

THE POTTERS'

DISCOVERY TOUR



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Offices de
Tourisme
de France



Pays
Rhénan
OFFICE DE TOURISME

WELCOME

to the city of potters



3,800 YEARS OF POTTERY... AND COUNTING!

Close your eyes and travel back in time...

Pause for a moment in the Bronze Age, around 1800 BC. This is where it all begins: skilled hands shaping clay, giving life to the very first pottery pieces of the region.

Archaeological digs in the nearby Haguenau forest uncovered hidden remnants buried in ancient burial mounds — silent witnesses to long-lost stories. Centuries later, in the 19th century, a man named Xavier Joseph Nessel, then mayor of Haguenau and a passionate historian, unearthed these treasures and brought them together in a collection now housed in the town's historical museum.

But why here, of all places? Because nature had laid the perfect foundations: clay-rich soil, flowing rivers, and forests full of wood to fire the kilns. Everything was in place for the art of pottery to take root... and endure through the centuries, all the way to us.



For the tour,
click here!

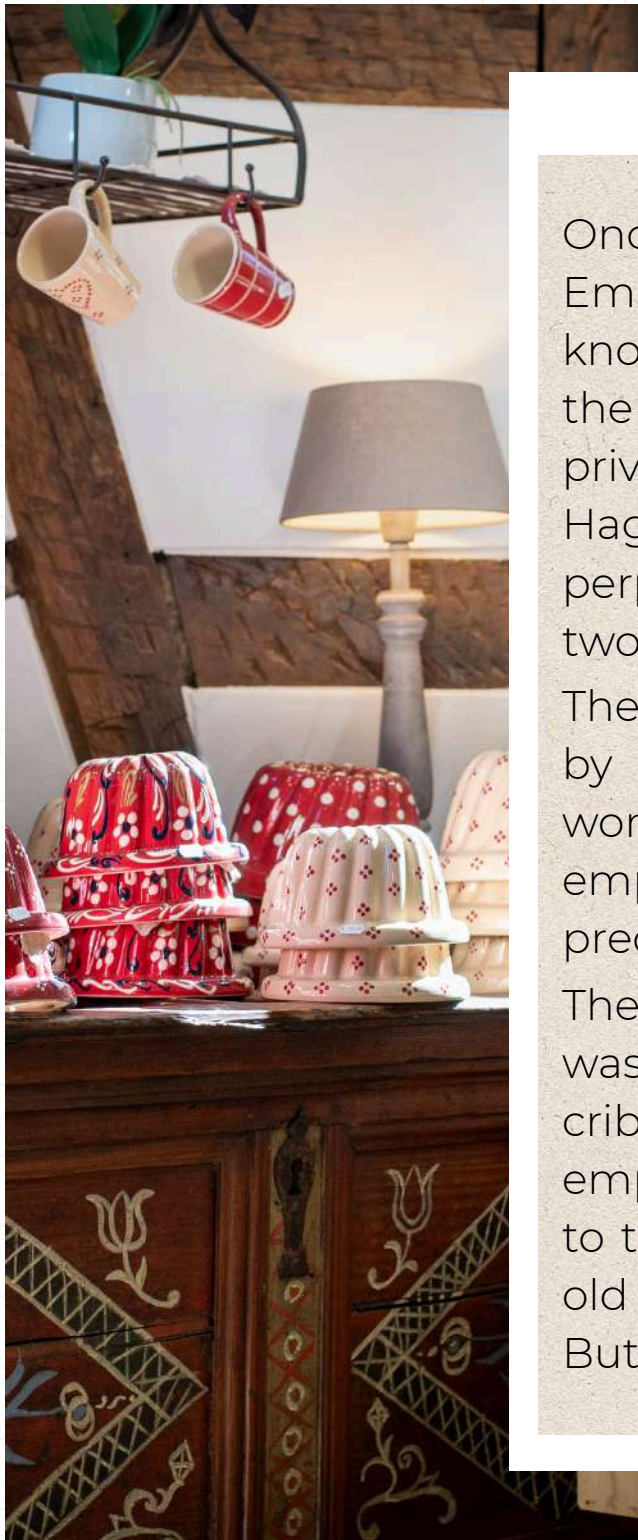


A LEGEND CARVED IN CLAY

Once upon a time, in the 12^e century, Emperor Frederick I of Hohenstaufen, known as Frederick Barbarossa, granted the potters of Soufflenheim a unique privilege: to extract clay from the Haguenau forest free of charge and in perpetuity. But why such a gift? There are two versions of the story...

