



Jean-Luc
Brendel
CHEF, GARDENER AND POET

PRESS
FILE
2023

LA TABLE DU GOURMET 
THE KOBELBERG GARDENS | THE BRENDELSTUB

B. SUITES | B. COTTAGE | B. VINTAGE

« When nature and culture merge in perfect chemistry »

« Jean-Luc Brendel has built an entire ecosystem at Riquewihr: in addition to his gourmet restaurant, he has a modern Winstub (specialist wine bar of the Alsace), as well as upmarket guest rooms. At the Table du Gourmet, located in the heart of the city, the chef prepares fabulous seasonal produce with great care and with that touch of creativity that lifts it out of the ordinary to become extraordinary. His garden-to-plate menu showcases produce from his organic vegetable garden, such as this delicious kale served with game... from the Alsace, of course. Alsace wine also dominates the winelist, along with a few Burgundy wines, and all can be enjoyed in a decor that seamlessly merges the old (the house is pre-16th Century) and the modern with contemporary touches of furniture and lighting. A winning formula. »

« At 500m from the restaurant, we created a permaculture garden, with more than 350 varieties of herbs, plants, vegetables and fruit, including some rare species. The greenhouse guarantees produce from mid-February to the end of December. Composting and selecting are undertaken daily, many of the eggs are laid by our own hens, and we produce honey from our own bees. »

The 2022 Michelin Guide 🌿🌿

LA TABLE DU GOURMET 🌿🌿

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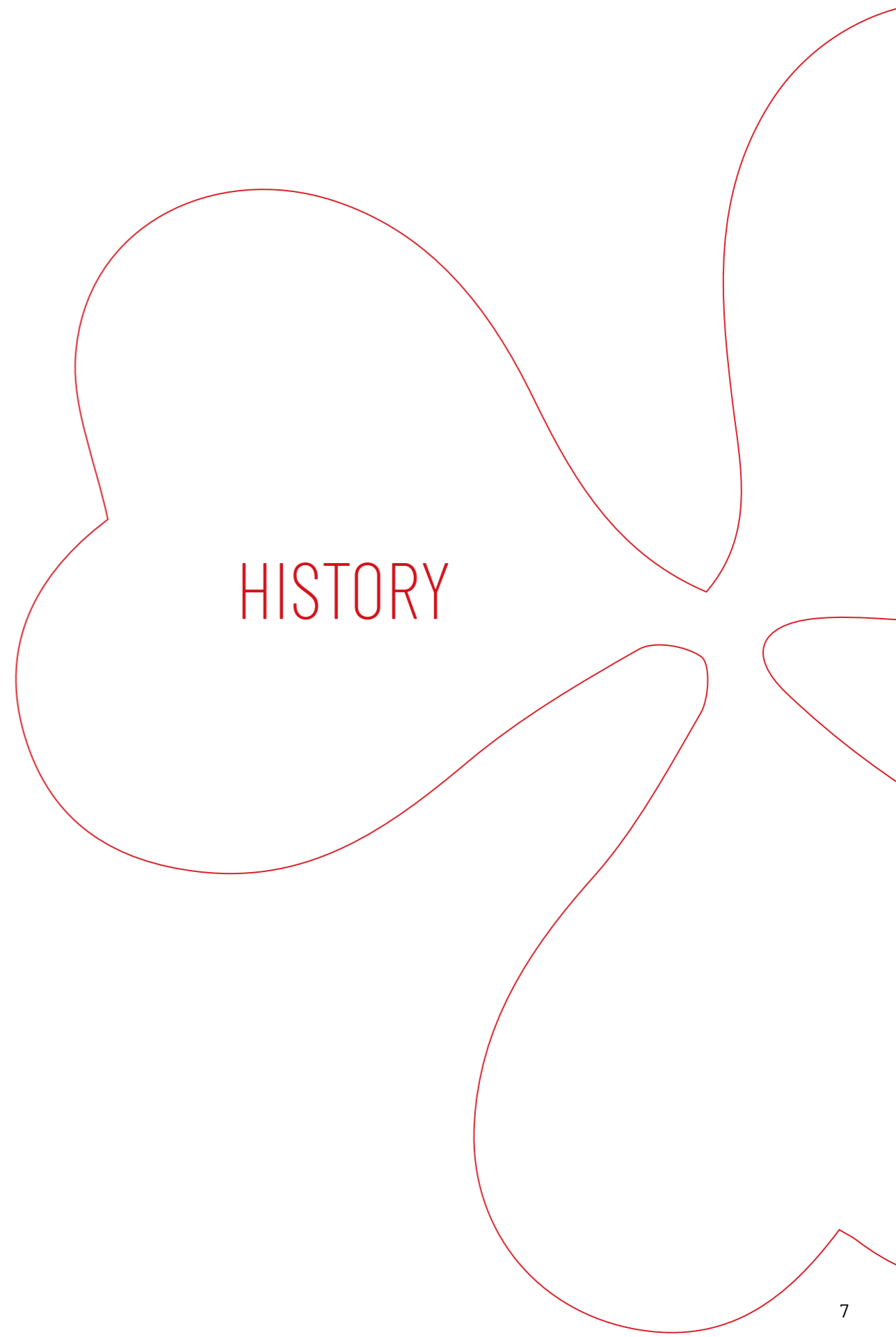
*Riquewihr:
Medieval immersion and exciting experiences
in the heart of nature*

Located along the **Alsace Wine Route**, a beacon of heritage shines out from the heart of **Riquewihr**, the most characteristic of **Alsace towns**, the only 3-star restaurant in the Green Michelin Guide. A medieval town with ramparts and alleyways steeped in enduring and powerful myths. It is here, in 1982, that Jean-Luc Brendel developed his sparkling creativity, captivated by the vibrant beauty of the place, situated at the crossroads of the Grands Crus of Schoenenbourg and Sporen.

