

Coutellia

20th & 21st
MAY 2023
THIERS

THE INTERNATIONAL
ART KNIFE TRADITIONAL
KNIFEMAKING FESTIVAL

www.coutellia.fr   



**MEDIA
PACK**



Coutellia

Editorial

"The future is looking bright!"

Last year, COUTELLIA moved to a new site and to say the very least, everyone seemed very happy with the move.

Today, COUTELLIA's scope for growth lies plainly on the international stage, as the event has already achieved national notoriety, make that European. But now we must reach out even further. I am truly convinced that tomorrow COUTELLIA will become the world's leading event in the sector of knifemaking!"

Philippe Fouet,

Elected Member of the Chamber of Trade
& Industry Puy-de-Dôme Clermont Auvergne Metropolis.

"It is our ambition to continue to grow COUTELLIA by building on the momentum that we have created over the last ten years. Every year the number of exhibitors increases, just like the number of visitors that includes more and more foreign buyers.

It is also through our event that we work to promote trade and training in the knife industry as it is vital to get the younger generation on board and interested in the cutlery trade from an early age. This is where the challenge lies for us without forgetting that COUTELLIA contributes to the recognition of the whole of Thiers-made cutlery, the town's heritage and eight centuries of know-how primarily in knife manufacture. But let's not forget too that COUTELLIA is also a fantastic event for arranging meetings, for chatting and for enjoying!"

Jean-Pierre Treille,

President of COUTELLIA

THE BIGGER PICTURE, women in the cutlery industry

According to statistics from INSEE (National Statistics Office), for the past 40 years women have barely accounted for 19-20% of the total sector workforce as it has, throughout the ages, been a male-dominated industry.

Yet things are changing and today women are increasingly filling managerial positions and jobs that require specific skills, jobs that had previously been reserved for men. It was at the end of the 1980's and 1990's that women began to take over the management of cutlery companies, such as Claudine Dozorme and Patricia Couperier-Coursolle. Today, women represent 30% of the whole Thiers workforce mainly managing or sharing the management of firms that are primarily family owned.

At the same time, the cutlery industry is becoming more feminine. Forging, polishing, grinding and guilloche engraving are no longer the preserve of men. Many women have successfully mastered this traditional art. Whether as company directors, artists or craftspeople.



**Patricia
Couperier-
Coursolle**

Managing Director of
Couperier-Coursolle
knifemakers

Patricia Couperier-Coursolle learnt about cutlery making from her husband's long-established family business, by working initially out of the spotlight, in the firm's workshop and then its retail shop. **Prior to in 2019 taking over the reins of the business from her husband by assuming management of the firm that had been established in 1902.** "Forty years ago, it was still a tough environment where little attention was paid to aesthetics." But in recent years, Patricia has seen the sector evolve and change, notably with the feminization of skills. **"In the Thiers cutlery area, more and more women are taking up prominent positions in the industry. And they are not just in the workshops. This change has brought a touch of femininity and sensitivity. We have a different perspective of finishing and colour associations."**

Patricia has seen the sector evolve and change, notably with the feminization of skills.

Internationally recognised for its know-how in working metal with its famous Coursolle knife and its distinct motifs on the brass plates, Couperier-Coursolle has remained a very small firm with just 4 full-time employees in the workshop. Immediately recognisable, the motifs on Coursolle closing knives remain in tune with the times. **"We have launched a range of new engravings, such as the boules player. But some of our old dies still have a strong public following, such as the poilu (First World War infantry soldier) and the charretier (horse and cart driver) that date from the early 20th century."**



Couperier Coursolle



Le Cellois



Nathalie Robin

Designer of "The Cellois"
knife, awarded first prize at
COUTELLIA 2018

Having spent 12 years working in accounts, Nathalie Robin entered the cutlery business via the back door. In 2012, she set up a small business as a setter for cutlery manufacturers in the Thiers area. Her husband who was, at the time both a knife assembler and teacher of new entrants, taught her the various techniques and the correct use of the machinery. It was during these 7 years of subcontracting that Nathalie learnt and mastered every stage of the knifemaking process. **"Moving from an office job to a manual activity was a real turning point for me."** And limiting herself to assembling knives was no longer enough for this businesswoman who had developed her own attention to detail, patience, curiosity, and the appreciation of a job well done.

Beside assembling knives, she began designing templates of original knife designs, Nathalie's artistic skills were taking shape. **"I wanted to design a knife that stood out, something authentic and very original"**. Nathalie's Le Cellois first went on sale in 2018, one notes its unusual, inverted shape with its blade tip that rises upwards, also, the choice of two different opening and closing mechanisms, either a friction folder or a back lock and finally the practicality of a knife that will sit flat on its handle when placed on a flat surface.