The first tells of Barbarossa being attacked by a wild boar while hunting. A potter working nearby came to the rescue of the emperor, who in gratitude offered this precious right to the craftsmen.

The other version states that this privilege was granted in gratitude for a terracotta crib made by the potters and offered to the emperor. The imperial parchment attesting to this right disappeared in 1622, when the old Soufflenheim town hall burned down... But the tradition is still very much alive!



DURATION

1h30 to 2h

DISTANCE

3,5 km - 2.18 miles

DEPARTURE

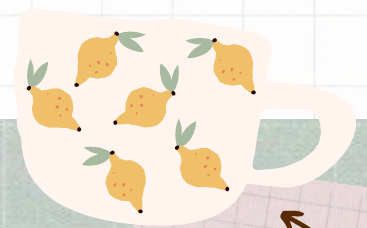
Tourist Information Office
20b, Grand'Rue 67620 Soufflenheim

DIFFICULTY

Easy

ACCESSIBILITY

Pedestrians - Cyclists



Follow the mugs in the booklet – they're your clue to finding the potteries!

STEP 1 - TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE

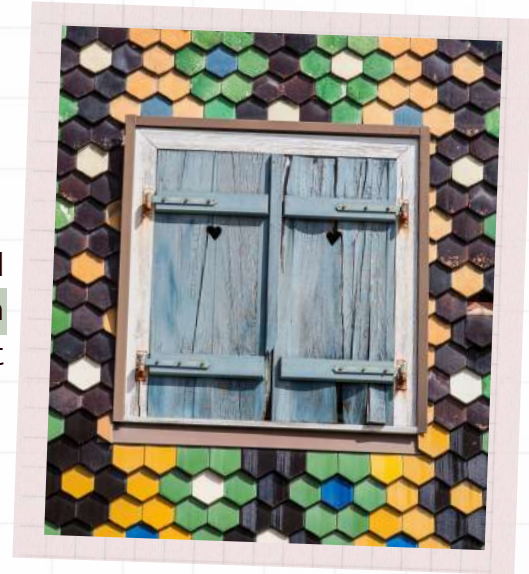


Once out of the Tourist Information Office, go up the Mont de l'Église, to your left.

STEP 2 - TRADITIONAL HOUSE WITH GLAZED TILES GABLE

Make a stop at the tree, you can see a beautiful traditional Alsatian house with a particularity, a gable covered with colourful glazed tiles. This method is a local solution to protect the exposed gable to the west from the rain.

Go up to the Church and enter through the side door.



5 other houses with tiled gable exist in Soufflenheim and 3 more in the Rhine country: in Drusenheim, Fort Louis and Roeschwoog.

STEP 3 - SAINT-MICHEL CHURCH

(open except during services)

Built in a neo-classical style, the church is from 1831. The 4 confessionals and the pulpit in a baroque style are the last remains of the Cistercian monastery destroyed by the French Revolution. Potters from Soufflenheim have always been very pious which is why there are many productions of religious subjects. Next to the entrance, you can see a bas-relief made by the ceramist Elchinger, as well as a Via Crucis which is located in the chapel behind the altar. The main altar was created by Marie-Ange Graessel and her husband, active potters, in her father's memory.

Go out of the church, walk down the Mont de l'Église and turn left after the yellow and blue house.



During the Advent season and right up to Christmas, local potters exhibit a number of ceramic nativity scenes.

STEP 4 - PRESBYTERY

Go up the sandstone stairs to go to the Oelberg. On your left you will see the presbytery, a beautiful building erected in 1781. On the right, vines have been planted by the city council in memory of when priests were making their own wine.



STEP 5 - OELBERG

You reach a natural promontory called “Oelberg” (The Mount of Olives), named after a former chapel that was destroyed and in which was represented Christ on the Mount of Olives. Today you can see a ceramic Last Supper represented, made using the sandstone-cement technique. It was created on the occasion of the Eucharistic Congress that took place in Soufflenheim in 1932. This masterpiece made by Leon Elchinger matches the size of the original fresco made by Leonardo Da Vinci for the Santa Maria Delle Grazie convent in Milano (1495-1497).