For this man with boundless energy, **there was no better place to develop his eco-responsible, pure, intense and slightly off-the-wall culinary identity**. His primary inspiration at La Table du Gourmet comes from his own Kobelsberg Gardens, among the most fascinating garden in the world of haute cuisine. He also reveals his natural expressiveness in the inspired simplicity of the Brendelstübli bistro. And to make the stay in Riquewihr a complete and whole experience, a total immersion in his dream world, he has designed accommodation, steeped in both charm and history, inspired by the centre of the ancient town, by its gardens and its ramparts. Romantic luxury, a way of living and a passion for architecture come together in this corner of Alsace. In everything, from the garden to the table, accommodation; the theme is poetic and committed – an elegy to both nature and culture.

Deeply influenced by his background, Jean-Luc presents a unique and sensitive interpretation of Riquewihr. A vast human knowledge intended for the well-being of enhancing life. A stratospheric world rewarded with a **Michelin star in 1996**, "**Great of tomorrow**" by **Gault&Millau in 1999**, "**Gault&Millau d'Or Tour Est**" and **4 Toques** in 2016, then the **Green Star in the Michelin Guide** and **3 Ecotable macarons in March 2022**. Something one could normally only dream of ...





HISTORY

THE BRENDEL FAMILY THROUGH THE YEARS

1962 Jean-Luc Brendel was born in Strasbourg, where his mother managed Les 3 Lièvres, a bistro near to the Cathedral, a meeting place for artistes from the opera and the national theatre, for the archdiocese and the whole of Strasbourg!

1978 Studies in biology and chemistry.

1979-1980 Apprenticeship in the kitchen with the Sengel family, who made their mark in their time.

1981 Commis chef at the newly established Hilton in Strasbourg.

1982 - 1983 At the age of 19, along with his sister Fabienne Brendel, Jean-Luc bought a wine producer's house in Riquewihr, which dated back to 1539. **La Table du Gourmet** opened in March of the same year.

1991 Creation of **B. Cottage**, a country house surrounded by nature, overlooking the medieval city. First accommodation offered by the Brendels.

1992 Creation of a **vegetable garden** near B. Cottage.

1996 1st Michelin star.

1998 Creation of the circular **medieval garden**, a circle within a square. A geometric design, where flowers and aromatic herbs share the 800 m².

Gault&Millau Gastronomy Gold Key.

1999 Jean-Luc was declared a "**Grand de demain**" (Great of tomorrow) by **Gault&Millau**.

2000 **Arthur Brendel was born**, who, by the time he reached adulthood, shared his father's passion for innovative, plant-based cuisine. After 3 and a half years at Villa Laliq, in 2023 he continued his career at La Bouitte, in preparation for joining his parents to continue the family business.

2001 - 2002 "**Les Jeudis en Herbe**" (Thursdays in the garden) Picking from the garden and foraging in the surrounding fields close to the forest, followed by lunch with the harvested plants. An introduction to the world of wild plants.

2006 Creation of the **Brendelstüb and B. Suites** in a 13th and 17th Century mansion. Anne Brendel, the Chef's wife, who previously worked in the dining room at La Table, took on the responsibility for the bistro and the accommodation.

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Anne Brendel



Fabienne Brendel



Jean-Luc Brendel

2009 Extension of the B. Suites on the top 2 floors.

2011 Arrival of **Anne Humbrecht**, Head Sommelier.

2014 Implementation of **food and wine pairings**, highlighting the greatest of Alsace Grands Crus and the best of the new generation.

2015 Creation of the **Spa** near B. Cottage and the garden.

2016 Purchase of plots of vines adjoining the Grand Cru Schoenenbourg near B. Cottage, opening the door to the **creation of the Kobelsberg Gardens** and a market garden company. 1st harvest in 2017.
Jean-Luc wins the Gault&Millau d'Or Tour Est and 4 Toques.

2017 Creation of **B. Vintage** on the town ramparts, one of the most luxurious and romantic lodgings in Alsace.

2021 Emerging from the pandemic, Jean-Luc developed his culinary style to focus even more on the world of plants. Daring to go to the very essence of the ingredient to create a culinary journey that he now calls "**Menu Grande Symphonie**". (Grand Symphony menu).
Creation of an **Alsace wine list with 500 entries classified by geology and type of terroir**. A unique approach within France.

2022 Awarded the **Green Star in the Michelin Guide**, and **3 Ecotable macaroons**, which recognizes a commitment to eco-responsibility.
Atabula describes the food and wine pairings at La Table du Gourmet as "a total success", "one of the most successful in France".

2023 The Kobelsberg Gardens are extended by a further 850 m², bringing the total area to 7500 m².
Creation of a Roman Garden (rare fruit trees interspersed with vines), a nursery (cultivation of all seedlings of plants, flowers, herbs) and the planning of a citrus greenhouse.
Anne Humbrecht wins the **Chef Sommelier of the Year Trophy from the Pudlo Guide**.