"As a woman, it was with enormous pride that I moved out from the shadows into the spotlight in the space of just a few weeks."

2018 marked a significant turning point in Nathalie's career with the launch of her first line of cutlery and the award of first prize at COUTELLIA. **"The recognition by my pairs was completely unexpected. As a woman, it was with enormous pride that I moved out from the shadows into the spotlight in the space of just a few weeks. 5 years later I would say that all that was due to the Le Cellois that has proved so popular both in France and abroad"**.

With great attention to detail, she takes care of all production that is 100% craft manufacture, she is particularly interested in the harmony between colours, and the engraving of blade springs. **"When creating a knife, I pay particular attention to the handle as it is the handle that enhances the knife."**

And to close the loop, Nathalie's husband, following a crash course in forging abandoned his previous job and went to work with Nathalie in 2020. He now makes all the Damascus blades for the Le Cellois knives. And 90% of the wood used for their handles comes from their own farm to give a range of knives with a profound link to their region of origin!



Clara Larrieu

Cutlery designer
« L'Atelier Rosie »

and its handle made from oyster shells, two symbols of oyster farming in the Arcachon Bay. **“The passion of having trained myself means that I have no rules or guidelines. I can give free rein to my creativity”.** She has been working in her workshop in Bordeaux for the last two years, **as a young woman, she has never felt restricted in her business activity.** *“At first, I developed the syndrome of the pretender, but very quickly, my desire and creativity, factors that drive me every day, came to the fore. The feminine side of my designs is noticeable in my attention to detail, I like them to look pretty! My packaging and visual identity provide that femininity. When dealing with other businesses and suppliers in the industry, I have frequently noted that my point of contact is often a woman. And once people learn that the Atelier Rosie is me, after their initial surprise, the reaction and feedback are always very positive. I feel supported and recognised.”*

As a young woman, she has never felt restricted in her business activity.

To wake up one morning with an idea to create a knife in perfect harmony with the surrounding territory, such as the flipside of Clara Larrieu's story. On the upside, the young woman quit Paris and dropped her bags off at her home in the south-west of France before embarking on a new career as a self-taught cutlery maker. At the same time as her training in the Auvergne region with Raymond Rosa, Clara perfected the prototypes of her first knife with a strong regional flavour reflecting both her and her inspiration. The result was Le Solen, a knife with an original shape that reminds us of oyster boats



Pome Castanier

Managing Director at
Mercorne, supplier of
materials for the cutlery
industry

In 1994, when taking over the management at Mercorne, Pome Castanier remembers that she was one of the few women in the industry. *“In both the mainstream cutlery industry and the artistic cutlery sector there were very few women of any age group”.* During her first trade shows, she exhibited stabilised green and pink wooden handles, which stood out from those found on other stands. *« The feminization of our industry has allowed us to give a whole new look to the aesthetics, to the balance of colours and more attention paid to the details such as the mechanics. From the start, I have never been afraid to create new textures and to offer colours that had never previously been seen.”*

« La féminisation de notre secteur a permis d'apporter un regard sur l'esthétique »

For nearly 30 years now, **Pome has always considered the materials presented by Mercorne through the prism of their beauty, with research for new art forms taking precedent of finding the right mechanics.** This is one of the strengths of the family business, whose research and development enables it to include aesthetic aspects throughout its designs. *“Over the years, our position as a simple supplier has evolved to that of colleague for the majority of our clients”.*

The challenge for the next few years? To continue to develop our specialist processing of resin-based materials. *“Our production area has recently doubled from 100 to 200m². In artistic cutlery, there is growing demand for highly resistant materials. And with resin, it's fantastic because everything is possible!”*

As exhibitors at COUTELLIA from the show's early days, the company now stocks more than 300 references of handle materials, compared to the 2 boxes of horns exhibited at the first Coutellia in 1994. Mercorne has certainly come a long way.



ON VIDÉO

LEARN ABOUT

OTHER WOMEN CUTLERY MAKERS.

Discover the personal stories behind Magali Soucille, Frédérique Seret, Maëlle Muzart and Danielle de Buyer.

[Click here!](#)

FOCUS ON

training for women

In recent years, manual jobs have become popular with young people and the cutlery sector is no exception.