Come down by the main stairs and walk through the Memorial to the Dead Square. Turn left to Rue du Marché, then turn right after the bank to enter Rue des Pierres.



From the top of the Oelberg, looking to the east, you can see the Black Forest in Germany.

STEP 6 - TYPICAL HOUSE WITH TILED GABLE

You can stop in front of house number 3 in the Rue des Pierres, another tiled gable house, this one has tiles in a beaver tail form (in Alsatian: *Biberschwanz*). These are flat tiles with rounded ends placed to form scales on the rooftop.

Go straight to the pottery at the end of the street on the right.

STEP 7 - LUDWIG POTTERY

5, Rue des Potiers
+33 3 88 86 60 24

Facebook : Poterie Ludwig Soufflenheim

You're standing in one of the village's oldest pottery workshops — a place where tradition and authenticity are proudly kept alive. Michel, the potter, still works just as his father and grandfather did before him, faithfully preserving the gestures of the past. A remarkable example: here, shaping is still done the old-fashioned way, using plaster molds set on an off-center wheel to create oval or round forms. This technique has become rare today... In fact, Michel is the last potter who still practices it!

After exiting the pottery, go to the right and turn right on Rue des Potiers.



Visit the potter's workshop Monday to Friday.



STEP 8 - MARKET HALL

5 Grand'Rue



The market hall is in front of you. The mural painting, which depicts products from the market as well as Soufflenheim potteries, was painted by Charly Barat, a famous contemporary Alsatian painter, illustrator and humourist of Eurasian descent.

Weekly markets are being held every Wednesday morning.

Keep walking to your right and cross the pedestrian crossing after the town hall.

STEP 9 - GRAESSEL POTTERY

9, Grand'Rue

+33 3 88 86 78 91

www.poterie-graessel.com

Facebook : Poterie Graessel



Marie-Ange and Jacky Graessel, descendants of a long line of potters from Betschdorf, arrived in Soufflenheim somewhat by chance about forty years ago. It all began with a Sunday stroll with their daughter, which led them to the village during a local fair. They instantly fell in love with a shop that happened to be for sale. Things moved quickly from there — and the Graessel pottery was born. Since then, they've been crafting mostly traditional stoneware, high-fired at 1280°C, and offering a wide range of colorful glazes.

Going out of the shop, go to your left and stop in front of the restaurant.



You will love their original creations with vivid colours!



STEP 10 - RESTAURANT LA COURONNE

21, Grand'Rue

Here's an example of a particular house made of firebricks. The municipality has an important brick industry still in production today to line tarte flambée ovens, foundry blaster furnaces, steel mills and glass factories. Many houses in Soufflenheim are built with these bricks.

Go up the Grand'Rue and stop in front of the Tourist Office.

There are still two refractory products companies in the village today.

STEP 11 - TOURIST OFFICE

Look at the fresco created by Jean-Paul Frindel (1928-1994), a local artist and professor at the “Ecole des Arts Décoratifs of Strasbourg”.

Keep walking until you reach the crossroads, then turn to the left onto Rue de Schirrhein.



This fresco represents the potter's coat of arms as well as traditional potteries.



STEP 12 - FORMER ELCHINGER MANUFACTURE

6-9-9A, Rue de Schirrhein



The buildings of this factory, founded in 1834, are listed as part of the industrial architectural heritage. The factory has won international reputation for its Art Nouveau, Art Deco and religious art creations, the latter including the remarkable monumental Stations of the Cross at Mont-Sainte-Odile (1935). The courtyard features a ceramic sculpture dating from 1905. It depicts a cockerel struggling against its strangler. This old fountain is the result of a collaboration between the sculptor Jean Désiré Ringel from Illzach (1847-1916) and the ceramist Léon Elchinger (1871-1942).

From 1950 onwards, the factory enjoyed further success with the creations of Fernand Elchinger (1911-1975), linked to the vintage of this post-war aesthetic period. A large selection of these works is on permanent display at the Musée Historique de Haguenau.

The pottery closed its doors in 2016 after existing for 200 years of history.

