

Coutellia



18 & 19
MAY 2024
THIERS

THE INTERNATIONAL ART
KNIFE TRADITIONAL
KNIFEMAKING FESTIVAL

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What do you understand by COUTELLIA?

Having established itself over many years, as THE attraction in the month of May for both businesses and the public, COUTELLIA, the International Festival of Artistic and Traditional Knives, is today a key event in the local economy. Internationally renowned, every year new talents and techniques are revealed that continue to promote the knifemaking trade's values. Companies and artisans from the world over come to COUTELLIA to showcase their know-how and passion. We look forward to hearing their stories at this, the 33rd edition on May 18 and 19!

Claude Barbin,
President of the Chamber of Trade and Industry
for the Puy-de-Dôme Clermont Auvergne Metropolis



The next generation is already here!

The competition organised during COUTELLIA 2023 featured the detailed and meticulous work of 2 young knifemakers, both under the age of 30. What satisfaction and pride it gives us to see our traditional know-how continue to prosper with this new generation, whose creative work is totally in tune with the times. Combining traditional skills with modern technology, they open a whole new world of possibilities in this constantly evolving sector!

Universally recognised today, here in Thiers, in the heart of the only knifemaking region in the world to boast 8 centuries of uninterrupted history, COUTELLIA has become a truly global annual gathering for both trade and amateur knifemakers, and in such a festive atmosphere!

Jean-Pierre Treille,
President of COUTELLIA

Coutellia IN A FEW FIGURES

2 500
m² of showground
space

300
exhibitors, as
follows,

200
Art cutlers and knife
manufacturers

40
Suppliers

7
Collectors of old
knives

50
Members of
knifemaking
associations

21
countries
represented

1
knife design
competition

1
Knifemaker's Village

7 200
visitors expected in
2024



THE BIGGER PICTURE A NEW GENERATION

With 113 companies representing over 1,200 craftsmen and artists and some 30 specialized subcontractors, the French knifemaking industry retains an ancestral know-how that has continued to prosper. Recognized internationally, the proof of this being that 28% of our business comes from exports, with a sharp 61%¹ increase since 2018.

Regional knives, art knives or personal creations, ancestral techniques or more modern knives, French cutlery continues to progress with a skilful blend of tradition and modernism. And the younger generation have seized on technological advances to carve out their own history while retaining the fundamentals that have made French cutlery so successful. With a deep passion for their craft, these young knifemakers create knives that reflect their own image, with a distinctive look and exceptional finish. Because the resurgence of artisanal cutlery is also due to young people who produce less but create more elaborate pieces, we look at this gifted generation in 4 portraits.

BENJAMIN LARAUD
31 years old | Puy-de-Dôme



“ I dreamt of a knife as beautiful as a jewel. ”

Benjamin Laraud exemplifies the fresh and daring spirit of this new generation of knifemakers. Following his basic training at the CFAL in Thiers, he gained his spurs by working as a craftsman for several firms in the Thiers region, before opening his own workshop “Laraud Blades” in January 2023. **Drawing on his 9 years of experience, he has created his own line of handcrafted knives, the “Oegopsyde”.** This pocketknife, incorporating a liner lock mechanism, combines practicality with the elegance of its sleek lines. Driven by a desire to perfect each stage of the manufacturing process and guided by his passion for blades, Benjamin is continuously honing his skills. “It was at a previous edition of COUTELLIA that I had a go at creating Damascus steel during the World Damascus contest. The opportunity to learn from these experiences is very rewarding”, Benjamin relates, aware that **constant self-questioning is a given in the art of knifemaking.**

Happy in his job, Benjamin doesn't hesitate for one second to admit that knifemaking has become an integral part of his life journey!



ROMAIN ALVAREZ
22 years old | Puy-de-Dôme



“ I want to help keep this industry strong, by staying as close as I can to the traditional ways. ”

Winner of the knifemaking competition at COUTELLIA 2023, Romain Alvarez continues to forge his career as a largely self-taught craftsman. Already, at the age of 12, he made his first knife under the guidance of his very DIY-minded grandfather. And at 15 he was perfecting his knifemaking skills under the watchful eye of Guillaume Antoniucci. Since when, he has dedicated his life to the craft of knifemaking.

