

POST 4. HOUSE OF THE BOURGEOISIE

Following the unification of the communities of Ayer and Mission (1798), in 1799, the building that houses the Bourgeoisie of Ayer was enhanced and expanded. “Bourgeois” refers to a person from the place (the village). The first traces of the Bourgeoisie of Ayer date back to 1327.

The building consists of three levels. On the top level is the meeting room, with a soapstone stove of 1799, that includes the coat of arms of Ayer, Cuimey, Mission and Zinal. The furniture inside is rich with paintings, as well as religious and historical images.

On the second level, formerly, there was a school room. Students from Ayer started going to the central school in Vissoie in 1973. From 1974 to 1976, the hall was occupied by a clock workshop with fifteen employees on site and a further dozen who worked in their homes. Today it serves as an office for the Bourgeoisie.

The ground level is occupied by the wine cellar of the Bourgeoisie. The Bourgeoisie has forests (645 hectares) and vineyards (1 hectare) above Sierre, with several varieties of grape. Wine is served on

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request, at receptions. The wine of the Glacier, of a grape variety known as “rèze”, is a white wine that was kept in barrels in village cellars. In the cellar channes (pewter goblets) are aligned given by those who have occupied functions in the Bourgeoisie, the town and the canton.

On the west wall, above the third level is the paw of the last bear killed in 1870. The beam was cut for the purpose of enlarging the windows.

On the wall is a fresco made with smooth mortar, created by Alfred Wicky in 1959.

The inscription on the northern wall is reproduced and translated on a plaque, “Ayer and Mission built this building. Now both are united in one heart. Peace makes our fields fruitful ; our granaries are full and our cellars like a lake, filled with sweet nectar. May almighty God bless our fraternity, the Bourgeoisie of Ayer “ .

Formerly, next to the House of the Bourgeoisie, there was a Chapel dedicated to Saint-Marc. After the construction of the church it was used to stock fire fighting equipment. In 1956, when the square was enlarged, the chapel was demolished. The altarpiece dating from 1753, was transferred to the chapel of Sainte-Anne in Niouc.

Inside the bend, on the left, the renovated building had two classrooms for girls and boys as of 1950. A few metres further on, look at the house on the left of the road. It is dated 1620 and has particular facades, typical of the region of Leuk.

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Take the road along the building to the right and turn immediately left. Follow this street until the square that dominates the village.