFRED TERRASSIER
Successeur

TAIN (DRÔME)

HAUTEUR		DIAMÈTRE		PIÈCES NÉCESSAIRES À LEUR CONSTRUCTION		Poids total approximatif des matériaux	PRIX du Four en fabrique ou en gare à Tain
de la base	de la craie	N° 1	N° 2	N° 3	N° 4		
1.66	0.48	10	29	97	125	25	68
1.83	0.48	12	33	111	180	25	77
2.00	0.50	14	36	124	215	25	88
2.16	0.50	16	37	136	265	25	99
2.33	0.50	18	39	148	335	25	115
2.50	0.50	21	42	158	395	25	132
2.66	0.52	24	45	170	465	25	143
2.83	0.52	28	48	180	540	40	159
3.00	0.52	31	51	193	625	40	176
3.16	0.52	34	55	202	690	40	198
3.33	0.52	37	59	214	775	40	220
3.50	0.52	41	62	227	880	40	242
3.66	0.55	45	64	237	980	40	264
3.83	0.55	50	68	250	1030	40	289
4.00	0.55	54	70	259	1215	40	308

L'emballage de la terre se facture 1 franc par 100 kilog.

LE PRÉSENT TARIF ANNULE TOUS LES PRÉCÉDENTS

Tain, le 1^{er} janvier 1901.

www.delcampe.net

Document « Fours Fayol »

The communal oven in Tresserve has the following dimensions:
diameter 2 m, height 0.5 m, total weight 2.6 t.

The following table shows the composition of the kit and the sale price: 88 Francs. The total cost, including repairs to the building and installation of the oven came to a total of 800 Francs.

Terrassier's installation instructions ended with a piece about wines produced in his own vineyards:

"As a major owner of excellent vineyards in the canton of Tain, rightly renowned for the quality of its wines, I offer my customers top-quality wines in the best possible conditions, unplastered, without artificial colouring, natural and guaranteed to be made from fresh grapes".

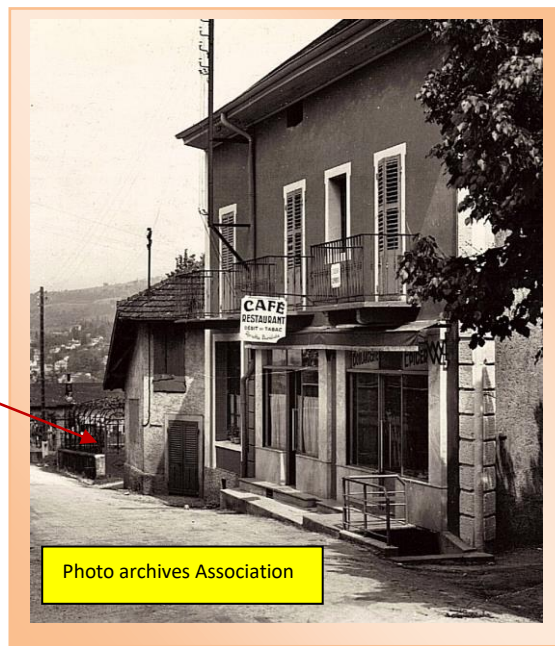
Free advertising !

The oven in Tresserve was in operation up until the Second World War, then replaced by bakeries

Family bakeries in Tresserve

In 1900 Bertrand Philippe opened a bakery near the church. For several years, a bakery and 2 communal ovens coexisted. B. Philippe's oven is similar to the communal ovens (heating with wood placed on the oven hearth).

Jeu de boules



During World War 1^{ère}, the bakery ceased to operate because the baker was mobilised in Lyon. It took a complaint from Tresserviens and probably the mayor to get the baker back in the village!