In 2022, he officially launched his own workshop in Vertaizon. For Romain, **traditional craftsmanship takes precedence over the use of machines, as they result in unique and authentic creations.** “I prefer to use natural and organic materials. In my creations, I avoid using composites in favour of a more classical and more eco-friendly approach,” explains the young man, who remains very attached to traditional skills and techniques. In his opinion, **the perfect knife is a simple, functional, and robust tool, hand crafted with passion and attention to detail.** All his designs are entirely made by hand. It takes anything from 2 to 10 days to produce a knife and with humility he pursues his chosen career path as a knifemaker, fully aware that one never stops learning.

Focus on his winning knife

In 2023, Romain Alvarez, at just 21 years old, won first prize at COUTELLIA. The jury applauded the technical aspects of his design that features a type of safety catch mechanism that is generally found only on larger knives.

As Jean- Pierre Treille, president of COUTELLIA points out, “It's an insanely simple knife, but incredibly sophisticated! It's on a par with work produced by the *Meilleurs Ouvriers de France* (Best Crafts persons in France)!”



¹ Source «Panorama économique enjeux de développement et compétences du secteur de la coutellerie française» (An Economic overview of development and skills in the French cutlery sector), 11 December 2023. In this study, one-person businesses (classified as «cutlery artists») and businesses which, in the opinion of the study's authors, do not fall within the cutlery sector (e.g. razor manufacturers). Very small businesses and self-employed artisans were not included either, even though many artisan cutlers work within the parameters of these business models.

JOËL ALEXANIAN

29 years old | Var



“ **My attachment to the environment is reflected in my designs** ”

It only took 7 years for Joël Alexanian to confirm his position and style as an art knifemaker to his peers from repairing a knife found in a forest to winning 2nd prize at COUTELLIA 2023, “*Having always intended to become a forest ranger, I discovered the world of cutlery when restoring a knife that I’d found by chance in a forest. To me it was a defining moment, and so it was as a completely self-taught individual that I launched myself into the world of knifemaking!*”, as Joël confides to us today. Closely associated with the environment, the knifemaker uses local wood, but not just any wood, for his knife handles. “*I collect juniper and olive wood from forests that have burnt down. As well as reusing materials that tell a story, burnt wood is more stable and reveals interesting patterns to work with for the handles of my folding knives.*”

With his authentic, time-honoured approach, Joël carries out every stage of a knife build in his workshop in the Var, including the forging of his Damascus blades. “*I was soon won over by the artistic potential of cutlery and the opportunity to give free rein to my designs. From using a chisel at the outset of a new design to the microscopic precision finish for forging flies on springs, my method has quickly appealed to my customers as a way of personalising their knives. I now try to create 4 or 5 beautiful knife models a year. Recently, I started sculpting blades in 3 dimensions,*” for Joël, precision, patience and dexterity are inseparable from his craft.

FOCUS ON HIS KNIFE, “LE CHAMPÊTRE” THAT WAS AWARDED 2ND PRIZE BY THE JURY IN 2023

The 3-dimensional design at the heart of the knife’s blade, shaped entirely from one piece, took 50 hours to complete. A true feat of artistry, some areas measure only 2 tenths of a millimetre thick. The spotted woodpecker adds a delightful finishing touch to this knife, which offers a scene teeming with detail and life.