Since 1992, the training provided by CFAI in Thiers prepares apprentices for the cutlery trade. Benefiting from cutlers' shop windows, this CAP (*Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle - Certificate of competence*) attracts every year an increasing number of candidates. From the 80 applicants, just fifteen are selected for the training programme of whom there are a few young women, such as Marguerite Baranger.



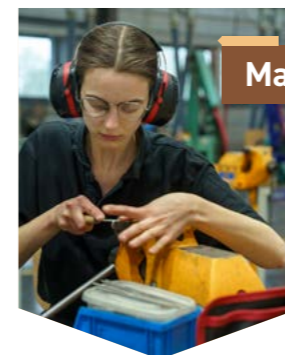
Pascale Hermillon

Head of Training
at CFAI Thiers

Pascale Hermillon, Head of Training at CFAI Thiers tells us more,

"We are aware that our trades attract the younger generation. Young women are also interested in our profession, and they too have their place in the cutlery industry, even if the number of female applicants is still low. The trades are increasingly accessible to them, and it is not unusual for companies to ask us to recruit multi-skilled female students."

In reply to the question, what skills are companies particularly seeking? Pascale replies, without hesitation, that, "Our trades are manual, physical, and often very dirty. In general, apprentice cutlery makers are spirited individuals with strong characters. They are able to work any material, develop a sensitivity to the design of a knife and display high levels of craftsmanship."



Marguerite Baranger

18 years old
Apprentice at
CFAI Thiers

Marguerite Baranger discovered the world of cutlery at the age of 15, from an artisan cutler in the Vendée (North-west France). *"Over several months I had the opportunity to acquire the basics. This first experience reinforced my belief that there was a legitimate place for me, and it gave me confidence in my abilities and prepared me to start learning"* emphasises the 18-year-old, who recognised at an early age her affinity for manual work and her desire to work in a male-dominated environment.

For Marguerite, the training in Thiers was the obvious way forward and represented the opportunity for her to learn and start her career in the heart of the world's cutlery centre and develop her network. *"In addition to the cutlery industry, Thiers is home to a whole range of related trades, such as smiths, leather workers and suppliers of cutlery materials. This is a significant advantage!"*

For Marguerite, the training in Thiers was the obvious way forward.

At the conclusion of her training, Marguerite was offered a job at Goyon-Chazeau Cutlers. *"As a woman, I admit that I have been somewhat spoiled by my colleagues. It's true that instinctively we are assigned tasks that are historically dedicated to women, but by discussing things, we manage to move the boundaries and take on more masculine positions or roles."* To confirm her second year, Marguerite is now working on a project for a greenhouse, a nod and a wink her other passions, horticulture and fruit farming.



Coutellia

IN A FEW FIGURES

2,500
m² of exhibition
space

300
exhibitors
in total

200
Art cutlers and knife
manufacturers

35
Suppliers

10
Collectors of
old knives

50
Cutlery
associations

16
countries
represented

3
high points
during the show

1
knife-maker's
village

7 000
visitors expected
in 2023

ON VIDÉO

FIND OUT MORE

ABOUT COUTELLIA

Listen to the first-hand comments from Stéphane Rodier, Mayor of Thiers, Clémentine Albouy, Project Manager Chamber of Trade & Industry Puy-de-Dôme Clermont Auvergne Metropolis and from Fabrice Delpuech, Project Coordinator.

[Click here!](#)

COUTELLIA back on track

20th & 21st May 2023, in Thiers



The International Festival of Art and Traditional Knives, COUTELLIA is back in Thiers (63), the Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st of May 2023.

For the event, close on **300 exhibitors from more than 16 countries, including art knifemakers, knife and cutlery manufacturers, raw material suppliers, machine tool manufacturers and knife associations** will gather in the heart of the world capital of knifemaking to demonstrate their know-how and share their mutual passion.

Now the European reference in trade fairs for knifemakers, COUTELLIA attracts every year many visitors who come to discover the best in international cutlery. In 2022, the event attracted 6,400 visitors who enjoyed strolling from one knifemaker's stand to the next.

Organised by the Puy-de-Dôme Clermont Auvergne Metropolis Chamber of Trade and Industry with support from the Auvergne Rhône-Alpes region, the Puy-de-Dôme Chamber of Trades and Crafts, the town of Thiers, the Thiers-Dore and Mountains Community of Municipalities and the Livradois-Forez Regional Park, the Festival provides a showcase for the whole knifemaking industry in France, and more particularly highlights the influence of the Thiers area on a global scale, giving further exposure to the town of Thiers that manufactures 300,000 knives every day.



A KNIFEMAKER'S VILLAGE OFFERING VISITORS A PLETHORA OF ACTIVITIES.

