

POST 16. CAFÉ DES ALPES

The Café des Alpes, formerly called the Hôtel des Alpes, was built around 1885 by Baptiste Rouvinez from Grimentz and a person called Roduit, a native of Lower Valais.

Initially, the building had only four levels : the basement, the ground floor and two levels above that. At the end of the nineteenth century, it was raised one floor by Basile Vocat (1863-1959) from Vissoie, the son-in-law of Baptiste Rouvinez. At the end of the 1920's, and in the early 1930's, well-known people stayed there including the painter Albert Gos (1852-1942) from Geneva and Hans In der Ghent (1882-1947) from Zurich, a specialist in Swiss folk songs. He transcribed the old songs of the Val d'Anniviers that people came to sing at night at the “ Café des Alpes ”. He is the author of the song « La petite Gilberte de Courgenay “ from the film of the same name. Albert Gos also played the violin beautifully and knew all the melodies of the folk dances of Anniviers. Léon Monnier (1902-1988), the son of Chrétien and Crésence, had just created the “ Société des vieux costumes “ in Vissoie. During his stay at the Hotel des Alpes, two to three weeks a year, Albert Gos participated as a musician in rehearsals of old dances.

Over the decades, the Café des Alpes has undergone transformations and improvements,

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the last of which date from 2011, but the core of the old establishment has not changed much. It now should be considered an historic building of Vissoie. It is a convivial meeting place for villagers and passersby. Many anecdotes and stories have emerged from the “Alpes”, as local people call it. It is also in this place where village politics have taken form. This is where lovers of “reines”, the fighting Hérens cows, meet to discuss, make predictions and develop tactics. For quite sometime, the establishment gave up its hotel activities to focus on the café and restaurant.

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Cross the road to the square and follow the road down to the left for about 20 meters.