

A MORVAN HOUSE



This is a reconstruction of the principal room in a Morvan house, where the family would eat together and gather round the hearth.

GASTRONOMY

Saulieu's reputation as a halt for travellers began when it was on the old Roman road, and was further established in 1653 when the regional authority at that time built the main Paris-Lyon road through the town. The town then became a staging-post. It was about this time, in 1677, that the famous Madame de Sévigné, travelling to Vichy to take the waters, stopped for a copious meal and confessed that she became a little intoxicated.

Centuries later, this town already renowned for its French cuisine became even more famous thanks to Alexandre Dumaine (1895-1974) – "chef to kings, and the king of chefs". He came to the Hôtel de la Côte d'Or in 1931 and left in 1963.

After Dumaine, Bernard Loiseau (1951-2003) took charge of the Hôtel, and became its owner in 1982.



With his wife Dominique he made the Hôtel de la Côte d'Or famous world-wide for its warm welcome and its cuisine which combines simplicity and refinement. The menus here displayed are a witness to the culinary art of our two great chefs.



POPULAR ART AND TRADITIONS



We go back in time with this display of old trades and their tools: blacksmith, sabot-maker (maker of wooden shoes), farmer, bee-keeper-all under the protection of their special saints.

Much older are the Gallo-roman ex-votos or commemorative plaques discovered at the Fontaine Segrain, and which are associated with the veneration of an ancient healing spring.

Many sabot-makers worked in Saulieu in the 19th C. in small workshops.

The sabots they produced were sold at local fairs and in the villages of the Morvan, even the smallest. At the beginning of the 20th C nearly 800 000 pairs of sabots were produced every year.

Why is there a Musée François Pompon in Saulieu?

Between the two world wars the Town Council of Saulieu, under its mayor Alfred Guillaume, opened in a 17th C house a museum devoted to the traditions of Morvan life.

The idea of establishing a Musée François Pompon in Saulieu was first proposed in Paris in 1929. The sculptor's reaction was reported in the press : " A Museum for me? I've never heard speak of it. You astonish me!... I've never shown the least interest in this project... It's not in order to furnish a museum that I work." However, when François Pompon visited Saulieu in November 1932, he yielded to the numerous entreaties, and chose a room in the former presbytery as his museum.

After François Pompon's funeral, which took place in Saulieu on the 11th May 1933, the authorities encouraged the people of Saulieu to help in creating a museum in honour of their compatriot.

Since he died without inheritors, François Pompon left his work to the State. The contents of his studio were divided between several French museums.

The museum at Saulieu inaugurated its new "Regional Museum of Traditional Morvan and Burgundy Life" with a room dedicated to the sculptor François Pompon. Here are youthful works donated by his family, and in addition works entrusted to the museum in Saulieu by the Museum of Paris and the Fine Arts Museum in Dijon. These were later acquired by the Musée François Pompon thanks to gifts and purchases. Through renovations in 1993, the collections were now shown to better advantage and pay homage to one of the greatest of animal sculptors.

The museum displays other paintings and sculptures, as well as temporary exhibitions. There are also conferences, readings, and competitions in drawing, painting and sculpture.

Closed Monday afternoon and all day Tuesday

And on 1st May and 25th December.

Annual Closing : January and February.

Opening Hours

Monday to Saturday

From 1st April to 30th September
10h.00 – 12h.30 and 14h.00 – 18h.00

From 1st October to 31st December
and 1st March to 31st March
10h.00 – 12h.30 and 14h.00 – 17h.30

Sundays and Public Holidays

10h.30 – 12h.00 and 14h.00 – 17h.00



musée
Pompon



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GALLO-ROMAN FUNERAL MONUMENTS



13 funeral monuments in Morvan granite from the ancient necropolis of Sidolocum (Saulieu). Such Gallo-roman monuments show the dead in their daily life, with some symbol (pump organ, staff, tool or vessel, an animal, or sometimes an inscription) which identifies them.

Some objects are symbolic : the ascia or adze, representing the inviolable tomb ; the door, representing the passage from life on earth to that beyond the grave ; the plate or dish for offering food to the dead.

SACRED ART

This room presents a number of objects used in the celebration of the liturgy : a lectern, a collection of musical responses sung during the services, a chalice, a paten, and also statues of saints.



A remarkable **St. John the Baptist** in wood of the 14 C from the church at Thoisy-la-Berchère.



A large statue of **Christ** in wood of the 14C, whose face bears the imprint of sorrowful spirituality.

EVANGELIARY "prayer book of Charles the Great"



A 12th century manuscript, the cover consists of two ivory slabs carved in the 11th century. The ornamental decoration dates back to the 14th century. An Evangeliary, the English term for the Latin Evangelarium (plural Evangelitaria), is a liturgical book containing those portions of the Four Gospels which are read during Mass or in the public offices of the Church. It is therefore distinguished from a gospel book, which contains the full texts of the Gospels, without references in them to the passages or date of liturgical use.

FRANÇOIS POMPON

Born in Saulieu on the 9th of May 1855, Pompon was first apprenticed to his father, a cabinet-maker.

François Pompon worked for a time as a monumental mason. In 1870 he studied at the School of Fine Art in Dijon, followed in 1875 by a course at the school of Decorative Arts in Paris.



He specialized in portraits of the human figure. Grouped round his own portrait sculpted by his friend Martinet, we see his youthful work : portraits of his wife, his parents, his nephew, and the priest of his native town.



A skilled practitioner, he was employed by the most important sculptors of that time : Dampé (1885), Mercier (1888), Falguière (1890), Rodin (from 1890, where he became head of studio in 1893), and Saint-Marceaux (1896-1914).



By 1906, Pompon had become less interested in the human figure, and began to devote himself to the representation of animals. This particular interest was due, not only to his Burgundian origins, but also to one of his professors, the renowned animal sculptor Pierre Rouillard.

In summer Pompon found the models for his domestic animal sculptures on the farms and in the farmyards of the countryside...

... in the winter, he found the models for his wild and exotic animals at the zoo, in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris.



There, on his portable workbench, Pompon modelled his chosen animal from the life, in clay, which he then reworked in his studio.



François Pompon said "It is movement which determines shape and form. What I have tried to express is the sense of movement. At the Jardin des Plantes, I observe the animals as they move. It is interesting to see how the animal reveals the articulations of its body. I sculpt the animal in almost every small detail, and then, little by little, I eliminate these so as to keep only what is absolutely necessary."



This principle of simplification in order to express form is close to Japanese aesthetic theory. Could it be that Camille Claudel, who Pompon met in Rodin's studio, initiated him into Far Eastern art? Pompon eliminates detail and what is insignificant in order to express more effectively mass and movement.



His friends - a young painter, the critic Robert Ray, and the sculptor Antoine Bourdelle - advised Pompon to copy animals life-size. His polar-bear, in size as big as it is in nature, was a great success and brought fame to Pompon at the Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1922.

Colette, the great French writer, admired the Bear : " The strange smallness of the head, its elongated, sharpened, fish-like shape designed to penetrate through ice to the water beneath..."

People came from far away to visit Pompon's studio. He was decorated with the Legion of Honour. However, this sudden fame did not change his way of life. His advice was "If you find success, shut yourself up in your studio and work". That was what he did. He continued to sculpt and perfect his animals.



Orders flooded in, while he continued his creative work. Fame and reputation did not change his modest nature.

Pompon died in Paris on the 6th of May 1933, at the age of 78. Still today, in the cemetery of the church of St. Saturnin in Saulieu, near the apse, Pompon's life-size statue of the great Condor watches over the tomb of Pompon and his wife Berthe.