An unmissable feature of the COUTELLIA festival is the Knifemaker's village that organises, throughout the weekend, numerous activities and demonstrations of knifemaking skills for the visitor. These include an exhibition of old knives, forging demonstrations, knife assembly, sharpening, an initiation to corkscrew making and many other events to arouse the public's curiosity.

Among the novelties, **children aged from 6 to 10 will be able to participate in the workshop "Make your first all-wooden closing knife"**.

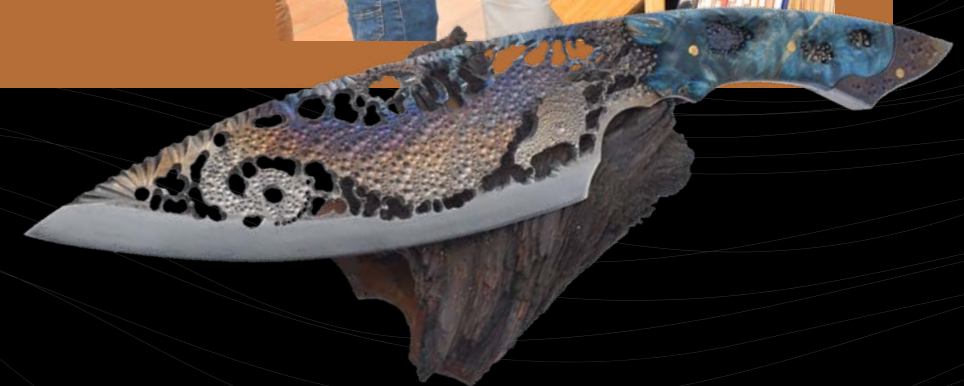
It represents an excellent opportunity to discover the many trades, skills and talents closely or distantly associated with the cutlery industry in Thiers and beyond. And maybe even inspire new entrants to the industry?

THE MUST OF KNIFEMAKING

COUTELLIA, is not just a unique opportunity to discover some original designs, but also a privileged moment to meet and chat with knifemakers present at the show from all 4 corners of France and the globe.

For this 32nd edition, there will be **200 art knife designers and knife manufacturers** exhibiting their unique creations, demonstrating their traditional skills and know-how that reflect the cultural identity of their region or country of origin.

Exhibitors from several countries will be present, from Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Pakistan, Spain, Turkey, United States and Uzbekistan.



3 HIGHLIGHTS

HIGHLIGHT #1

The Damascus World Cup, an ode to the art of forging



After a successful 1st edition in 2022, COUTELLIA will once more host the Damascus World Cup, the only competition of its kind that brings together knifemakers and blacksmiths from all over the world who are adept to the art of Damascus knives.

Over 5 hours, using identical equipment, teams of 3 will compete against each other to create the most beautiful Damascus steel blade, to be judged by a panel comprising recognised masters in their field such as Jean-Luc Soubeyras, artist blacksmith, Pascal Renoux, Best Craftsman in France and Gérard Almuzara, a member of the 2022 winning Hispamebro team.

This year's competition has attracted **a dozen teams.**

Who will succeed the Hispamebro team from Brittany who won the competition last year?

SO, WHAT IS DAMASCUS STEEL?

Damascus is obtained by successively bending and forging different pieces of steel. This process is repeated several times to obtain a single piece composed of a hundred successive layers. Once forged, this assembly, a kind of steel laminate, reveals a host of different motifs.

A unique and remarkable skill now listed in the French Inventory of Cultural Heritage.



3 QUESTIONS FOR Dominique Chambriard, knifemaker, and organiser of the competition

Why organise the Damascus World Cup?

"Quite simply to highlight the art of forging and the knifemakers adept at making Damascus art. Damascus is the ultimate in knifemaking, it's a traditional forging technique which in the past made it possible to improve the properties of different pieces of steel by successively bending and forging them. Today, it is probably the most difficult process to perform."

So how does the competition work?

"Competing teams will have a total of five hours to make a Damascus steel blade starting Saturday morning and finishing at midday Sunday. In teams of three, each team will have identical equipment (gas and coal forges, anvils, etc.) and access to the same stock of steel.

They will then have five hours to make the most beautiful piece, one hour of preparation, three hours of forging and one hour to finish their work. Like popular TV cooking competitions, teams have a limited period in which to produce their winning Damascus blade.

Sunday afternoon, the jury will then, behind closed doors, judge each piece on its merits.

How will the different Damascus blades be judged?

