

LA CITÉ DU CHOCOLAT

VALRHONA

PRESS FILE

VALRHONA

AUX SOURCES DU GRAND CHOCOLAT®



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Jean-Luc Grisot's editorial



Valrhona, the choice of the most prestigious gastronomy professionals, is today the benchmark brand for the greatest chefs, pastry chefs and artisans all over the world. An insistence on excellence guides Valrhona's creation of chocolates and its innovations for professionals and gourmet consumers.

True to its commitment of "offering the best to create the best", Valrhona helps to enhance global gastronomy, and shares its expertise and experiences with the greatest number.

Through its brand-new Cité du Chocolat, Valrhona invites amateurs and professionals on an eye-opening, interactive and sensory journey to explore the world – of craft, taste and ingredients, cocoa foremost among them – behind every chocolate square.

Jean-Luc Grisot
Managing Director, Valrhona

A word from Franck Vidal



Chocolate – both exceptional and everyday – is a product loved by everyone, but it still conceals many mysteries. To (partly) unveil the world behind each chocolate square, Valrhona has created the discovery centre – the highlight of the Cité du Chocolat.

The contemporary architecture of the Cité building showcases 90 years of expertise, while also blending in with the historic chocolate-factory site. The exhibition design is intended to offer a mouth-watering discovery plus living chocolate knowledge that is accessible to all – from the most demanding professionals and amateur gourmets to fans of all ages.

The interactive tour, offering multi-sensory experiences that are both fun and educational, will let visitors explore, admire, listen to, touch, feel, and, of course, taste chocolate in all its forms.

Franck Vidal
Director, Cité du Chocolat Valrhona



What's the Cité du Chocolat?

Established since 1922 in Tain l'Hermitage, in the County of Drôme, Valrhona is a purveyor of exceptional chocolates to the most prestigious gastronomy professionals and to gourmet enthusiasts. The missions it has set itself? Promote the talent of artisans all over the world, and showcase exceptional chocolate. True to its undertakings, Valrhona is opening the Cité du Chocolat on 24 October 2013.

Strong commitment

The Cité du Chocolat experience is truly an eye-opening journey. Visitors step into a fascinating world of ingredients, aromas and flavours, of professions and skills, of creativity and tradition, as they travel from the cocoa farms to artisans' kitchen labs. Through this venue, Valrhona expresses its deep commitment to taste, to gastronomic fulfilment and to the environment; and its respect for the work of the men and women who transform the raw cocoa. With the Cité du Chocolat, Valrhona brings the exceptional within everyone's reach.

Delicious know-how

An excellence-led brand with unique savoir-faire and dedication to farmers and pastry and restaurant professionals, Valrhona is passionate about its profession. It is this passion, expertise and understanding of exceptional chocolate that the French chocolate maker is now seeking to share through a fun, educational and mouth-watering experience. Housed in a unique venue, the Valrhona Cité du Chocolat gives the public and professionals the opportunity to explore, taste, learn and maybe even take away some of the secrets of this leading provider of exceptional products.



From Valrhona expertise to visitor experiences

As visitors enjoy interactive experiences along a seven-part trail, they are introduced to chocolate and discover Valrhona's array of expertise.



Sensory Studio: all the senses are stimulated to explore the world behind a chocolate square.

Visitors step into the world of chocolate – tasting, listening and touching to rediscover the sensations afforded by this familiar yet unique product. A sensory immersion in a delectable and mysterious world of ingredients, tastes, craft and creativity.



The Recipe Bar: be initiated to the secrets of production.

Ingredients, proportions, classic or original raw materials... Visitors play with the palette of chocolate tastes. But isn't chocolate's rich identity partly due to its secret recipe?



Cocoa Farms: a journey to chocolate's roots.

Visitors travel the world of cocoa via an interactive planisphere; and find out why terroir, cultivation and farmers' skills are so important in developing chocolate's taste. Also raised is their awareness of the sustainability initiatives that Valrhona leads in conjunction with local producers.



The Chocolate Factory: the magic of beans being turned into Grand Cru chocolates.

Visitors discover each stage in the production process, venturing into the mysterious Valrhona Chocolate Factory where master-roasters, conche operators, and blenders deploy their exceptional savoir-faire and precise skills as they transform the raw cocoa into chocolate with subtle, well-balanced aromas.



The Chefs' Kitchen Lab: take the place of a pastry chef or chocolatier supplied by Valrhona.

Visitors stand in their shoes, reproducing their skills and artisanal artistry as they work with chocolate – this exceptional ingredient which for centuries has inspired the greatest pastry creations.



The Chocolate Workshop: discovery sessions in a mini-workshop format.