*« Nourish nature,
explore one's roots,
and cook for a good life »*

Jean-Luc Brendel

THE ORIGINS OF A WAY OF LIFE

In his world full of love, art, harmony with plants and the desire to share, Jean-Luc Brendel's life experience has multiple roots: his father was an artist and painter, his mother a restaurateur of Les 3 Lièvres in Strasbourg, and his green-fingered grandmother cultivated a garden at which to marvel, a treasure of surprising and unexpected plant combinations. Every weekend, he went there with his family, learning from the rich, sensory and emotional experience, amazed by the discovery of the smallest shoot pushing through ground. A secret garden that left a lasting impression on the child, right up to the moment he started creating for the restaurant. *"These are memories of fabulous times, lots of different tastes, of magic. I was completely in awe of her garden, she grew a whole variety of plants that she reduced to potions, elixirs and other syrups"*. An outstanding cook, her food had a consistency and was of a standard that unconsciously permeated both Jean-Luc's stomach and soul. It is obvious looking back that the crystal clear and very reassuring childhood memories of this experience have left their mark on Jean-Luc; the real taste of things, simple and pure.

His initial instinct was to be drawn to scientific studies, to become a biologist of the **plant world**. This world already **appealed to him, and would become a passion that would determine his life**. He devoted every spare moment to helping out his mother at Les 3 Lièvres. It is there that he began to realise what he wanted to do, working over a hot stove, dreaming away, happy and altruistic. *"I was in secondary school and studying biology when I started helping out at my mother's restaurant. From small beginnings the ideas grew: quite simply I had discovered something that drew me in and attracted me to the pleasures of the table"*. He left his course and devoted himself entirely to his culinary apprenticeship, with the objective of one day running his own restaurant and fully developing his own culinary identity.

In 1982, he came across an authentic wine producer's house located in Riquewihr. It dated back to 1539. Beyond a heavy wooden door and two pink steps, was a tiny kitchen and world of hope; he fell under the spell of its history and heritage. *"Jean-Luc was working at the Hilton, not wanting to take over our mother's restaurant. He dreamed of being able to run his own ship, having a clear image of his own project, being able to take it all the way, in the way that he wanted. Fate brought him back to Riquewihr and his childhood memories, where Le Petit Gourmet bistro was for sale. He saw this as an opportunity not to be missed! For him, this was undoubtedly the most beautiful village along the Wine Route, with an extraordinary natural and cultural heritage. While wandering the cobblestone streets in search of the Petit Gourmet, we asked directions from passers by... they all gave us the same answer - that it didn't exist. And then finally we came across it... In a courtyard, a small wooden building with shutter, beyond which hung black and white Vichy curtains, an understated window, a freshwater tank containing live trout, the perfect set up... it needed everything doing to it, but everything was possible!"* says Fabienne Brendel, Jean-Luc's sister, sommelier then director, always at his side.





It was a perfect example of the Alsace style, with architectural identity, direct access to the gardens and with a freshwater tank already in place. You could feel the family atmosphere of the place; it spoke to him and Jean-Luc was overwhelmed. It was love at first site, a touch of madness too - but who cares! Despite the obvious difficulties, **he would settle here and nowhere else, and create La Table du Gourmet.** *"It wasn't thought through at all. We weren't on the main street, we didn't have any experience of haute cuisine at the time. We knew very little about this world, it was an unknown quantity for me at the time. At that point, my only point of reference was Chez Antoine Westermann at Buerehiesel: the very careful work with tastes and textures, the famous frogs legs, the veal sweetbread pie, the exceptional dessert menu... my ideas were in their infancy, but already gastronomy was exerting an irrepressible force on me".*

At the start of the adventure, the initial idea was to push the boundaries of his mother's style of traditional home cooking. Jean-Luc dared to make it more spirited, one might say more "bourgeois". But once you get the taste of freedom, you tend to run with it.

He is fond of the traditional dishes: blue trout, carp filets, foie gras, but he turned his back on the old-fashioned and clichéd dishes that others make. He wanted to be himself, connected to the territory of Riquewihr, to create a particular and out of the ordinary place in the world, and "to make his mark". *"The town was very traditional and inward looking. We weren't from here. The established families kept telling us that we understood nothing, that we had to stop before we went bankrupt! We were under constant pressure; "you are not from here! Understand that you never will be!" ". "But I carried on doing just the opposite, and I thanked them for the advice because it just made me more determined, it was obvious what had to be done. The way was clear: to cultivate what was different within me! ".*

And against the odds, although there were six restaurants in Riquewihr at the time, and La Table du Gourmet was the only one set away from the main street, the concept of being different rapidly took hold. It was the only way to attract people off the beaten track and to our door. And so, we decided to do things differently, so that the tourists and then the locals came not only for the food, but for the chef with his crazy ideas. *"This has always been my driving force through the years. Anything I didn't know or couldn't do, I pushed myself to master. I bought fish that I had never seen before, products from the market that were completely unknown to me. When I travelled, I brought back new flavours and curiosities; this was my training."* In short - being daring. So as time passed, the chef evolved, he widened his field of knowledge, but also refined his style, deepening and developing his project along the way.

The kitchen was extended, the dining room modernised with a bold décor – the red of passion. Jean-Luc felt he was losing his way, questioned himself, then regrouped. But he never deviated from his beliefs: to remain true to himself, or rather **to find oneself, to accept it and stay true to one's identity, whatever the circumstances. And to do his best possible to promote the produce of Alsace, whilst respecting its heritage. Searching for the good, the beautiful, the benevolent and perfect sense.**

And finally, **after several decades, the rebel that was Jean-Luc became the reference point, the ultimate expression of the art of living and eating well within the region.** Because what drives him – his creativity – is not just a passing fashion or a shallow marketing concept. Rather, **it is his acute sensitivity and his piercing vision that presents a fresh take on the haute cuisine of Alsace and reveals the heart and soul of Riquewihr.**