"Different criteria will be scrutinised when the blades are revealed at the end of the competition on Sunday afternoon. Firstly, **the design and originality of the piece**, which we will be able to measure by the beauty of the final motif. More evocative, but nevertheless important, are the aesthetics of the forged blade and the resulting patterns. **The technical skills** which can then be seen in the different types of damask, whether laminated, mosaic or twisted and in the arrangement of the various layers of steel. Not forgetting, of course, the **weld quality and team organisation**, how each team member played their part in achieving the final blade.

All these criteria combined will result in the creation of an exceptional blade!"

SAVE THE DATE

The winning team will be announced, as the blades are removed from the acid bath (a technique used to reveal the full extent of Damascus work), **at 3 p.m. on Sunday 21st May 2023 in full view of visitors to the show.**

IN SHORT



3 members per team



5 hours in which to produce the best Damascus blade



Identical equipment and steel supply



5 judging criteria

Design - Aesthetics
Technical skills - Weld quality
Team organisation



To be judged by a panel of Damascus practitioners and specialists



R E L I V E

IN PICTURES AND STORIES

the 1st edition of the Damascus World Cup

[Click here!](#)



HIGHLIGHT #2

The art knife design contest, the must of knife art

Open to all art knife exhibitors at the Festival, the knife design contest rewards the most beautiful creations on show at COUTELLIA.

Competing knives will be examined from every angle by an exceptional panel of judges as per criteria of originality, technical features, design, functionality, quality and finish.

For this 32nd edition of Coutellia, there will be **thirty art knife designers competing and showing the extent of their talents.**

Last year, it was Jean-Pierre Martin, a knife maker in the Bouches-du-Rhône département of France, who was awarded 1st prize for his carbon and black titanium knife with its unique feature of a retractable «pocket clip» system hidden within the handle.



ON VIDÉO

WATCH AND LISTEN HIS STORY!

[Click here !](#)

ÉRIC ROUX AND PÉRICO LÉGASSE, 2 COLOURFUL MEMBERS OF THE JURY

This year's contest will be judged by a jury including 2 champions of French gastronomy: Éric Roux, food writer and Périco Légasse, food critic. Both fervent advocates of «eat better» and «eat right», they are also great fans of knives. They will have to decide between the competing knifemakers and determine the most beautiful piece.



Périco Légasse

Éric Roux

HIGHLIGHT #3

The COUTELLIA Innovation Awards, rewarding innovation.

Launched in 2022, the “COUTELLIA Innovation Awards” put the spotlight on the best technical knife innovations from among all the knife exhibitors at the Festival.

The prize-winners will be chosen by a jury made up of knife industry leaders, representatives of professional organisations and by the Festival's partners.

This free to enter competition is open to all exhibitors registered as suppliers and who wish to promote a technological innovation designed for the cutlery industry.

Not just limited to products, as innovative services qualify too.



D I S C O V E R

THE FEEDBACK FROM THE 2022 PRIZE-WINNERS

Mercome, Pierre La Lune and Naniwa

[Click here!](#)

N.B.

A delegation from the town of Bursa in Turkey will be present at COUTELLIA to showcase its knifemaking expertise and its different range of knives.

A large city in north-west Turkey located in the foothills of Mount Uludag, that rises to roughly 2,500 m above sea-level, Bursa is known for its mosques and its historical sites that date back to the start of the Ottoman Empire.

The town is nicknamed Yesil Bursa (Bursa the green) due to its numerous parks and trees as well as the impressive environment formed by the surrounding mountain ranges.

Bursa is also well-known for its knifemaking. This know-how was brought by Balkan refugees after the Russo-Turkish war of 1877, who then developed the knifemaking trade in their town of adoption.

A vast array of activities

Throughout the weekend, the Knifemaker's village offers a multitude of events and demonstrations for the pleasure of all visitors to the Festival, enabling them to learn more about the industry.

Here, we focus on several unmissable events.

NEW!

Workshop "Assemble your first all-wooden closing knife"

Mentored by the Confrérie du Couteau LE THIERS® (Brotherhood of the LE THIERS® knife) this workshop allows young apprentice cutlers, aged between 6 and 10, to learn about the different pieces that go to make up a knife and to learn how to assemble their own knife, one made entirely from wood!

> **Registrations directly at the knifemaker's village stand**



Initiation to forge work

For 90 minutes, under the supervision of the Confrérie du Couteau LE THIERS®, visitors will discover the complex management of fire and learn the technical gestures that will transform a flat steel bar into a blade ready to be assembled.