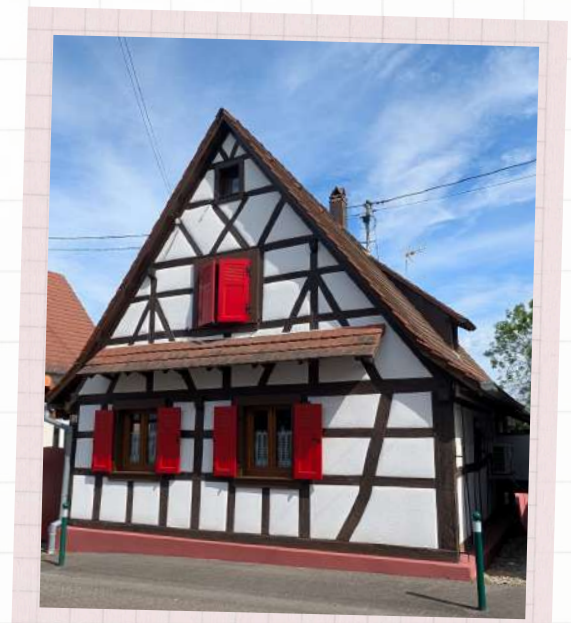
Keep following the street and stop in front of house number 15.

STEP 13 - TYPICAL ALSACIAN HOUSE

15, Rue de Schirrhein

Here you can see a typical half-timbered house, one of the last that kept its bread oven. In the passageway (“*schlupf*” in dialect) with the neighbouring house on the right, you can see the bread oven sticking out of the wall.

Move forward until you reach the end of the street, Rue de Schirrhein, and turn to the left in Rue de Bischwiller.



STEP 14 - VILLAS



On your left, at number 29 and number 31 of Rue de Bischwiller, you can see two villas built when firebricks factories prospered in Soufflenheim, beginning of the 1900's. These villas show their homeowners' success thanks to this industry.

Keep walking to the left and make a stop in front of the Knepfler factory.

STEP 15 - COMPANY OF THE KNEPFLEBROTHERS

31, rue de Bischwiller

2 companies are still manufacturing refractory products in Soufflenheim. The Knepfler company has existed since 1792 and produces bricks, chimney sleeves, chimney bolsters, lanterns for stone-made chimneys and ovens. Their products can resist heat as high as 1100°C to 1400°C – 2010°F to 2550°F. Since it was founded, the factory has manufactured firebricks, using traditional methods.

Cross the road and go to Poterie Beck.



You can observe elements used to make furnace bricks (which are used to make ovens) as well as two wagons, used to move the clay from the clay quarry situated in the surrounding forest.

STEP 16 - BECK POTTERY

42, Rue de Bischwiller

+33 3 88 05 74 74

www.poterie-beck.fr

Facebook : Poterie Beck



Looking for a modern style with a playful twist? You've come to the right place! Founded around 1750, this is the largest pottery workshop in Soufflenheim. While it proudly continues to produce the traditional shapes that made the village famous, it has also kept pace with the times by developing new colors and designs. Today, the potter's three daughters have taken over the reins. They carry on the family's know-how — with a fresh touch of creativity and flair.



Do not hesitate to visit the small exhibition village created entirely by Richard Beck.

Continue by going up Rue de Bischwiller, then turn right on Rue Postérieure. Look behind you.

STEP 17 - CHIMNEY FROM THE HAASSER FACTORY

You can see one of the last two large chimneys of the grand ovens. It is the chimney from the Haasser manufactory for refractory products.

Enter the Rue Postérieure and stop in front of house number 23 on your right.



In 1891, Soufflenheim had 51 similar chimneys.



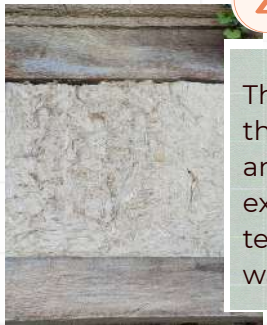
STEP 18 - TYPICAL HALF-TIMBERED HOUSE

At house number 23, Rue Postérieure, another tiled gable house can be observed.

Keep going until you reach the end of the street. Turn right on Rue de la Montagne. Stop in front of house number 6.