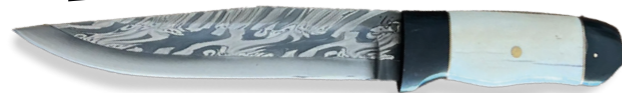
“ **It’s a fascinating and rewarding trade. I just wish that it stays that way, while adding my own personal touch.** ”

In the family workshop Couleur de Forge, Guillen Soubeyras blends both tradition and contemporary design in the creation of his work. Specialising in the manufacture of table, hunting and historical knives, Guillen enjoys nothing more than to experiment with new materials and techniques to produce even more beautiful and robust creations. For him, **the perfect knife is both functional and satisfies all our expectations of it.** Passionate about fire and steel, Guillen shapes blades and forges parts using the strength of his own hands. “*I am very fortunate to have a workshop equipped with high-performance machines such as a power-hammer, a press, a mill, grinders, coal, gas and induction forges, and so on. This enables me to combine the skills of knifemaker with those of blacksmith to create objects made entirely in my workshop. I am continually challenged to produce even more remarkable pieces, both in terms of their aesthetics and their quality.*”

This talent was undoubtedly inherited from his father, Jean-Luc Soubeyras, an artisan blacksmith, knifemaker and one of the pioneers of the revival in Damascus steel. “*This transfer of forging know-how, whether from within the family or from a more professional capacity, is highly important in my opinion. We offer courses and training for students to discover the world of hot metal work, and to train future crafts persons. To be able to share this family heritage is a real source of honour and pleasure.*”

GUILLEN SOUBEYRAS

32 years old | Drôme



A WORD FROM LAURENT BÉAL, INSTRUCTOR AT THIERS CFAI IN THE PUY-DE-DÔME

Over the last 5 years, the promotion of manual trades at a national level has reduced the average age of apprentices at the CFAI in Thiers. The number of students studying a CAP (*Certificat d’aptitude professionnelle - Certificate of competence*) in cutting and surgical instruments, is rapidly increasing.

Laurent Béal, Instructor at the CFAI in Thiers, looks at the motivations behind the training, as well as the changes that have taken place in recent years. «Many of the young people who join our training programme choose knifemaking because they are enthusiastic about the final product. In most cases, an interest in artistic knifemaking is one of the motivating factors, along with the desire to fashion a unique creation. Throughout their training, they discover that the art of knifemaking is a real niche. At the same time, craft cutlery remains accessible and viable thanks to recent technological developments. It is now possible to manufacture small series by calling on subcontractors who specialise, for example, in the laser cutting of blades. In micro-workshops, machinery is smaller but also more accurate, making it possible to manufacture parts to an exceptional finish. This new generation of knifemakers is focused on product quality, producing a visually attractive yet highly functional object. Most young people who graduate from our training programme go on to work for a cutlery company, although a few go straight into business on their own. In recent years, some firms have given their younger employees more freedom allowing them to design their own knives, some of which are even produced in-house. This creative flame is kept alight for those so inclined. After gaining valuable work experience in a wide range of firms, some of them go on to set up their own workshops.”



FEATURING THE LE THIERS® KNIFE A KNIFE FROM, AND ENTIRELY MADE, HERE

LE THIERS® IN A FEW FIGURES

190

active members of the **LE THIERS®**
la Confrérie du couteau
(Thiers Knife Brotherhood)

62

members cutlery firms, manufacturers
of the **LE THIERS®** knife including
5 new members in 2024.

MORE THAN 700

variations to date, with 50 new
accreditations every year.

From the Auvergne to Brittany, via Corsica, the Alps to Provence and Alsace, every French region's knife claims specific shapes and features. Conceived, designed and manufactured in the heart of France's #1 knifemaking region, the **LE THIERS®** knife is no exception to the rule. Instantly recognisable for its modern yet timeless shape of a double wave, with obliques at either end of an inverted handle. As a pocketknife or a table knife, in a traditional or more contemporary version, the **LE THIERS®** is a knife from here, and entirely made here since November 7, 1994! **This means that all the individual parts of the knife and every stage of the manufacturing process must be fully carried out in the Thiers cutlery region.**

Every year, COUTELLIA invites a cutler to propose their own interpretation of **LE THIERS®** shaped knife. And this year, the event organisers have invited Tim Bernard, knifemaker at the Névé workshop, to create an elegant and detailed version with his **LE THIERS®** Nordic. Read on for a behind-the-scenes look at how it was manufactured.



Couteau **LE THIERS®** Nordique de Tim Bernard, Atelier Névé

LE THIERS® NORDIC THE KEY STAGES OF ITS MANUFACTURE



IT STARTS LIFE AS A SKETCH

The knife starts life as a **hand-drawn design** on paper, which also details of the materials to be used and the intended design of the Damascus blade.