🕒 **Duration** : 90 mins 💶 **Cost** : € 60

> **Registrations directly at the Knifemaker's village stand.**

📺 **ON VIDÉO**

[Click here!](#)

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Listen to the feedback from a member of the Confrérie du Couteau LE THIERS® and a participant.

Knife assembly workshop

Equipped with a protective apron and chaperoned by a member of the Confrérie du Couteau LE THIERS®, festival visitors will learn how to assemble their own LE THIERS® knife and take it home with them.

🕒 **Duration** : 45 mins 💶 **Cost** : € 35

> **As of Saturday morning, book your place at the Confrérie - Knifemaker's village stand.**

📺 **ON VIDÉO**

[Click here!](#)

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Listen to the feedback from a member of the Confrérie du Couteau LE THIERS® and a participant.



Object cutting competition

The idea? Cut the maximum number of objects (paper, wooden planks, rope, bottles, tennis balls etc) in the minimum number of strokes while keeping the edge of the knife intact.

Corkscrew making demonstrations

Just as Thiers is the French capital of knives, so Saint-Rémy sur Durole (10 minutes by car from Thiers) is the historical capital of the corkscrew. Through a number of demonstrations, visitors will be able to discover how the various types of corkscrews are made.



Knife sharpening

The Thiers CFAI will give demonstrations and initiations in knife sharpening.



Exhibition of ancient knives

16th century "dailles" (type of sickle), flat knives, folding knives from the 17th and 18th centuries and hunting knives, so many old pieces for the visitor to admire..

Exhibition of shaving equipment

The Rasophiles, an association of collectors of traditional and modern shaving equipment, including cutthroats, electric razors and styling equipment, will exhibit a number of exceptional French and foreign shaving devices and appliances.



Exhibition Les Vieilles Lames

The Vieilles Lames (lit. « Old blades») association will showcase many of the tools and machines used before the advent of electricity, with visuals of old-fashioned techniques and manufacturing processes.



An Introduction to Knifemaking Teaching and Training

Teachers and apprentices from the Thiers CFAI will be on hand throughout the weekend to introduce visitors to knifemaking training and will answer all your questions.

The Festival “FRINGE”



COUTELLIA is also a great opportunity to promote the architectural, cultural and industrial heritage of the town of Thiers through a **number of free events**, found on the fringe of the Festival, organised by the Thiers Tourist Information Office.

Visit to the Knifemakers Museum

The Knifemakers Museum can be found in the centre of Old Thiers in a typical half-timbered house classified as a listed building. Festivalgoers can visit free of charge to learn all about the history of knives. Eight centuries of knives can be admired through 800 rare or unusual pieces. More than just a traditional museum, it also houses workshops demonstrating old-fashioned knife cutting and the assembly of a closing knife. A living repository of knifemaking heritage.

58 rue de la Coutellerie • 63300 Thiers
Open 10.00-12.00 • 14.00-18.00 every day,
except Mondays

www.ville-thiers.fr/musee-de-la-coutellerie



Exhibition Blades of excellence,

Best Craftsmen of France -

Thiers May 2023- May 2024

The town of Thiers invites visitors to an exhibition dedicated to the Best Craftsmen of France, active in the Auvergne region and surrounding départements, most of whom learnt their trade in Thiers. The Thiers area, alone, counts a dozen Best Craftsmen of France (known as M.O.F.), not to mention those who started their business in Thiers before moving to other regions in France.

Tribute will be paid to Henri Viallon, and Angel Navarro, who was head of the workshop at the Maison des Couteliers and himself a candidate in the 1982 competition, plus tributes to two other M.O.F. figures Roger Dubost and Jean-Baptiste Simonet.

The exhibition can be partly found at the Musée de la Coutellerie (Knifemakers Museum) for the more historical section and the Cité des Couteliers (for the more contemporary section), from 20th May 2023 to May 2024.



N.B.

A **free shuttle service** is available for festivalgoers between the COUTELLIA Festival and the upper part (historical centre) of Thiers, as follows, Saturday 10.00 - 19.00 and Sunday 11.00 - 19.00.



FOCUS ON the 2023 knife

Every year, the official COUTELLIA Festival poster features a knife.

For this year's event, a knife designed by Pierre-Alexis Chambriard has been selected to set the tone for 2023. This unprecedented knife was made in concert with 2 other knife artists Théo Buisson and Pierre Thomas.