Supported by his equally passionate family, his sister Fabienne and his wife Anne, he continues to scale the heights, channelling his strengths, and reaching out to touch the hearts of gourmets everywhere, through elegance and finesse. Declared the **"Grand of tomorrow" in 1995 then Clé d'Or from Gault&Millau in 1998, and awarded a Michelin star in 1996,** looking back he remarks *"the cuisine we were creating at the time are nothing like those we create today. When we received these incredible accolades, we were sent gifts from every part of France, it was crazy. It really pushed the restaurant forward."*

Despite mixed fortunes along the way – some disastrous, some wild beyond the imagination – by 2021 the Kobelsberg Gardens were well established – and a new frontier was crossed. **In 2022, the Green Star in the Michelin Guide and 3 Ecotable macaroons recognised their eco-responsible approach. And Jean-Luc refocused, pushed the boundaries more than ever, refining and redefining his art. Clarity, simplicity, purity... the poet has overcome the rebel. He has become an artist, marvelling his guests with exciting, inspired and delicate creations.**



*« My muse,
my palette of expression,
my source of inspiration »*

Jean-Luc Brendel



« THURSDAYS IN THE GARDEN » AND THE MEDIEVAL GARDEN, THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLANT-BASED CUISINE

Let's go back to the start of the whole approach to plant-based cuisine. In 2001 and 2002, Jean-Luc Brendel began to focus his cuisine on plants, organising weekly "Thursdays in the garden" events. After discovering the fruits of the emerging garden, he and his guests ventured further to forage in the neighbouring fields next to the forest, then cooked lunch from what they had gathered. An introduction to foraging in the wild.

Alongside his Swiss friend **François Couplan**, writer and specialist in edible wild plants, Jean-Luc immersed himself in the world of wild plants and carried out in-depth research. *"Anything I came across in the wild that I didn't recognise, I made a note of its specifications: its smell, taste and texture. I gathered everything I found and studied it under the microscope. Thus, I managed to distinguish the edible from the toxic, and work out what kind of plant I was dealing with. And year by year, I ended up knowing more about the ecology of the area"*.

Totally taken with his plant discoveries, he started creating. He explored his land with passion and revelled in the discovery of berries, flowers and leaves. He tried out everything - extractions, infusions, reductions - until Nature gave up her secrets. *"In the spring, it was easy. I went out with my basket and the earth gave up the most beautiful gifts. But as the seasons progressed, the plants became woody, tasted sharp and went to seed; everything that was edible in the spring became less and less so with time. I then climbed to altitude, and I searched in the Vosges, and was able to match the freshness of the lower meadows from previous weeks. And the more the weeks progressed, the higher I went, until the autumn when it came to an end. It is then that the first idea for the garden was born"*.

The planning began. Jean-Luc resorted to his books once again, this time concentrating on botany. He had been drawn to Riquewihr by its heritage and environment. A new field of expression lay before him and he put his heart and soul into it. Using the world around him as a guide, and **having purchased and developed the B. Cottage high up in the town and an initial small vegetable garden in 1992, in 1998 he acquired a further plot of land nearby. "I wanted to replicate everything I had seen in my grandmother's garden.** It should be exuberant, full of life and a diverse range of plants." The idea seeded in his brain, a circular medieval garden emerged, bountiful during the 3 long months of summer.

A budding potential, nurtured by the hands of the chef. Slow and steady wins the race - these things take time. At the time Jean-Luc owned about 1,000 m², half of which was an ornamental garden, with food production relegated to the margins. But the evolution of his culinary art was to have a massive impact on his approach. *"It was a vital step for me to be able to draw on plants from my own garden, my own nursery, here in the centre of Riquewihr. Over time, I have come to understand the vital importance of my garden. But the change took years. 20 years of trials, experiments, frustrating failures, and successes beyond all expectation. Cultivating my garden as I do today has been a voyage of discovery, one from which I am finally able to reap a harvest of the most beautiful fruits"*.

Thanks to the winegrower and artist Jean-Michel Deiss, in 2016 Jean-Luc restored a plot of vines and created his market gardening company. Returning to study - horticulture this time - he immersed himself in the field of biodiversity, determined to uncover the lifeblood of the soil, here in Riquewihr. **He finally understood that plants are not just for garnish, but the basis of everything, given up by the bountiful earth. He makes them the focal point of his dishes, his inspiration, the divine muse of his extraordinary gastronomy, born from his Kobelsberg Gardens.**

FROM CIVILIZATIONS TO WINE, FROM THE GARDEN TO THE PLATE, THE EMERGENCE OF A **UNIQUE CULINARY IDEA**

Jean-Luc Brendel likes to explore, to seek and to draw from the smallest entrenchments. To fully understand so as to be as accurate as possible in all aspects of his life. *"He is inquisitive, taking inspiration from past **civilizations, the history of art**, the customs of different peoples, from the smallest of sources, in order to listen, take-onboard and **comprehend the living world in all its forms**. He is always full of ideas. Even in the evening when he comes home, he reads obsessively to maintain intellectual stimulation and stay ahead of the game, losing none of his creativity, curiosity, and adaptability. Spontaneity of spirit, essential to perfect each adjustment and deepen the slightest reflection,"* says his wife, Anne Brendel.