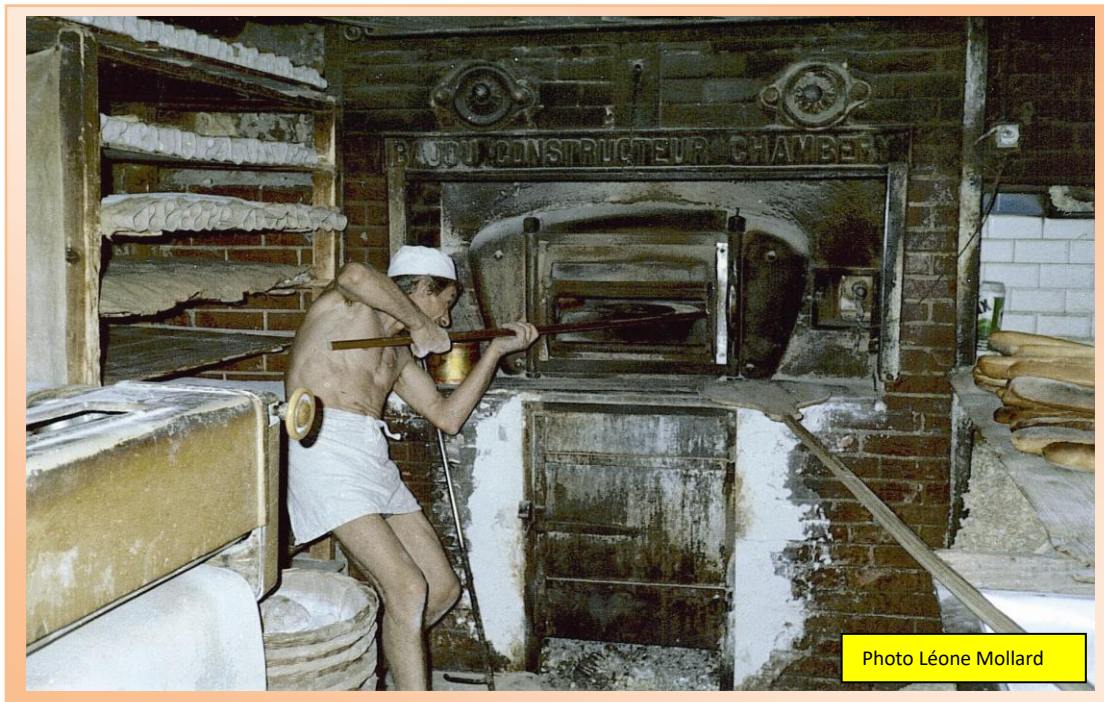
In 1923, the bakery was bought by Claudius Philippe. He ran it until 1960.



Photo Léone Mollard

In the 1950s, the oven was restored by Baudu, a builder in Chambéry. Heating was then provided by a hearth below the hearth floor.

From 1960, his daughter Léone and her son-in-law Marcel Mollard took over, and the bakery produced bread until Marcel's death in 1986. Léone continued to run the grocery part of the business.



Léone remembers:

« Our bakery was very well known and much appreciated in the Aix area. People from Aix used to come up to the hill to buy bread. We produced between 4 and 500 loaves a day.

During the Second World War, the bakery closed because my husband was requisitioned to work in Chambéry.

We had famous customers: Gaston Monnerville and Daniel Rops. They loved going to the oven to chat with my husband. Until 1977 we also ran a very popular bar and jeu de boules. I retired in 1996 »

In 2007 Myriam and Gino Urro opened a bakery on the other side of the street.



Photo François Bonfils



Photo J. Collaudin

The couple comes from the Jura, where Gino already worked in the bakery trade. After running their first bakery in Grésy, they took over the Liaudon family café-restaurant in Tresserve.

Tresserviens quickly adopted them. They installed a Fringand electric oven and produced bread, pastries and daily specials for several years.

Gino remembers :

"We made bread, pastries and daily specials. Everything was made locally. We made 2 mixers and 6 batches a day, for a total of 300 to 350 pieces. I had to start my day at 2am because I was supplying a vendor at the Aix market.