As the 28-year-old Pierre-Alexis explains, *"All three of us had entered the contest, we talked about our respective ideas and from the outset it was clear that the three projects were very different each from the others. Pierre was thinking of a knife with plenty of visual detail and decoration, whereas Théo had the idea of a colourful pop art knife. So my thinking was to take the opposing view, visually speaking, by imagining a refined and modern interpretation of the Le THIERS® knife."*

I decided to make the handle out of carbon fibre, an innovative material with excellent properties, even if it remains invisible in photos. With the addition of the double mitre and a brushed finish steel blade for a very metallic look. I also set myself a small technical challenge concerning the mechanism that locks the blade. This is a back lock that had to be forged by hand and then made to fit perfectly into the handle without it protruding. I spent many hours working on the knife and its prototypes before obtaining the perfect mechanism. But all those hours of work were worth it!"

KNIFEMAKERS FROM FATHER TO SON...



Pierre-Alexis Chambriard has been working as a knifemaker for seven years and the least we can say is that it runs in the family.

In 1952, his great-grandfather, André Chambriard built a small factory in "La Montférie" (near Viscomtat) that made table knives, including the entirely stainless-steel Monobloc, a very popular design that sold all over the world. The company prospered, expanded, and moved closer to Thiers, under the leadership of Georges, André's eldest son, who ran the company with his sister Monique and their younger brother Alain. In the 80's, the company moved premises to the centre of Thiers, when Georges' two sons, Dominique and Philippe, joined

the company. Philippe is Pierre-Alexis' father.

It was therefore quite normal for him to follow in the footsteps of his ancestors. In 2014, he began a knifemaking CAP in Thiers and completed his apprenticeship with Florinox, before joining the family knifemaking business in 2016.

Today, Chambriard Knifemakers stock more than 5,000 types of pocketknives and table knives, many are manufactured by sixty of the 100 knifemakers based in and around Thiers. Member of the Confrérie du couteau Le THIERS®, (Brotherhood of Le THIERS® knifemakers), the company is also renowned for the manufacture of its knife "Le THIERS®" by Chambriard.

A look at the local economy

Thiers cutlery manufacture and its impact on the economy

Pocket knives, professional knives and table and kitchen knives are the principal manufacture in Thiers, where **350,000 items of cutlery are manufactured every day, that represents 80% of the total national output.**

80 craft companies employing 1,620 staff for an annual turnover of 200 million Euros.

Every second company based in Thiers exports to the EU, other exports are equally destined to America (primarily US and Canada) and Asia (in the majority to China).

THE THIERS KNIFEMAKING INDUSTRY IN A FEW FIGURES

137 craft companies

90 sub-contractors and suppliers

1,620 employees

€ 200 M in annual T/O

350,000 items manufactured every day = 80% of the total national output

20,000 different models of knife and cutting instruments

Thiers, world knifemaking capital



It's in the heart of the Livradois-Forez regional park, opposite the UNESCO-listed Chain of Puys that one finds the town of Thiers, a town that has been entirely shaped by the knifemaking industry with an uninterrupted history of 8 centuries of cutlery production.

Many sites bear witness to Thiers' rich knifemaking heritage, such as,

- **Factory Valley (Vallée des Usines)**

An iconic site located beside the river Durolle, which was the epicentre of knifemaking between the 14th and 20th centuries. Today, it is better known for Hell's Hollow (Creux de l'Enfer) that is a contemporary art museum, plus the May Factory (Usine du May), a culture centre.

- **Spinning wheel Valley (Vallée des Rouets)**

Here, you will find all the old water mills. By following a trail, visitors can follow in the footsteps of the grinders, craftsmen who used to sharpen their blades, lying on wooden boards.

- **Knifemakers City (Cité des Couteliers)**

The shop window of all Thiers know-how, in a dedicated space is displayed all Thiers' knifemakers' current products.

The future of knifemaking will be shaped in Thiers

Since 1992, the training programme provided by the CFAI in Thiers instructs motivated young people to study for the CAP in cutting and surgical instruments.

The centre also caters for company employees, the unemployed and people undergoing retraining. Since it was first started, over 300 apprentices have been trained for the cutlery CAP with a growing number of applicants in recent years. Classes are made up of a maximum of twenty or so apprentices.

The CAP is a sandwich course based around an apprenticeship contract with over 40 companies sponsoring and supporting students during their training.

It is a golden opportunity for all companies in the Thiers area looking for qualified personnel.

"As it stands today, there are far more job offers than trained candidates to fill those spots."

Pascale Hermillon, Head of Training, CFA Thiers.



WANT TO LEARN MORE

ABOUT THE TRAINING?

Listen to Pascale Hermillon, Head of Training, CFA Thiers.