With **Jean-Michel Deiss** - renowned winegrower and creator of the University of Great Wines in 2013 - he organised trial "food & wine pairings". From the autumn of 2014, the search for the **perfect match became a tireless quest**. Up until March 2020, ahead of each session, Head Sommelier, Anne Humbrecht, selected 70 to 80 designer wines, all organic, from major labels to new producers. Winegrowers and sommeliers gathered round the table to fully explore every idea, without preconception and with open minds. In tasting these culinary creations with their wine pairings, Jean-Luc Brendel quickly understood the amazing power of contrast, and the potential impact of the superfluous! *"An additional touch of pickle, a mere artistic touch, could destroy the wine. If I was quite unaware of this at the beginning, it wasn't long before I had to reverse my beliefs and start building my dish around the wine. I adapted and evolved towards purity and the complexity-simplicity binomial."* With this complete change in mindset, he moved towards a cuisine of partnership and natural collaboration, following his vision, this revelation of a new way, a new philosophy.

A few months on comes the point when, **in the midst of a full lockdown, the situation pushes the Chef to focus in on expressing the identity of his region, and he goes full out for it**. A final round of in-depth reading, to fine tune his ideas. Out go the so-called "classic ingredients" which have no association with Alsace. **The plant finds a voice, the terroir responds, the story of the roots of this land, here in Riquewihr, bursts out:** *"Dishes that have become emblematic are created solely from plants picked from the Kobelsberg Gardens.*

*It is so rewarding when the emotional response of the guests to eating carrots, celery or beetroots, exceeds that felt when tasting the great dishes of French gastronomy. Obviously, the so-called classic ingredients are familiar, can bolster the ego. **But when an everyday product shows itself in a different light, takes on an unexpected dimension, I am telling a story and touch the hearts of my guests.** People are happy and understand that vegetables are the nucleus of it all, that they also are classic ingredients. And so, when public holidays come round, the local foie gras that makes up the stuffing for my ravioli, is made from a sheet of pumpkin milk, taking on a new dimension. The pumpkin is the star of the dish, the vegetable of Cinderella".*



*« Come to Alsace
and drink of its soul »*
Anne Humbrecht

Anne Humbrecht, Head Sommelier at La Table du Gourmet.



Spiced sweets of tomato.

THE BRENDEL WORLD
TODAY

THE KOBELSBERG GARDENS, AN INCREDIBLE PLANT PARADISE, INSPIRATION AND EVOLUTION

Only 500 m from La Table du Gourmet, overlooking Riquewihr and adjoining the Grand Cru Schoenenbourg, **Jean-Luc Brendel undertakes permaculture and organic farming over some 7,500 m². 350 varieties flourish here in one of the most incredible Chef's gardens on the planet.**

"Permaculture is to the garden world what the world of gastronomic awards is to the restaurant business." What better tribute is there than to encourage biodiversity, within 75 acres of sheer poetry, singing from the bountiful earth.

Nothing would have been possible without **an exceptional site. Overlooking the ramparts and the medieval town, surrounded by forests as far as the eye can see and crowned by the Koenigsstuhl at 938 m** (literally "the king's chair" – the highest point of the Commune –), the gardens never fail to fascinate visitors. Even 20 years after his initial reaction on seeing it, Jean-Luc remains hypnotized by the **beauty of the place. Previously planted with vines in the clay-limestone soil and gypsum marl**, a few sections of vines remain today. **This world apart adjoins the mythical Grand Cru of Schoenenbourg – formerly owned by Voltaire – which produces one of the greatest white wines in the world.** A wine renowned for laying down since the Middle Ages, the vineyards are distinguished by their southerly aspects near the bottom of the valley, the steep slopes, and a unique geology (iridescent marls and gypsum from the Keuper, and Vosges sandstone).

It would be an understatement to say that **the garden benefits from a unique terroir and essential energy. It is not surprising that the plants here take on a depth of taste, have an almost dizzying effect on the palate.** Even a simple watermelon takes on a new dimension. The challenge at hand is to work with nature, to help it achieve its full potential. For Jean-Luc, the holy grail is to harvest daily each variety at its moment of perfect ripeness, and to prepare it without delay, at La Table du Gourmet. **The symphony of flavours and the natural sweetness of the plants are so complex that it has taken time to find the correct, counterbalance of flavours** (particular with regards to acidity and bitterness), in search of the perfect equilibrium.

After the initial vegetable garden, then a landscaped garden around the B. Cottage in 1992, followed by the medieval garden in 1998, it took until 2016 to create the Kobelsberg Gardens as they are today. It is a place in perpetual evolution, a true source of inspiration for the chef. From his core, Jean-Luc Brendel dedicates his life to it with a sense of humility. For the one that gave life to it, encouraged it to grow, is nourished by the same act. It is the garden that nurtures, heals and cares for those who spend time amongst the flourishing plants and energy emanating from the surrounding Schoenenbourg *terroir*.





*« This garden has profoundly
changed my life, my sensitivity and how
I see my profession. »*

Jean-Luc Brendel



From the heart of this diverse world, **he draws inspiration by tending the land every day, working the soil and protecting the living world under his charge.** With one hand, he gently caresses each small budding shoot, so fragile and yet so full of promise. With the assistance of his gardener Marie, and his wife Anne, the pillar of support in his daily life, Jean-Luc stands tall, straw hat on head, contemplating the richness of the earth, a real breath of life. But don't expect him to toe the line. He often finds himself chuckling to himself "Remember to take the road less travelled instead of the well-beaten path", he feels he can do as he sees fit; what a wonderful indulgence. Totally connected to his habitat, he has created a whole universe, a humanisation of the garden that recalls an agricultural life, where everything speaks and tells a story, the life of yesteryear like the present, made beautiful from the passing time, transported by its vibrations.