Our establishment was the football club's 'HQ' for Sunday aperitifs. But our most loyal customer was the late Elie Pontarolo (a member of the Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine until his death in 2014)."

Unfortunately, health problems led Myriam and Gino to close their business in 2013.

The bakery was taken over by Ludovic Carré until 2015.

Since March 2015, Camille and Renaud Muller have been bringing the business back to life, much to the delight of Tresserviens.

Both employees in Chambéry, they have decided to "fly on their own wings" and offer breads made using the deferred bread-making method: no shaping, greater hydration and slow fermentation for 48 hours, to preserve the bread better and develop aromas for a creamy, tasty crumb.



Photo Camille Müller

Camille tells us about her business:

"We produce between 350 and 450 pieces of bread a day in 3 batches (the biggest in the morning, 1 at midday, 1 in the afternoon and 1 at the end of the day), combining our famous traditional French baguette, the 'Tresservien' (a baguette made from maté wheat and small seeds) and a whole variety of speciality breads. We also offer home-made pastries and a great selection of savoury products (quiches, pizzas and seasonal savoury tarts). Our speciality is the "pâté du chef" or "pâté lorrain lorrain" (Renaud's family is from Lorraine).

We have a lovely little terrace where Tresserviens can enjoy a coffee, croissant, organic iced tea or homemade chocolate. We have a licence to serve white, red or rosé wine and draught beer".



Photo J. Collaudin



Photo Camille Müller

PS: There was another bakery. Its owner wished not to appear in this story.

The Tresserve industrial bakery

In the early 1970s, Mr Chapaton set up an industrial bakery at Litière to make bread for schools, hospitals and retirement homes. After more than 25 years developing the business, he sold it in 1997 to Pain Savoyard, which still runs it today.



Photo J. Collaudin

Farid Boukhamila, its operations manager, tells us all about it:

"Our company produces 20,000 pieces of bread a day, 365 days a year, for a variety of customers, the main ones being the schools in Chambéry and the hospital in Rumilly. One of our customers is the Comité des fêtes in Tresserve for the oven festival."

Our flour supplier is the Degrange flour mill in Le Bourget du Lac.

8 bakers prepare the dough between 7pm and 5am and activate the rotary or hearth ovens, heated by gas between 11pm and 6am. They all have between 10 and 20 years' experience in the company.

6 drivers deliver the bread to our customers between 3 and 8 in the morning.

The quality of our bread is recognised.



Nostalgia for communal ovens

In the early 1980s, a number of Savoie communes decided to bring their ovens back to life as a way of restoring past conviviality. Once or several times a year, a family, a group of local residents or an entire village would put the oven back into service on the occasion of a festival. In Apremont, for example, the oven is fired up for the grape harvest. Sometimes the restoration of the oven by local residents is an opportunity to get it working again. But very often it's an opportunity for a village association to raise funds. Bread is baked, as well as pizzas, brioches, tarts, St-Genis, epognes, etc., which are sold in front of the oven, after mass or in the supermarket car park.

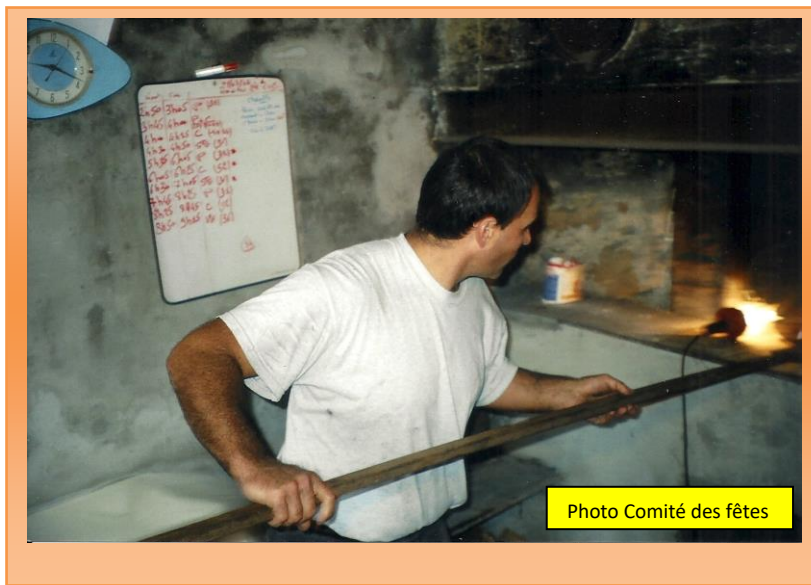
A survey carried out in 2002 by the Savoie Heritage Services identified 170 ovens still in use around Lac du Bourget. These include the one at Tresserve Nord.