THE BLADE

Using the forge just a few yards from his workshop, Tim Bernard makes his own Damascus blades. For his **LE THIERS®** Nordic knife, **he challenged himself by using an electro-erosion technique to create snowflakes.** Once forged, the blade is hardened and tempered in a quench furnace to guarantee its hardness and strength. This is followed by the sharpening process using a backstand to create the cutting edge. The Damascus pattern is revealed by immersing the blade in a special bath.



THE CUTTING AND DESIGN OF STEEL PARTS

Using templates as a guide, the knifemaker **traces the contours of the spring and plates** on the steel sheet, before **cutting out their shapes** with a hacksaw.

Parts are then deburred using a belt sander.

And a drill used to **make holes** principally those for the spindle.

Parts are milled before using a grinder to ensure that they are **finely calibrated.**



SHAPING THE HANDLE

The different materials to be used for the handle are assembled and screwed to the body followed by painstaking, precision **shaping** to optimise grip.



ADJUSTMENTS AND FINISHING

Before final assembly, the decorations on the metal parts, such as the guilloche engraving and certain inserts, are made by hand. All the parts are then polished before the knife is reassembled and ready for use.

There are over 70 different stages when making a knife
It takes a week to forge each Damascus blank blade

In his workshop, Tim Bernard has optimised the 35m² available to optimise use of his 9 machines (including a dust extraction system) as functional as possible. For the knife featured on this year's Coutellia poster, every stage was carried out in his workshop and forge.

TIM BERNARD

Known as “**Mr. unusual materials**”, the thirty-year-old has combined his very Nordic inspiration with the mountain themes found on his designs to create this elegant, detailed version of the **LE THIERS®** shaped knife. As a passionate fan of palaeontology and Nordic culture, his influences have fuelled this creation, which impressed the jury when deciding upon this year’s official poster.

*“I enjoyed adapting the features of my knives to the specifications for **LE THIERS®** shaped knives! The handle is my signature design, using mammoth ivory, heat-treated beech in the centre, a rod of fossilised walrus ivory carved into shape for the throat and, for the body of the knife, textured platinum reminiscent of flint. I forged the Damascus blade with a multi-barrel pattern and as a nod and a wink to the world of snow and ice, I added some snowflakes!”*

In the world of cutlery, and particularly among collectors and buyers, this young man has carved out a unique place for himself. *“Some of my knives are sold to foreign buyers in Germany, Belgium and the United States. **What appeals to them is the distinctive French style, which is rooted in our pocketknife culture, combined with materials that tell a story.** Right now, I’ve got a soft spot for the semi-automatic liner lock mechanism with a front flipper system that you find on this design. It’s very practical and modern, allowing you to open your knife with one hand, and it’s very popular.”* Admits Tim who accepts that he is always on the look-out for unusual materials that will be the talk of the following year’s Coutellia.

FOCUS ON 2 TRADES RELATED TO KNIFEMAKING

Knifemaking in the Thiers region would be inconceivable without the presence of certain related trades. Specialist bespoke and larger-scale firms working behind the scenes to supply both the smaller craft knifemaker and the larger factories.

M CUIR

Small series leather goods

In this traditional leather goods company found in the hills above Thiers are three female employees who **passionately produce leather sheaths for all types of knives and sharp objects**. From initial cutting right through to final product packaging, the facility’s 3 workstations of hot stamping, stitching and slice dyeing are used by all 3 employees as Marion Mondière, who manages M Cuir tells us, *“When I acquired the company in 2021, we mutually decided that the best way forward would be for each of us to make the sheaths from start to finish, with only the prototypes to be validated by me. **We are proud to work primarily with French leather.**”*

From one-off orders to the production of up to 1,000 pieces, M Cuir supports knifemakers in making the sheaths and cases that will house their creations. With the advent of younger knifemakers, the trio’s creations are taking on even more colour, moving away from the ever-present black and brown leather and stitching thread!