Their own hens provide many of the eggs used at his award-winning establishment, whilst 3 generations of splashing Koi carp add a touch of beauty, and micro-organisms and worms industrially work the soil. Life is everywhere, bringing joy. Within this extraordinary place, surrounded by nature, vineyards and the forests of the Riquewihrian hills, he chose to raise some **350 varieties of herbs, plants, vegetables and fruits, in a wonderfully idiosyncratic collection:** dogwood, dragon bean, Vendée melonette, mandarin pepper, Albenga squash, apple cabbage or curry herb, hammer and petrowsky turnip, Bonnotte potato, tomatoes (black blue bayou, Trilly, Andine Cornue), carrots (gniff, from Kyoto), beets (Alvro mono, Reine Noire, Petrouchka cylindra), oca from Peru, chervis, Anared strawberry, goji berry, beef horn pepper, Mexican tarragon, pineapple sage, Rubine Brussels sprout, myrobalan... **Some of these ingredients are among the first to be used by a chef in the East of France, and even nationally.**



The range of tastes and textures of the plants, and their life cycle has turned Jean-Luc's view of his profession upside down. From the artisan cook that he was, the learning curve that he followed to shape his garden gave birth to the soul of an artist, a culinary composer. Jean-Luc Brendel enjoys himself and loves creating surprises. His reward is seeing the amazed expressions on the faces of his customers: *"I like the unusual rather than the conventional, to take it as far as it can go. If it's something that everyone already knows, then I'm not interested! Let's take Helianthus, for example, well-known for its flowers. Here we grow it for its roots: a large rhizome that we cook. It is very complex and delicious. Its taste is similar to, but more interesting than the Jerusalem artichoke. The same with the Peruvian oca of Peru; who thinks of using the leaves? No-one! And yet it produces an incredible depth of taste!"* **Jean-Luc is crazy about these new discoveries in taste, texture and structure.**

Species from all over the world can find a place here, carried in by an incredible, whirlwind of energy: Polovnia a hybrid plant from Southeast Asia, a mango tree, red meat radishes, Polygonum or Vietnamese coriander. **Far more than a simple vegetable garden, this is a haven for curiosities of nature and is totally organic, the common feature being unique food, from the land of Riquewihr, Brendel style, simple and complex, serene, based on in-depth knowledge.**

To successfully undertake this exploration of plants, Jean-Luc observes, listens, smells then tastes, and puts his 5 senses in turmoil until he comes up with the 6th ! This is where the idea takes shape, on an emotive and creative level, to come up with the ingredient, the sauce, the dish, the subject for the next gourmet creation. What bliss to allow Nature to decide at which point one should create. If you listen to Nature, you inherently understand her, as Jean-Luc would say. One should nurture the plants, fruit and vegetables through to full maturity, to extract their precious essence, the intimate sap of life. Listen to the stalks cracking or creaking and pick wisely, allowing the earth to breathe so that it can regenerate. *"We break up the soil to allow air to circulate, but do not turn it over. Otherwise, all the life present could be destroyed. Our soil is dark, and crumbly, it's wonderful, there are lots of micro-organisms and insects. That's the whole point of having a living soil. Over there, we have beans, which we will pick and then let the foliage die back naturally and turn into nitrogen. So, during the winter months, the work carries on naturally and the soil regenerates itself so that we end up with a soil full of energy and life. An eternal cycle of birth and rebirth"*.

DISCOVERY GARDENS & KITCHEN | Sundays, by reservation only, 48 hours in advance.

from €180 for a single person and €310 for 2 people, including:

Lunch at La Table du Gourmet | **Visit** to the Kobelsberg Gardens with Chef Jean-Luc Brendel as guide (allow 1h30) | **Tasting** extracts of plants and a **basket of seasonal vegetables** to take away.

JEAN-LUC BRENDEL IS AWARDED A MICHELIN GREEN STAR AND 3 ECOTABLE MACAROONS IN 2022

An ethical recycling policy, zero waste, composting, waste management and selective sorting... eco-responsibility is not a fad but a lifestyle choice, a permanent quest. This requirement to know all about small scale food production is evident right down to the food on the plate with its of exceptional purity of taste, deep, intense, and its unique textures. Today La Table du Gourmet is 98% plant self-sufficient from June through to December, and 80% for the rest of the year, with the greenhouse coming into its own for the winter season. The quest for what is healthy, tasty and beautiful is the aim. Every morning, as soon as the dew has settled, the picking team fill their baskets with freshly harvested produce, and sometimes once more in the evening, if necessary. A pantry full of produce, enriched by the sun and guided by the phases of the moon.

In this world of his, where the roots sing and the leaves dance, and plants are the celebration of his creative palette, Jean-Luc Brendel lovingly provides guidance to this vital ecological place. A song of love for which, in March 2022, he was awarded the green star in the Michelin Guide and 3 Ecotable macaroons, the ultimate reward for the total commitment of a man born with strong family roots, for a chef devoted to sustainable gastronomy, both responsible and committed. A tribute to nature and to his native land. He is continuing along his horticultural path with the creation of a Roman garden, currently on the drawing board, and will continue to interpret his life through nature and marvel at the fruit trees...



FROM FORESTS, TO MOUNTAINS AND VINEYARDS, RIQUEWIHR IS THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN OF ALSACE

In the heart of Alsace, and on the Wine Route, Riquewihr has the appearance of an enchanted fortress. It is a world apart, combining both nature and culture, a shining union. A chance to briefly live in a different world, in a different time. History, heritage, feelings, and memories abound. From the luxuriant greenery of Spring to the bonhomie of the distinctive Christmas market, few places inspire as does Riquewihr. You can almost touch the souls from the past who once walked these same streets, and the stories they tell. It is this rich past that emanates from within this picturesque town, with all its complexities of life. A treasure of original architecture, nestled behind its miraculously preserved 13th century ramparts, with its portcullis, drawbridge, cobbled streets, and numerous dwellings, both grand and charmingly modest. **The history and artistic influences of both France and Germany, from the Middle Ages through to the 18th century, come together in Riquewihr.** Every nook and cranny is filled with a forgotten way of life and charm. Life explodes and shines from this jewel of Alsace.