This oven was brought back into service in the early 80s by the festivities committee chaired by Mr Cariou. Roger Cachoux, a member of this committee and also of the Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine, was the baker. He received the dough from Chapaton. Members of the committee assisted him and sold the bread in front of the oven on Sunday mornings.



Photo Comité des fêtes

In 1989, Roger passed on the "bread-making secret" to Pascal Efrancey, who would be the baker until 2006.



Pascal en Septembre 2006

Photo Comité des fêtes

Christian Hauguel took over from 2006 to 2010.

Christian remembers :



"On Saturdays at 6pm, 2 people cut wood into logs. A second team of 2 people light a medium fire and move it to the hearth of the oven so that the temperature rises gradually and evenly until the bricks are white (around 500°C), a process known as "dehumidifying" the oven. The waste from the previous festival is destroyed by pyrolysis. Then a large quantity of wood is added to maintain the temperature until 3am on Sunday."

At 3am on Sunday, the Saturday operations are repeated. By this time, the temperature has risen to around 800°C and the bricks of the vault and hearth are white. The baker removes the embers using a rake (a metal hook at the end of a long handle).

The embers are used to cook diots. The hearth is then cleaned with a pana (a mop attached to the end of a long handle) in a cloud of steam. The sole and the vault must be white. The team checks the temperature by throwing a handful of flour onto the hearth. If the flour burns, the temperature is too high and the baker has to open the hemas. If it browns, then he proceeds to put it in the oven. This operation must be carried out quickly so that the temperature does not drop too low. One person is responsible for opening and closing the door and loading the shovel, which the baker places on the oven altar. As soon as the loaf of dough is tipped onto the spatula, the baker quickly cuts the surface with 2 knife strokes and then puts it in the oven. 25 pieces are inserted in this way. After 10 to 15 minutes, the baker opens the door to check the condition of the loaves. They should be puffed up but still white in colour. If they are already golden, the oven temperature is too high and the baker opens the door to reduce it.

After 20 to 25 minutes of baking, the bread is taken out by the same people. It is tested (turned over and struck with a closed hand, making a hollow sound). Next, 30 brioches from St-Genix and Epognes, which require a slightly lower baking temperature, are put in the oven and left to bake for around 30 minutes.

At each event, the festival committee produces 200 to 250 loaves of farmhouse bread and 120 St Genix brioches, which are sold by a 3rd team of 3 people. It's also an opportunity for visitors to enjoy a glass of white wine, taste the diots and chat. The oven festival ends around midday.

Commande d'un oura



Photo J. Collaudin

Photo Comité des fêtes



Photos Comité des fêtes

In 2010 Eric Bigalet takes over from Christian until 2012.

After a 3-year hiatus, the new chairman Didier Haecker is relaunching the oven. He is planning 2 annual events (spring and autumn)

Didier is supported by his 2 predecessors on the day of the takeover on 15/11/15 (from left to right Didier Haecker, Christian Hauguel and Daniel Stalin with 3 members of the committee).



Photo J. Collaudin

Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine

11/2015

Updated 11/2023

The document "Les fours à pain autour du lac du Bourget" from "La Rubrique des patrimoines de Savoie" (07/2002) was used as a reference in compiling this dossier.

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