RODDIER RODDIER

The Last independent metal work subcontractor

Specialist in the manufacture of metal parts for closing knives, Roddier Roddier has evolved with the times to continue to meet the expectations of knifemakers in Thiers, France and abroad. Their century-old expertise is now being exported to Japan, the United States and elsewhere in Europe. The team of 14 employees makes blades, springs, bolster, punches, and corkscrew worms, from small series to large-scale production runs. *“We mainly manufacture components for regional knives, but we also produce made-to-measure products. Thanks to laser cutting, we have been able to **develop small production runs that are accessible to traditional knifemakers** for orders of just a few dozen pieces. Working with this new generation of knifemakers is stimulating! We’re sometimes out of our comfort zone because of the challenging designs they expect, but we continue to grow our customer base.”* Olivier Bonthoux, the firm’s CEO tells us.

The unique feature of Roddier Roddier is that it is **the last surviving manufacturer of forged spring heads**. This cold forging process is used to produce small parts such as the bee found on all Laguiole knives, the iconic letter “T” found on **LE THIERS®** knives and the Moor’s head that features on the Corsican knife.



COUTELLIA

A GLOBAL SUCCESS

This 18th and 19th of May, the International Festival of Art and Traditional Knives, will be held in Thiers, the world capital of cutlery. It is undoubtedly the not-to-be-missed event for the knifemaking trade and fans, both young and old, passionate about cutlery.

With visitor numbers up 11% by 2023, COUTELLIA confirms its position as a benchmark event both nationally and internationally. A genuine showcase for time-honoured expertise, but also an invaluable event to discover the innovations and new technologies developed by manufacturers, the festival attracts no fewer than 300 exhibitors from over 20 different countries.

The programme includes a knife exhibition, competitions, demonstrations, workshops and opportunities for knife enthusiasts to meet and chat with knifemakers.

The Festival is organised by the Puy-de-Dôme Clermont Auvergne Metropolis Chamber of Trade & Industry with support from the Auvergne Rhône-Alpes region, the Puy-de-Dôme department, the Puy-de-Dôme Chamber of Trades and Crafts, the town of Thiers, the Thiers Dore and Mountain Community of Municipalities and the Livradois-Forez Regional Park. COUTELLIA provides the perfect showcase for the French and Thiers knife industry throughout the world.



Concentration of the Nec plus ultra!

For a whole weekend, the world of French, European and international cutlery can be found in Thiers. And what better site for this event than the world capital of cutlery? Art knifemakers, knife and cutlery manufacturers, raw material suppliers, machine tool manufacturers and knife associations will gather in the heart of the French capital of knifemaking to share their mutual passion and demonstrate their know-how.

COUTELLIA, is your perfect opportunity not only to discover original creations, but also to meet and talk to knife and cutlery makers from all over France and the rest of the world. **200 art knife and cutlery makers will be exhibiting unique pieces based on ancestral know-how and reflecting the cultural identity of their region or country of origin.** 20 countries will be represented at this, the 33rd edition of, COUTELLIA, including Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Pakistan, Portugal, San Marino, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Ukraine.

ART KNIFE DESIGN COMPETITION

The quintessence of art knifemaking

In 2023, 42 knifemakers submitted their creations to the keen scrutiny of the members of the jury. A new record for the competition that is open to all knifemakers exhibiting at the festival. And every year, the competition rewards the most outstanding creations exhibited at COUTELLIA.

Each knife is examined from every aspect including originality, technical features, design, practicality, quality and of course, finish.

The portraits of the two 2023 prize-winning knifemakers, Romain Alvarez and Joël Alexanian, can be found on pages 5 and 6.



NEW THIS YEAR

This year, exhibitors manufacturing machine tools will have a new 50 m² area to demonstrate their machines in operation, such as induction forging, abrasive machines and laser engraving tools.



THE KNIFEMAKER'S VILLAGE

A VAST ARRAY OF ATTRACTIONS

Interested in learning about the knifemaker's craft or about the knife industry in general? The Knifemaker's Village gives visitors the chance to find out more about how knives are made, and to learn more about the culture of knives.