The only three-star town in the Green Michelin Guide in Alsace, Riquewihr plunges you into the heart of **living nature, transporting you away from it all.** Nestled between two Grands Crus, the medieval town shines. On one side are the sloping vineyards of **Schoenenbourg with its the living energy, its strength, both pure and complex**, like a masculine arm of protectiveness and strength. It is the rare geology of the place – gypsum undersoil which gives the wine a very high ageing capacity and naturally protects it – which brought wealth to the town from the start of the Renaissance. On the other side, the gently undulating land, the tender taste of **Sporen: tannic elegance, enveloping texture and comforting charm.**



The vines of Schoenenbourg plunging steeply into the heart of Riquewihr.

Between these complementing grand crus, the cheerful, colourful multitude of half-timbered houses, set in a natural amphitheatre at the foot of Mount Koenigsstuhl, complete with forests and rivers, create a pleasing sense of harmony.

Above all, do not make do with a mere quick foray into the central street. To understand the essence of the place, climb to the upper town to best admire the immensity that unfolds in successive layers below you. **With its lush vegetation and rich cultural heritage, Riquewihr is an alpine symphony, one that inspired the name of the Tasting Menu at La Table du Gourmet: "Grande Symphonie".**

Poetry, rhythm and contrast, inspiration, and energetic vibes sum up life in these sloping lanes, where everything from the land to the buildings is steeped in history. *"I am always amazed when I visit a place where stories are woven into everything. It envelops us and transports us elsewhere. That's what I liked about Riquewihr. That phenomenon was present and it was obvious,"* explains Jean-Luc Brendel. As soon as you enter the town, passing through the Dolder (the high gate in the ramparts) as soon as you set foot here, you experience its unique and exceptional identity. On entering **Riquewihr one suspends the reality of the present so as to immerse oneself in the living memory, driven by a longing to uncover its smallest secrets. Art galleries, craftsmen, local cellars, and macaroons of yesteryear, so many shining examples on show, both natural and cultural,** all of which lift the spirits. The pink, red, green or orange hues of the painted half-timbered buildings, wood, stone and unbounded joy declare a generosity of spirit, an exemplar and committed way of life.

And just as Riquewihr overwhelms with its strong emotion, it draws us in further to discover more, to take in the surrounding region and its potential, for visitors.

Nicknamed "Little Venice", **Colmar** is to romanticism what Paris is to love, an ideal stop to taste the dolce Vita. Original, historical buildings, masses of flowers, little squares and high buildings, churches and a sense of wellbeing. The birthplace of Auguste Bartholdi, creator of the Statue of Liberty, Colmar harks to a sense of adventure. With the wafting smells of Kouglofs and spiced breads, a stroll through the heart of the town tempts the visitor to seek out Colmar's secrets. The maze of canals at La Lauch, the covered market, the quayside fish market, and the heritage - escape to the refreshment of a delicious and soothing break. For a more intellectual challenge, there is the Unterlinden museum housing the unquestionable masterpiece of German art (the Issenheim altarpiece by Grünewald) and the Guernica tapestry by Picasso - Dürrbach.

On the banks of the Weiss River, **Kaysersberg** can also offer an exceptional terroir, the Schlossberg. It is here that a firm friendship was forged between the Faller family and the **Domaine Weinbach - whose wines are so crystalline and pure** -. So much so that their entire crop of myrobalan (an intense and tangy fruit - a cross between a plum and a cherry) is offered to Jean-Luc for a dessert that has become one of his key dishes. Kaysersberg recounts timeless Christmases and immerses you in the magical world of childhood Christmas Eves from the past. As soon as the first hints of winter creep in, with freezing mists and comforting woolly hats, this charming village plays to the tune of Advent traditions. Small wooden chalets, decorations, crèches and magnificent illuminations create a perfect spectacle at which to marvel. A cute and magical wonderland laced with chocolate, tinkling bells and delicious treats.

Back to reality within an historical context, **Ribeauvillé** is a living History lesson. Located 5 kilometres from Riquewihr, at the foot of the Vosges, nestled amongst the vineyards, the village is firmly rooted in the Middle Ages, with the Lordship of Ribeaupierre and its 3 castles - striking reminders of the past. A 7 km marked walking trail allows you to visit the buildings and travel back hundreds of years: the Château de Saint-Ulrich overlooking the Strengbach valley, the Château de Girsberg and its pentagonal keep, and finally the Château Haut-Ribeaupierre which has an amazing view over the plain of Alsace, from the top of its circular keep.

But above all, it is the hills and valleys of Riquewihr that show off the excellence of wine tourism in this area. Alsace is synonymous with complex terroirs, a subtle axis between France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland. And what absolute wealth is to found along the Alsace Wine Route - the oldest in France - sheltered by the Vosges and the Black Forest. A remarkable and unique itinerary, revealing the beauty of the natural sites and places it passes, a timeless human and emotional journey. For more than 170 kilometres, from Thann in the south to Marlenheim in the north, via Guebwiller, Colmar, Kaysersberg, Riquewihr, Ribeauvillé, Obernai and Strasbourg, the Wine Route crosses 119 wine-growing villages and 720 producers working in harmony with their region. 7 grape varieties, 51 grands crus, some of which are recognised among the greatest wines in the world, the region reveals a deep and fascinating depth of knowledge. The opportunity to live in the heart of a multidimensional, authentic Alsace, with the story of its inhabitants at its fore and with an innate sense of hospitality.