A tutor invites visitors to focus more closely on a specific theme during a face-to-face session that's fun, instructive and delicious. Tutored tastings, opening a cocoa pod, tricks of the pastry chef's trade... A range of activities are on offer all year round. The mini-workshops that kick off the first season? "From Pod to Nibs" and "Praline: From Hazelnut to Guitar".



The Artists' Exhibition: a feast... for the eyes.

When chocolate becomes a "medium" again, great chocolatiers and pastry chefs embrace a different facet of their art – modelling, moulding and combining it to create one-off pieces. Every year, this temporary exhibition space will host a selection of chocolate artworks.



Story of a project

The Cité du Chocolat stemmed from a desire to share and transmit! Over the years, given the success of many educational events initiated by Valrhona, including the travelling exhibition "*Destination Chocolat*" in 1992, the idea of opening the company's doors to visitors seemed a compelling next step.

How the project was born

In creating a chocolate discovery experience, Valrhona will satisfy the many factory-tour requests it receives from trade customers and gourmet consumers, and showcase its historic site in the centre of Tain l'Hermitage. Back in 2006, Valrhona conceived a scenario: for the greatest number of people to discover the world of chocolate, on an interactive tour of diverse attractions that stimulate all the senses. The triptych of "*Le goût, le geste et la matière*" (literally "taste, gesture and material") was born and naturally became the Cité du Chocolat's leitmotif.



The project, as told by its actors...

A GROUND-BREAKING PROGRAMME

The project's biggest challenge?
Fitting in next to what is still a very busy production facility. That's quite rare, and it was this distinctive feature that ultimately informed our thinking: the tour takes visitors behind the scenes of the chocolate factory, and they find out about the various stages in the production process.

What are the truly distinctive aspects of the Cité?

The tour trail emphasises the visitor experience. It all begins with sensation-based games; then explores the various production stages, which ultimately explain the pleasure we feel when tasting chocolate. Nothing is imposed – there are just propositions, and visitors even choose the direction of their tour. Whether big or small, visitors can go travelling, have fun and taste chocolate! They will also learn things without actually realising, and gain a fresh perspective on a food that they – mistakenly – think they're very familiar with.

Harmatan
Pascale Duret
Exhibition designer

A VENUE OF CAREFULLY CONCEIVED ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

What's the philosophy behind the project?
What lies behind chocolate – that was my philosophy. So we started by looking in the natural world for a breath of vegetation to mark the building's entrance: a green wall, 14 metres long by 18 metres high.

What posed the greatest difficulty?
In architectural terms, knowing how to link the existing building – the shop – with the new venue, which is read separately and makes its own statement. This was particularly tricky because the client wanted to keep the old hacienda-like frontage.

Barillot Architectures
Pierre Barillot
Architect

LILI AND ZOCO: FROM CHOCOLATE TO ILLUSTRATION

What were your inspirations?
I was influenced by the work of people close to my heart such as Hergé and Benjamin Rabier, in the spirit of illustrators' crisp strokework. But also the Japanese and mangas. I use assembly, a specific technique. With three simple shapes, you can make anything you like. That's how Lili and Zoco came to be.

Is there a link between art and chocolate?
Art is like chocolate – it's intended to enhance the beholder. The difference being that chocolate can be tasted too!

Luc Eyriey,
Pastry Chef / Chocolatier
Mascot designer

BACKING FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES

What attracted you to this project?
The dynamic, highly motivated team at the company; the spotlight on one of the region's flagship companies; and the innovative project approach. In the tourism and cultural-amenity sector, creating a pilot experience for field testing by customers was a first.

What does the Cité bring to the Rhône-Alpes' tourism offering?
It's a venue that fits perfectly into our network, and will definitely be one of our chief attractions. It has strongly differentiated content, especially the virtual production line that's recreated as part of the exhibition design... In our view, the Cité is an ambassador both for the region and our network, whose theme is company tours and industrial tourism.

Stéphanie Héritier Da Cunha
and Charlotte Tardivel
Industrial Scientific and Technical Tourism
(TISTRA)
Rhône-Alpes

ANIMATED CARTOONS TO EXPLAIN BETTER

What part of the project did you enjoy most?
The multi-sensory dimension of the venue, the Cité's originality and ambition, the creative freedom... we were able to imagine, invent and suggest things. And, of course, the topic itself – chocolate.

Your toughest challenge?
The interactive marble slab. It invites visitors to discover and reproduce the "skills" of pastry chefs and chocolatiers. This module blended filming, animation work and tactile games, and demanded a very complex design and development phase.