Workshops and initiations

Initiation to forge work with 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.

90 minutes | 60 € | Registrations directly at the stand

Workshop "Assemble your knife" with the Confrérie du Couteau LE THIERS® Festivalgoers will learn how to make their own **LE THIERS®** knife and get to take it home.

45 minutes | Children's butter knife: **12 €** - Adult's folding knife: **40 € |** Registrations directly at the stand as from Saturday morning.

Initiation to knife sharpening with the Thiers CFAI

The Apprentice Learning Centre will be giving free metal-sharpening demonstrations and teaching the correct techniques for sharpening knives.

Demonstration of corkscrew making

10 minutes from Thiers is Saint-Rémy sur Durolle, the historic capital of the corkscrew. Visitors will be able to see how corkscrews are made, through a wide number of demonstrations.

Exhibitions

Ancient knives including 16th century "dailles" (a 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.

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

Les Vieilles Lames, The "Vieilles Lames" (lit. "Old blades") association will showcase many of the tools and machines used before the advent of electricity.

EFMA (*European Firefighters Museum Association*), presents an array of firefighters' knives and cutting equipment.

Introduction to knifemaker's training courses

Instructors and apprentices from the CFAI in Thiers will be on hand throughout the weekend to talk about the knifemaker's training courses on offer and answer any of your questions.

Carving and culinary arts

A free shuttle service is available on Saturday from 10.00 to 20.00, and on Sunday 11.00 to 19.30, to all festivalgoers between the COUTELLIA show site and the upper (historical) town of Thiers.



WHAT'S ON IN THE FESTIVAL "FRINGE"

Treasure Hunt by Escape my Thiers

The challenge of this family treasure hunt is to connect the lower and upper parts of Thiers visiting some twenty sites that are iconic to Thiers cutlery. The aim is to, using the clues, find an old saying about knives. On finding the saying, participants are invited to submit their entry for a chance to win some fantastic prizes.

90 minutes | For the whole family | **Free entry**

Start point: COUTELLIA

Visit to the Knifemaker's museum

Parallel with COUTELLIA, the Knifemaker's museum is open, free of charge, to festivalgoers. Learn about the history of knives. Admire six centuries of knives through the 700 rare and unusual exhibits.

Much more than a traditional museum, the Knifemaker's museum also houses workshops demonstrating old-fashioned knife cutting and the assembly of a closing knife.

Temporary EXHIBITION "Blades of excellence", (*Made by the best crafts persons in France*)

23 & 58 rue de la Coutellerie in Thiers | **Free entry, all weekend, for festivalgoers**

Saturday 18 May 10.00-12.30 and 13.30-18.30

Sunday 19 May 10.00-12.30 and 13.30-18.00

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



A free shuttle service is available on Saturday from 10.00 to 20.00, and on Sunday 11.00 to 19.30, to all festivalgoers between the COUTELLIA show site and the upper (historical) town of Thiers.

THIERS

8 CENTURIES OF KNIFEMAKING

Located in the Puy-de-Dôme département of France in the heart of the Livradois-Forez national park, Thiers has been shaped by the knifemaking industry. With over 350,000 articles of cutlery produced every day this medieval town proudly oversees eight centuries of cutlery history. It is the only town in the world with such a long and unbroken history of cutlery making.

A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTOR TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

From pocketknives to trade or kitchen knives, 80 % of knives made in France today are made in Thiers. Representing 80 manufacturers employing 1,620 staff.

From the lone crafts person to the industrial company, via the artisan workshop, the variety of businesses and the diversity of production found in Thiers, contribute to the vitality of the area's knifemaking industry.



