



The Romainmôtier Foundation, since 1968 at the service of heritage and hospitality!

In May 1968, the cobblestones of Paris were torn away! In Romainmôtier, Katharina von Arx was delighted: the Romainmôtier Foundation was born and held its first promising meetings.

Jean-Claude Gisling, then director of the Câbleries et Tréfileries de Cossonay, told of Katharina von Arx's visit to Cossonay in his offices at the end of the 1960s, when she was looking for funds for her Maison du Prieur, which she had acquired in 1960 with her husband Freddy Drilhon from the Commune of Juriens which retained the precious water source of the château (but that is another story).

This unusual and courageous step was certainly the starting point of this wonderful experience which saw Bobst SA, Banque Cantonale Vaudoise, Câbleries et Tréfileries and Centre Patronal come together and thus provide the initial capital of CHF 160,000 for the Romainmôtier Foundation.

The statutes are simple and demanding:

"The aim of the foundation is to maintain a tasteful setting around the church of Romainmôtier:

- by safeguarding and restoring buildings of historical character;
- encouraging all initiatives aimed at creating a center of civic, social and artistic life in the restored buildings;
- by excluding constructions whose character or purpose would make the place look ugly;
- safeguarding the integrity of the landscape around the city. »

Initially focused on the Maison du Prieur, the Foundation soon played a major role within the Church compound. For over 50 years, its interventions, acquisitions and fund-raising activities have helped to preserve this group of buildings and to give them a historical look that is appropriate for the Abbey.

Indeed, the 19th century saw the gradual transformation of the old historic buildings of Romainmôtier into barns, sheds and stables for a rapidly developing agriculture. The demolition of the towers, the chapel and the cloister thus freed up space to store crops and hay wagons! The celebration of the 1500th anniversary of Romainmôtier in 1952 certainly gave the impetus for the revival of Romainmôtier and the gradual relocation of farms off the site.

Thanks to the generosity of many donors and the support of the State of Vaud and the Swiss Confederation, the Foundation currently owns magnificent and voluminous buildings in the Abbey's defensive wall: the Maison de la Porterie, dedicated to welcoming visitors, the Grange de la Dîme which houses the Jehan Alain organ, the Espace Pierre Aubert and Julian Willis and an art gallery, the unusual Tour St-Georges, the Ancienne Grange Carrée, not forgetting the Maison du Prieur acquired in December 2018, the jubilee year. This residence of the Cluniac Priors from 1245 to 1536 is the last remaining building in Europe where the Priors welcomed their guests. It hosts wonderful banquets, civil weddings and other events. A café-restaurant is open to the public and continues this tradition of hospitality, while offering activities to discover this enigmatic house.

The Canton of Vaud has entrusted the Fondation de Romainmôtier with the management of the Galerie de la Cour, a former rural gallery dedicated to culture and entertainment.

It has therefore long supported many activities related to the reception of guests and culture by offering spaces at very advantageous conditions.

The Board of the Foundation is made up of 25 volunteer members, all of whom are active in the spiritual, political, economic, tourist and cultural life of this part of the country. An office of 5 members manages the daily life of the Foundation with the precious administrative support of the Centre Patronal.

The legal form of the Foundation is totally adapted to the situation of Romainmôtier and to the conservation of this important real-estate heritage. The many institutional donors willingly support a Foundation of public utility, subject to the control of the supervisory authority AS-SO. In addition, the preparation of audited annual accounts is a factor of success in fundraising. The Cercle des Amis de la Fondation de Romainmôtier, which is open to the public, supports the actions of the Fondation de Romainmôtier in the service of heritage.

Come and discover or rediscover Romainmôtier! There is always something happening on the scale of the centuries.