STEP 19 - TYPICAL HALF-TIMBERED HOUSE

Make a stop to catch your breath... This is the perfect opportunity to look at this half-timbered house. A half-timbered house can be considered a piece of furniture, as it can be dismantled and reassembled from scratch as many times as desired. Take a look at the house front:



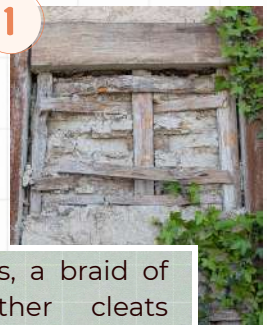
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The cob: a mass of clay soil mixed with straw then applied and smoothed by hand. This ancient technique has proven to be an excellent insulator in winter and a temperature regulator in summer. The filling was also done with bricks



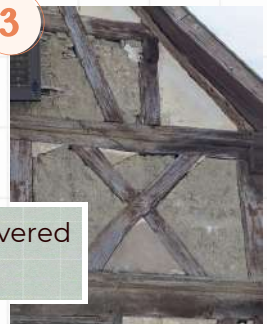
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In addition to their structural functions, some of the beams are placed to form symbols such as the Cross of Saint Andrew, which is supposed to provide protection for the property and its occupants.



1

Between the beams, a braid of branches and other cleats provide a solid base on which the cob is applied.



3

To protect the cob, it is covered with a lime coating.



5

After this short break, go down Rue de la Montagne until you reach Poterie Siegfried-Burger & Fils on your right.

The corner post serves as a support for multiple engravings such as the names of the owners of the house, the year of construction and protection symbols. Time has worn away the surface of this post, but one can still guess at the date: 1782? 1737? It's up to you to decide...

STEP 20 - SIEGFRIED-BURGER POTTERY

10, Rue de la Montagne

+33 3 88 86 60 55

www.siegfriedburger.fr

Facebook : Poterie Siegfried-Burger & Fils



Guided tours
in July and
August every
Tuesday and
Thursday.



Yes, you are indeed in front of a pottery and not a fast-food restaurant somewhere in the United-States! However, some visitors think they can eat a burger here. Undoubtedly, the pottery's name (pronounced Bur-gé, please!) is quite misleading. The coat of arms represents a tower: "Burg" in German, surely not the American sandwich! A Texan customer once remarked to the potter that pottery had been around much longer than the state of Texas. It goes without saying that they know pottery making! Indeed, the Poterie Siegfried-Burger & Fils has existed since 1842 and has been managed by the same family for 6 generations. In the beginning, the pottery's name was Burger. Then in 1925, Marie Burger married the son of a potter named Ernest Siegfried. And since then the pottery adopted the name Siegfried-Burger.

You will not be disappointed by the large culinary and decorative pottery selection. The staff will have the pleasure to welcome you and give you advice.

Exiting the pottery, go up the street and cross at the level of the playground. Take a look at the house between number 12 and number 14.



STEP 21 - FORMER POTERIE SCHEYDECKER-LEHMANN

Established in 1784, the current buildings date back to the 19th century. It was active up to the 1980's: a small typical Alsatian house with the potter's workshop adjacent and an intact chimney from the period.

Continue on your left and go up to the stop sign. Then turn right into the Rue de Bischwiller and continue straight on ahead until you see the souvenir shop on your right.

A FIERY TALE

Do you know why the people of Soufflenheim are nicknamed the Hellegeischer, or "spirits of hell"? The name dates back to the days when potters fired their wares in traditional wood-burning kilns. Back then, tall chimneys spewed flames and smoke — an even more dramatic sight at night! Without modern tools, potters would watch the color of the flames to know when the firing was done. And to control the process precisely, they always worked in the dark. Now picture it: men moving through the night, surrounded by blazing fire and swirling smoke... Not exactly a reassuring sight for passersby!

STEP 22 - SHOP LES SOUVENIRS D'ALSACE DU NORD

3, Rue de Bischwiller

+33 3 69 13 40 83

Facebook : Les souvenirs d'Alsace du Nord

A visit to this nice shop is a must, where you will find modern and original collections made by the Hausswirth pottery, as well as local products and souvenirs from Alsace. Don't resist the temptation to take a little bit of Alsace home with you !

Continue straight ahead and stop after the traffic lights on the left at the Poterie Hausswirth.



STEP 23 - HAUSSWIRTH POTTERY

1, Rue de la Montée

+33 3 88 86 74 31

www.alsace-poterie.com

Facebook : Poterie Hausswirth



Free visit of the potter's workshop from Monday to Thursday.