THE THIERS KNIFEMAKING SECTOR IS:

137 CRAFT BUSINESSES

Source, Puy-de-Dôme Clermont Auvergne Metropolis CTI

96 SUBCONTRACTORS & SUPPLIERS

Source, Puy-de-Dôme Clermont Auvergne Metropolis CTI

800 JOBS

Source, Economic panorama

€ **150** M € T/O

Source, Economic panorama



350000 ARTICLES MANUFACTURED EVERY DAY
80 % OF NATIONAL OUTPUT

20000 DIFFERENT MODELS OF CUTLERY
(PROFESSIONAL KNIVES, KITCHEN GADGETS, CUTTING TOOLS, TABLE KNIVES AND CUTLERY, PLASTER KNIVES, POCKET AND LEISURE KNIVES, CELLAR ARTICLES, ETC.)



INTERNATIONAL:

95% OF CUTLERY MAKERS OPERATE INTERNATIONALLY

14% EXPORT TO THE AMERICAS (PRIMARILY THE US AND CANADA)

50% OF THIERS-BASED MANUFACTURERS EXPORT TO EU COUNTRIES

14% EXPORT TO ASIA (NOTABLY CHINA)

CUTLERY IN AND AROUND THIERS THE FRENCH EXCEPTION

A clearly defined knifemaking area must include all the ancillary trades, whether craft or industrial, linked to the knifemaking activity. This is most certainly the case in Thiers where knife and cutlery makers are fully supported by a comprehensive, high-performance network of trades including raw materials suppliers, subcontractors, machine manufacturers, leather goods manufacturers and recycling specialists, among others. There are 28 cutlery centres around the world, from Albacete in Spain to Zlatoust in Russia, via Solingen in Germany and Seki in Japan, to name just a few.

AN EXCITING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Whether it's a street name (rue de la Coutellerie, rue des Forgerons, rue des Usines, rue de l'Industrie...), a sign hanging or painted on a shop front, the first industrial forges nestling in the valley, or a paddle wheel installed along the Duroлле, it's impossible to miss the many impressions that the cutlery, and in particular knifemaking, industry have left on the town.

Several sites bear witness to Thiers' rich cutlery-making past, for example,

- **La Vallée des Usines (Factory Valley)**, An iconic site located beside the river Duroлле, which was the epicentre of knifemaking between the 14th and 20th centuries. Today, it is better known for Creux de l'Enfer (*Hell's Hollow*) that is a contemporary art museum, plus the Usine du May (*May Factory*) and Croix de Fer (*Iron Cross*) culture centres. However, since November 2021, Fontenille-Pataud cutlers has set up its business here right in the heart of the Vallée des Usines.

- **La Vallée des Rouets (Spinning wheel Valley)** is a concentration of 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 planks.



PRESERVING LOCAL KNOW-HOW

The Thiers cutlery area has managed to preserve time-honoured skills. When the Thiers Confrérie de Couteau Brotherhood was first consolidated, its raison d'être was to preserve the uniqueness of this virtually self-sufficient production. On a national scale, certain trades are only found in the Thiers area or are among the last firms to continue these fast-disappearing trades. For example,

- **Fischer-Bargoin** is France's last remaining manufacturer of sharpening rods & steels
- **STGI (Société Thiernoise de Gravure Industrielle)** is a manufacturer of blade marking punches
- **Bost René Fils** is the last hot horn sealer for moulding horns in dies for use as handles

REGIONAL KNIVES

In the same way that the Laguiole knife has been made in Thiers workshops for over 150 years, many other regional knives have passed through the hands of Thiers' cutlers. It's due to the know-how, production capacity and «à la carte» services offered by the region's cutlery makers that these authentic, recognisable shapes will live on. Incidentally, the Thiers area has even designed and produced other regional knives to meet their local requirements such as the Aurillac, le Tonneau and the Armor and Camargue knives.