Fargo
Sophie Fallot
Interactive animations



ACCESS



By car

Tain l'Hermitage is 1 hour south of Lyon and 2 hours north of Marseille.
A7 motorway, exit 13 (Tain l'Hermitage)
N7 or N86 trunk roads
GPS: Lat. 45.06849 | Long. 4.844134

Parking

3 car parks a 3-minute walk away
200 parking spaces



By train

Valence TGV (high-speed) train station: 20km away
Tain l'Hermitage TER (regional express) train station: 10 mins on foot



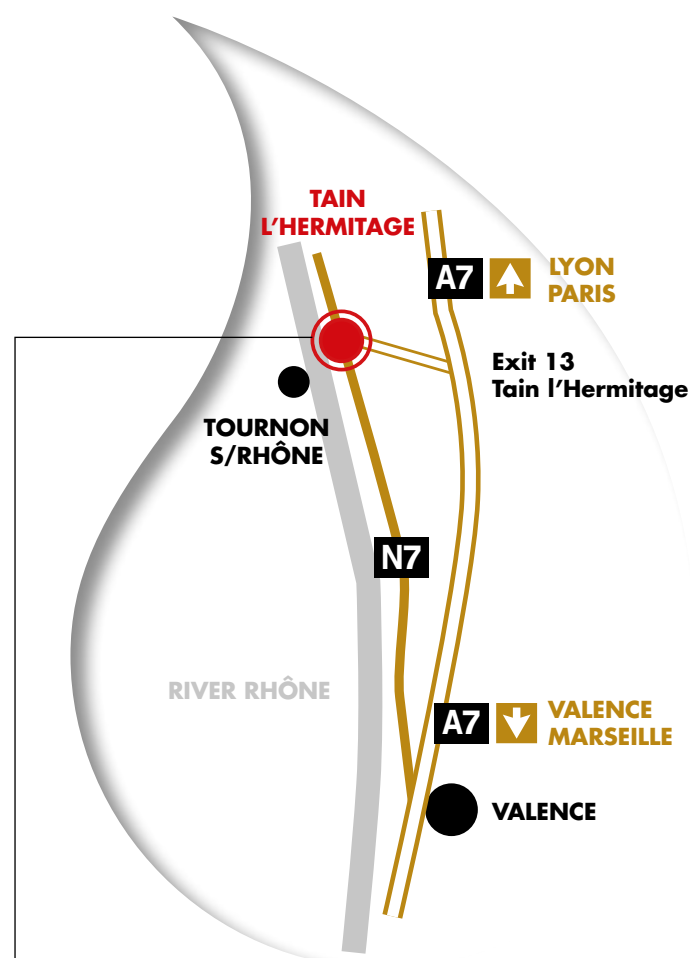
Lyon-Saint Exupéry airport

100km by motorway
Shuttles can be booked



By bike

100m from Viarhona (riverside bike path from Lake Geneva to the Mediterranean)



The Cité: a user's manual

OPENING HOURS

Monday to Saturday 9am – 7pm
Sunday 10am – 6pm
Last entry 1 hour before closing
Closed 25 December and 1 January

PRICES

ADMISSION PRICE

Full rate €10.50

Adult

Child rate €7.50

Under-13s

Free for under-5s

Family rate €34

2 adults + 2 children under 18

Extra child €7

Concessionary rate €9

Under-18s

Students under 26

Jobseekers

MINI-WORKSHOP PRICE

Mini-workshop (20-30 mins): €2.50

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Exhibition displays in English

Videos subtitled in English

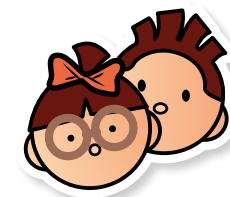
Tour in German and Dutch on a mobile application (January 2014)

GROUPS

Teachers, leisure centres, pensioners' clubs, works' councils: special prices and programmes according to group size and type of request.

FAMILIES

Lili and Zoco, the Cité's mascots, guide children (aged 6 and over) during their tour. There are animated films on chocolate's ingredients and production, child-friendly tasting kiosks, an interactive planisphere, games to play with Zoco, and more...





Ways to extend the experience

CITÉ GOURMET WORKSHOPS

Pastry workshops

The École du Grand Chocolat Valrhona, founded by Frédéric Bau in 1989, is an advanced training school and forum devoted to gastronomy professionals.

Its philosophy centres on sharing and disseminating, and on the know-how and creativity that set Valrhona apart. Inspired by the company's research, the school never stops innovating as it envisions the pastry creations of tomorrow.

And since 2003, through its École Gourmet, Valrhona has been giving amateur pastry chefs the benefit of its educational and technical experience. Hands-on pastry work, acquiring the tips and techniques of the world's top pastry chefs... every training session is held in a professional-grade kitchen, with the same equipment and ingredients as those used by École Valrhona chefs.

Tasting workshops

Spend an hour or two being initiated to the subtle aromas and flavours of Valrhona chocolates.