Shh, don't tell anyone! If you're discreet, you can sneak into the workshop just behind the sales outlet and go down into the cellar, where you'll discover the clay pit. You'll see clay in its raw state: unusual! On your way back up, feel free to enter the workshop to observe the various stages of production. Then take a tour of the boutique, where you'll find a wide variety of traditional culinary and decorative pottery.

At the pottery exit, turn right into Rue de Haguenau, then right again into Rue de l'Étang. Moulin Fritz is at the end of this street.

BONUS STEP - FOR CYCLISTS

Before continuing on the traditional route, people riding bikes are welcome to follow road signs indicating "Betschdorf", which leads to the edge of the Forest of Haguenau. After the last house on your left, you can see a big slope partially covered and overgrown by vegetation. Here is where clay stock is extracted and where some local potters come to get supplies. As you follow the road, after passing the forester's house, take the first path on your left to stop at "Le carrefour des retraités" (the crossroads for retirees). This peaceful and quiet spot invites you to take a break in the middle of the forest.



STAGE 24 - FRITZ MILL

18, Rue de l'Etang
+33 3 88 86 60 19

Facebook : Moulin Fritz - "La Wirmihl"
www.moulin-fritz.f

The Moulin Fritz is the Rhineland's last active mill. What makes it special? The mill's wheat is harvested entirely from local grain farmers within a 25 km-15 miles radius around Soufflenheim and the flour is produced in keeping with an ancient tradition which has been followed for six generations.

Continue up the street, at the end turn right.

Load up with organic traditional flour, in the shop next to the mill, "La Farinière".

STEP 25 - WEHRLING POTTERY

64, Rue de Haguenau
+ 33 3 88 86 65 25

www.poterie-wehring.fr

Facebook : Poterie Wehring



Pottery
discovery
workshop | ask
the pottery for
details

Welcome to a small artisan workshop that first opened in the early 1980s. Since 2002, it's been run by Peggy, a passionate potter who blends traditional craftsmanship with contemporary flair. Her goal? To create meaningful, everyday objects — pieces with soul that spark a touch of nostalgia. Her terrines à potée are inspired by old-fashioned shapes rarely seen today... but dressed in modern colors. Her kougelhopp molds evolve with the seasons and holidays, just as tradition calls for. But Peggy doesn't stop there — she loves to have fun with ceramics, reimagining the classics with a twist: think skull-shaped molds or stylish ceramic earrings full of personality!

Once out of the pottery, cross the pedestrian crossing.
Turn left to reach Poterie Streissel.



LITTLE POTTERY LEXICON — IN ALSATIAN!



Pottery: Hàfnerei

Potter: Hàfner

Mold: Form

Wheel: Draischieb

Small pot: Häfelä

Pitcher: Krüeg / Krüi

Glaze: Làck

Dish: Schessel, Schäll

STEP 26 - STREISSEL POTTERY

25, Rue de Haguenau

+33 3 88 86 64 69

www.poterie-streissel.com

Facebook : Poterie Michel Streissel



What is this potter's speciality? He completely reconstructed a wood-fired kiln; today, he is the only potter who fires part of his work in a traditional kiln. The firing process takes two days. The kiln consumes 6 steres-1.7 cords of pine wood to reach a temperature of 1100°C-2010°F. Beyond the nostalgia of the ancient firing technique, the authentic reconstruction of a wood-fired kiln immerses us back in the spirit of our ancestors. A spirit of hospitality, of celebration and good times surrounding firing, the highlight of the last step in the pottery-making process.

Exiting the pottery, turn right and walk up the street to the next pottery.

In the store, you'll discover a wide variety of pottery, including the famous "Holzschuhmännle" (little clog figures) and calaveras!

STEP 27 - LEHMANN POTTERY

7, Rue de Haguenau

+33 3 88 86 60 02

www.poterie-soufflenheim.com

Facebook : Poterie Lehmann



Free visit of the workshop from Monday to Tuesday.

But who are the potter sisters? They're dynamic, and they're carrying on the work of their forebears. They've managed to preserve tradition, while breathing new life into their creations! Kathia and Sylvie will be delighted to show you their varied pottery collections. The 2 sisters recently opened their own boutique "Poterie d'Alsace" in Strasbourg's Rue des Frères, close to the Cathedral, where customers are often pleasantly surprised to receive direct advice from the potters behind their creations.

