



SALT; THE WHITE GOLD OF THE JURA MOUNTAINS, A UNIQUE HERITAGE

PRESS RELEASE

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Salt is one of the treasures of the Jura. Proof of this is found in the towns of Salins-les-Bains and Arc-et-Senans, among others, with their history linked to salt and its exploitation. Present in the Jura Mountains for millions of years, the retreating sea left behind countless seams of salt below ground that have contributed to the wealth of the area, to the reputation of the salt waters of the Jura and to the blossoming of spa resorts. In order to exploit this *White Gold*, since the Middle Ages the local people have developed techniques for extraction whose historic epicentre is none other than the Grande Saline salt works in Salins-les Bains. For nearly 1200 years they exploited and commercialised this *crystal salt* *

The Grande Saline, evidence of the salt industry in the Jura Mountains

The origin of the name "Salins-les-Bains" leaves us in no doubt: the presence of salt and its subsequent use in thermal baths. In the Middle Ages and right up to modern day, Salins-les-Bains has been the 2nd largest town in Comté after Besançon. The town owes its renown to the salt that was exploited and traded here up until 1962. A veritable White Gold, this brine has also been used for spa treatments since 1854. Since the Middle Ages, wood was used as the fuel with which to evaporate this brine. For economic reasons, coal would replace it from the early 19th Century onwards.

In 1775, visionary architect Claude Nicolas Ledoux built the Saline Royale salt works at Arc-et-Senans, on the edge of the forest of Chaux. It made use of the salt waters of the Grande Saline works in Salins-les-Bains, fed by two wooden canals known as **Saumoducs** that were 21km long. The two salt works operated alongside one another right up until 1895.

Since 2009, the Grande Saline in Salins-les-Bains has been listed as World heritage by UNESCO as an extension of the Saline Royale of Arc et Senans.

Don't miss: taste the extremely salty water that springs from the hydraulic pump. Visit the underground gallery from the 13th Century. Admire the gigantic heating pans that are unique in the world. www.salinesdesalins.com

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Montagnes du Jura
L'AUTRE VERSANT DE LA MONTAGNE



The Dead Sea in Salins-les-Bains?



In ThermaSalina, the White Gold of the Jura is associated with detox and beauty in an entirely renovated 280m² space that is bright and Zen. On the programme are traditional Jacuzzis, hammam and massages but also, and above all, salt water springs that are reputedly richer in mineral salts than the waters of the Dead Sea. Perfect for recharging the batteries! www.thermes-salins.com

The Saline Royale in Arc et Senans; from dream to reality

Listed as World Heritage by UNESCO since 1982, the Saline Royale salt works in Arc-et-Senans is a masterpiece by architect Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736-1806). It was constructed from 1775 to 1779, under the orders of Louis XV, and was the very first major work of industrial architecture.

The Saline Royale worked like an integrated factory where practically the entire workforce lived. Constructed in a semi-circular form, it was made up of eleven buildings, five of which housed the workshops and workers' dwellings.

The brine would arrive from Salins les Bains via a **Saumoduc** canal and was naturally evaporated before then being poured into the ovens where the salt would emerge as a dense solution before crystallising in the air. In order to recover the salt huge quantities of wood were necessary, which was taken from the nearby forest of Chaux. New techniques heralded the end of the Saline Royale and it closed its doors in 1895. Abandoned, it was bought by the local council in 1927. The architectural elements of the Saline Royale, its history and restoration make it a monument that is unique in the world. It boasts **three museums**.

My highlight: sleeping in one of the bedrooms at the salt works in order to fully appreciate the site and imagine you are the director of the Saline Royale! www.salineroyale.com

Must do: The Via Salina leads walkers and cyclists from one site to another along a sign-posted touristic trail from Arc-et-Senans to Berne, along the historic salt routes. www.terrasalina.eu

**Crystal salt refers to salt taken from the land, rather than sea salt*

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