Practical information

Coutellia

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
OF ART AND TRADITIONAL
KNIVES

18TH & 19TH MAY 2024

Avenue du Progrès - ZI du Breuil
63300 Thiers



Opening times

Saturday 18TH May: 9:00 - 18:00
Sunday 19TH May: 10:00 - 18:00



Entry fee

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

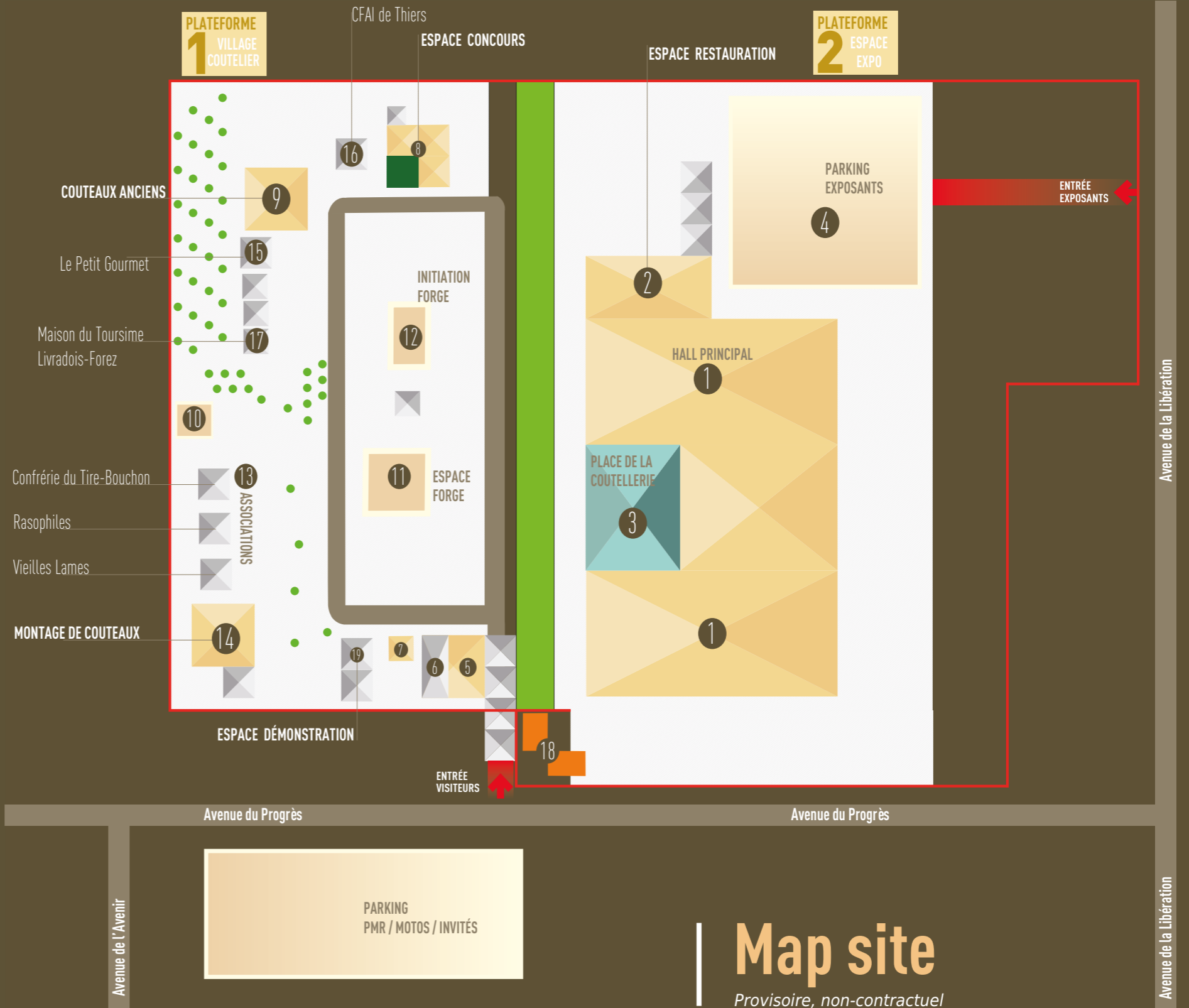
2 days : € 15/person

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



Catering

On-site catering



Map site

Provisoire, non-contractuel



contacts

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Service communication CCI Puy-de-Dôme - 2023
Conception : Agence Qui Plus Est
Couteau : Tim Bernard - © Crédits photos : Felix de Malleray, Nathalie Dubost, Serge Bullo, Freepik

Un événement organisé par



nos partenaires :