Turn right when you exit the pottery and enter the neighbouring pottery.



WHEN NAMES TELL A STORY

Did you know that some Alsatian surnames tell the story of a profession? The Hafner (or Haffner) were potters, the Müller were millers, the Schmitt were blacksmiths, the Wagner were cartwrights, the Schneider were tailors, and the Beck... bakers, of course! Just goes to show — sometimes, our names say a lot about where we come from.

Free visit of the workshop from Monday to Saturday.

STEP 28 - FRIEDMANN POTTERY

3, Rue de Haguenuau
+33 3 88 86 61 21

www.poteriefriedmann.fr

Facebook : Poterie Friedmann



What is there to see in this little Alsatian house so nicely decorated? Pottery of course! And not just anyone of them! Welcomed by Willy's nice whistle, you will be seduced by one of the oldest potteries in Soufflenheim: The first signs of its existence go back to 1802. The potter has stayed faithful to his elders' teaching passed down through the generations. The manual work and the favourable soil of Soufflenheim from the Forest of Haguenuau is what motivates him in his work.

Turn right when you exit the pottery and enter the neighbouring pottery.

Pottery with traditional decorations is now on display, but is also giving way to new, more colourful collection.

STEP 29 - ERNEWEIN-HAAS POTTERY

55, Grand'Rue

+33 3 88 86 60 15

www.alsace-poterie.fr



Free visit of the workshop from Monday to Friday.

Master potters from father to son, the Ernewein-Haas family has shaped the Forest of Haguenuau's clay for generations. Even today, the majority of pottery pieces is still turned manually, as per the ancestral methods. Besides the traditionally decorated potteries, you can also see new and original collections with vivid colours, created by the potter Jean-Louis and by Harmonie Begon, a graduate from l'Ecole des Arts Décoratifs of Strasbourg.

Keep following the Grand'Rue until you see the Alsatian half-timbered house.



SAY CHEESE!

Right next to the pottery, outside, don't miss the chance to take a photo at the wheel — the potter specially created this spot just for you!



soufflenheim memory

STEP 30 - THECLA HOUSE

35, Grand'Rue

This typical Alsatian half-timbered house is the former **nursing sisters' house**. The first nuns, Sisters of the Holy Saviour, came to Soufflenheim in **1904**. They were available day and night: their dedication to helping the elderly, the sick and the dying was very much appreciated. They left the village permanently in **1986** to make way for our current nursing practices.



MEMORIES ETCHED IN CLAY

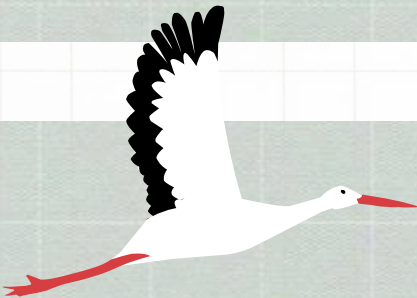
Thank you for joining us on this journey through craftsmanship, traditions, and pottery. We hope you leave with wonderful memories (and maybe a little pottery tucked under your arm?). And to end on a high note, we've prepared a fun little game for you to enjoy with family or friends...

THE MYSTERY OBJECT

What is this traditional object ?

He's often found in Alsatian homes, has small ears (but doesn't meow), loves to stay warm, and simmers dishes for hours...

Answer: the baeckeoffe dish!



SOUFFLEN-WHAT?

Where does the name "Soufflenheim" come from?

- A. From the sound of the wind in the pine trees
- B. From a Celtic word meaning "burning oven"
- C. From the breath of a dragon hidden in the Offendorf forest
- D. From a potter named Heinrich Souffle

Answer: B. From a Celtic word meaning "burning oven" (Spoiler: the dragon was never found, so be careful!).