[Click here!](#)

Practical Information

Coutellia

THE INTERNATIONAL ART
KNIFE AND TRADITIONAL
KNIFEMAKING FESTIVAL

20TH & 21ST MAY 2023

Avenue du Progrès - ZI du Breuil
63300 Thiers



Opening times

Saturday 20th May : 09.00 - 18.00
Sunday 21st May : 10.00 - 18.00



Entry fee

1 day : € 10 /person (free for the under 15's)

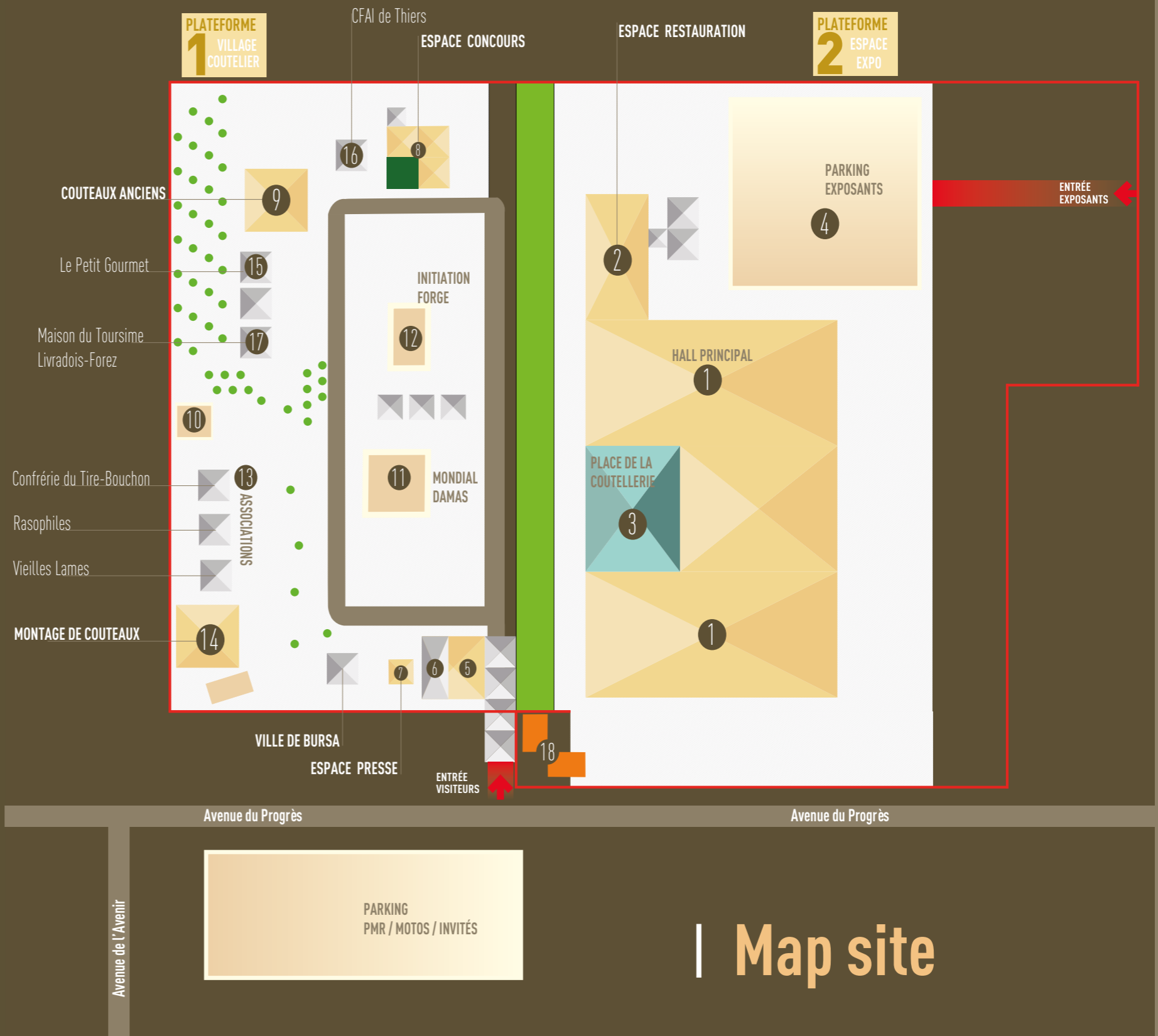
2 days : € 15 /person

> The entry fee includes entry to the Festival
and access to all events and demonstrations.



Catering

On-site catering



| Map site



contacts

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Service communication CCI Puy-de-Dôme - 2022
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Un événement organisé par

nos partenaires :