The Cité runs workshops all year round for amateurs to discover, assess, and thus deepen their understanding of chocolate – and even their passion for it. Valrhona presents images of cocoa's magical transformation into chocolate, with its planters, sourcers, blenders, creators... This sensory journey ends with a tasting of Grand Cru chocolates – an approach of great finesse that reveals the in-house savoir-faire recognised by the greatest chefs and by gourmets.

The workshops offer participants a sensory experience – with colours, smells, aromas, flavours and textures – to revive and enrich their taste memory, shift preconceptions, and unveil the rich and refined identity of fine chocolate!

All year round, booking required.

Schedule and programme: citeduchocolat.com.

THE CITÉ SHOP

Located on the historic site occupied by the company since the 1950s, the Valrhona Shop sells all the brand's products: bars and assortment ballotins, but also the famous couverture chocolates coveted by pastry chefs and chocolatiers across the world.

Whether regulars or just passing through, visitors will find an extensive array of delectable chocolates.

But what makes the Shop truly special is that visitors may freely sample a selection of complimentary Valrhona chocolates. With the opening of the Cité du Chocolat, the Shop is growing – and so is its offering.

Shop opening hours

Monday to Saturday 9 am – 7 pm

Sunday 10 am – 6 pm





The entire project, from conception to execution, was devised, funded and overseen by Valrhona, with support from local authorities (Tain l'Hermitage town council, Pays de l'Hermitage multi-municipal authority, Drôme county council, Rhône-Alpes regional council, TISTRA, etc.), central-government agencies (Prefecture of Drôme, DIRECCTE Rhône-Alpes, Ministry of Tourism, etc.). In particular, the project was granted a tourism-innovation subsidy by the Rhône-Alpes regional council and central government.

THE CITÉ DU CHOCOLAT: A TRULY COMPANY-WIDE PROJECT

Strong enthusiasm for the project within Valrhona made it possible to enlist experts in all areas. Extensive in-house resources were mobilised:

- the contributors in the films are Valrhona staff (chocolate factory staff, sourcers, taste expertise, etc.) or partners (farmers in the Dominican Republic, Madagascar, etc.);
- the inaugural artists' exhibition will feature work by the pastry chefs of the École du Grand Chocolat.

Dates and key figures

The project in dates

- 2006** Cité idea is born
- 2008** Exhibition design
- 2009** Land purchase and demolition
- 2010** Invitations to tender
- 2011** Architectural design work
Construction permit application lodged
- 2012** May: Cité pilot area opens
June: Construction permit granted
September: First stone laid
November: Construction begins
- 2013** October 2012 to September 2013: Construction of the Cité
August to October 2013: Exhibition fit-out

Thursday 24 October: Opening of the Cité du Chocolat Discovery Centre

The project in figures

Construction and fit-out

13 companies for construction of building (100% from Rhône-Alpes)
12 companies for exhibition build (50% from Rhône-Alpes)
€5m of investment, including €200k "tourism innovation" subsidy (region and central government)
700 m² exhibition area
100 m² extra shop floorspace (souvenirs)

Exhibition design and attractions

15 tasting stops during tour
50 attractions
3 to 5 mini-workshops (30 mins) a day
200 pastry workshops (0.5 to 2 days), with 2,000 participants a year
50 tasting workshops (2 hours) a year
50 Cité chocolate souvenirs developed

Human resources

Valrhona project team: 4 people for 2 years, then 10 for 6 months
People involved in project: 50 at Valrhona, 150+ at contractor firms (construction and exhibition design)
Staff recruited for opening: 15

Targets

80,000 visitors in 2014
150,000 visitors in 2015
Phase II opening (first floor) in 2016
300,000 in 2020 (after phase II)



Five reasons to discover the Cité du Chocolat

The Cité du Chocolat is an eye-opening, sense-stimulating journey to chocolate's heart.

Aromas, colours, flavours, textures... Enjoy a fun, multi-sensory immersion in chocolate. Tasting kiosks (dark and milk chocolate), games with ingredients and sounds...

Tasting boxes, interactive tasting kiosks, novel surprises... Savour 15 delicious moments that will surprise and educate the palate.

Identify smells, recognise chocolate's textures, reproduce chefs' skills... Try out interactive experiences to discover Valrhona's range of expertise: cocoa knowledge, sensory analysis, services for gastronomy professionals, pastry innovation.

Planting, pods, drying, fermenting, conching... Travel right along the cocoa and chocolate supply chain – from farm to pro chef's kitchen.

Blenders, master-roasters, sensory experts, conche operators, pastry chefs... Discover the professions, know-how, techniques and passion for chocolate of the men and women who make it.



Luc Eyriey

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