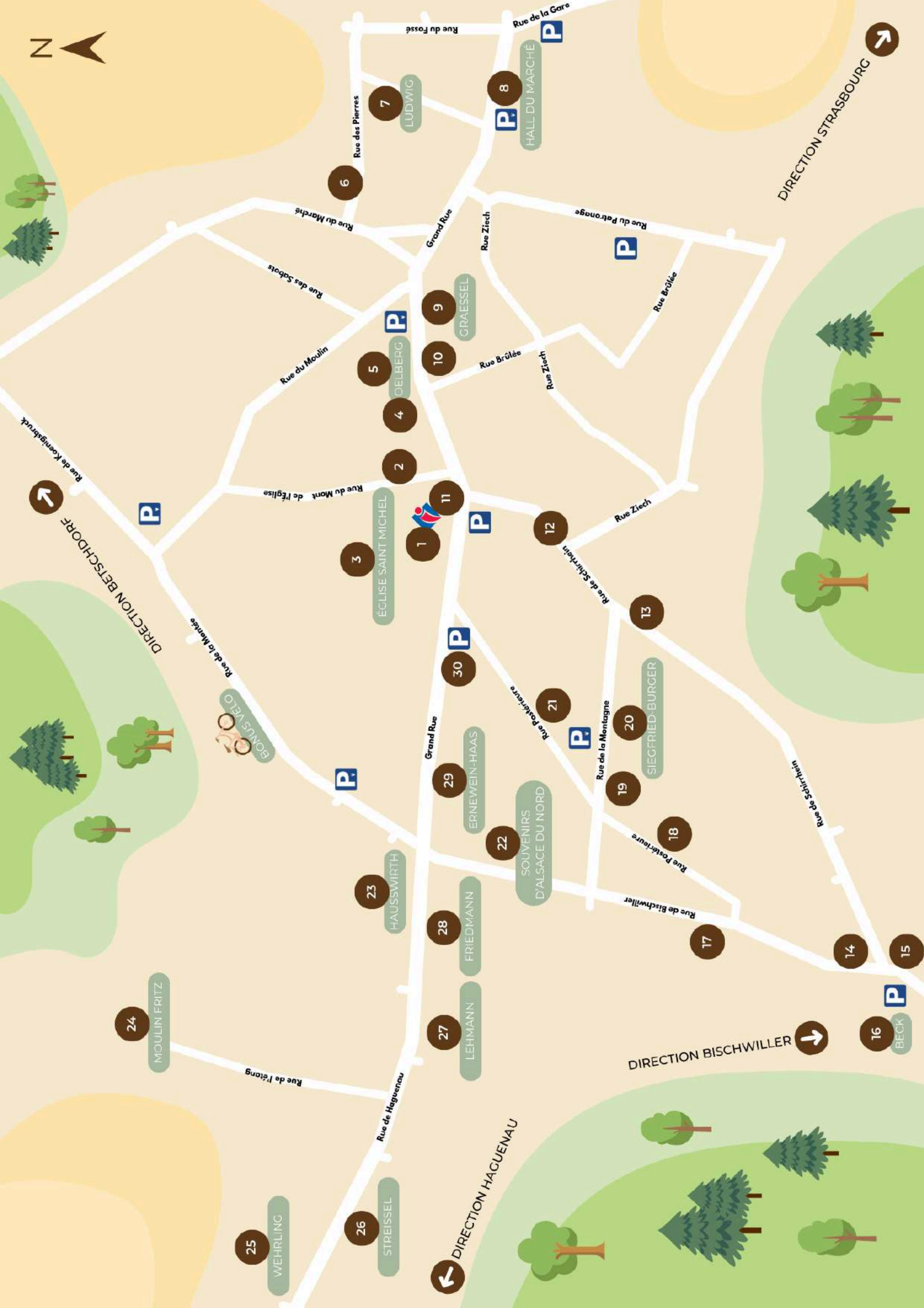
THE RIGHT PATTERN

Which typical design isn't Alsatian?

- A. Heart
- B. Stork
- C. Flower
- D. Narwhal



Answer D: Not yet observed in the Rhine, but we'll keep an eye on it.



N

DIRECTION STRASBOURG

DIRECTION BISCHWILLER

DIRECTION HAGUENAU

DIRECTION BETSCHDORF

24 MOULIN FRITZ

25 WEHRLING

26 STREISSEL

27 LEHMANN

28 FRIEDMANN

29 ERNEWEIN-HAAS

22 SOUVENIRS D'ALSACE DU NORD

20 SIEGFRIED-BURGER

23 HAUSSWIRTH

3 ÉGLISE SAINT MICHEL

4 DELBERG

5 GRAESSEL

7 LUDWIG

8 HALL DU MARCHÉ

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