CULINARY IDENTITY

THE ALCHEMY OF NATURE AND CULTURE, FRENCH ELEGANCE AND THE SOUL OF ALSACE



Jean-Luc is a poet, an artist of great sensitivity. His soul is inspired by nature and his native land of Alsace, an inextricable, intrinsic blend of characteristics that he interprets at will. Touched by the slightest feeling, connected to history and sources of emotion, his creativity draws strength from the raw beauty of his heritage, the innate instincts of his region, from a humanity that is authentic and simple. Without embellishment or pretence, he revels in the pure truth, true roots, those that have a story to tell and those that cause upheaval, a sign of particular significance, an expression of his territory.

Thirsty for knowledge and history, he delves deep into obscure sources to extract meaning, he travels to places of significant meaning, walks both mountains and forests in search of the ultimate emotion. In a broken twig, the freshness of an autumn morning, the failing light, the moss of the forests, the tender smell of a crushed leaf, his spirit is lifted, is turned upside down and suddenly comes alive. **Before even putting on his apron, he conjures his dishes from his heart.** Through them, he can tell a story, that of Riquewihr and its cobbled streets, of the vineyards that surround it, of the love he dedicates to life, the essence of everything, the soul of this place.



Chargrilled "Alsace" beef, roasted fennel, Choron marigold, bonnotte lace.

A moment spent in the heart of nature, the memory of a night in the caves of Matera, the intense emotion that comes with a significant encounter. A picker of yellow oyster mushrooms, a hunter of game, a memorable anecdote, a crushed ripe fruit. From there, **behind his contemporary-style glasses, his imagination takes flight. He strides off and settles himself within his favourite place, using his unique way of thinking, his hands deep in the teeming earth of his Kobelsberg Gardens, in search of the perfect ingredient to express the essentials of life; plants for a particular purpose, cooking as if painting a masterpiece.**

*"I am extremely attached to my territory and local products. It is **my map** that adapts to **my garden, not the other way around.** This is the very essence of what we wanted to put in place." And when he finally achieves his goal, **propelled by the powerful energy of his vegetable garden, his thoughts crystallise: the texture, the consistency, crunchiness, smoothness, fleshiness.** Delicate and intense... each element takes shape, tangible and precise, polished and delicious. His imagination is fired up to interpret his thoughts, deliver a story, share, take people on a journey. **To attain an overwhelming, pure and enveloping joy without superficiality or pretence.** For Jean-Luc approximation is not sufficient, but that of raising the selected heritage product to the pinnacle of excellence. And the crazier his thoughts, the better: **"Madness is often a wise muse, it was she who led me to choose Riquewihr, more than 40 years ago.***

***I fell in love with this place, resonating between nature and culture, where the energies dance together uncontrollably and my creativity alongside.** To reach the heights of perfection, it has to be a product of the garden, with its texture and its taste. We search and search, exploring all avenues. Depending on the given emotion at the time, I come up with ideas for new bonds, partnerships. When I design or taste, I have to understand its why and wherefore, it has to mean something to me. I can already see how the completed dish will turn out even before I start to cook it. When I can't see it, I know it's not going to work."*

Jean-Luc takes reason and irrationality to their furthest point. He cultivates the 7,500 m² of his Kobelsberg Gardens as per the rhythm of his inner soul, planting rare seeds, unusual vegetables, bright fruits and quirky plants that he watches over and cares for, during the entirety of their life cycle. This is how he creates the colourful palette of his abundant imagination, ready for the bountiful harvest. From start to finish, just like an artist facing a **blank canvas, he works it out in his head, sketching out his gastronomic creations. And puts Alsace in pride of place through the use of energised, exciting and powerful flavours.** Thus, he paints a living tableau, using the roots of his nourishing land and culinary aesthetics. His guiding parameters are beauty and relevance, an elegy to verdant nature, a whirlwind of the senses that takes flight.



Puffed petals, beef horn pepper ketchup.



Myrobolan sunflower.



Spiced sweets of tomato.

CULINARY SIGNATURE FROM CREATIVE REBEL, TO A CLEAR AND SIMPLE VISION

Possessed by the spirit of his region, beginning with Riquewihr and his Kobelsberg Gardens as the starting point, and nourished by his solid relationships with producers, breeders, gatherers, hunters or fishermen, Jean-Luc Brendel reveals the soul of Alsace as he lives out the dream, creating a bright, signature cuisine. Plants are the focus, an inspired, sustainable and responsible gastronomy, in homage to nature and his native Alsace. Chioggia beet, apple cabbage, hammerhead turnip or oca from Peru, star vegetable, dazzling fruit, the chef is unrestricted by traditional practices, free from so-called classic ingredients, and revels in a freedom of expression without barriers that bursts through with unbounded passion.

With clean lines and apparent simplicity, he produces dishes full of vitamins. Dishes where the essential goodness is obvious, a sensory overload that makes you happy just by looking at it. Through the medium of his audacious and joyful cuisine, Jean-Luc only wants to share the good and do benefit others.

From mankind to the planet and from garden to plate, every day and bit by bit, he refines his methods, always in search of perfect results that make an impact. By giving all of himself, he leaves nothing to chance in combining the richness of his terroir with his deepest desire for taste. The seeming simplicity of a dish hides the truth; a greater complexity, either hidden or hinted at, but always superb. First, the freshness of the ingredients, at the peak of ripeness. This initial hit to the mouth, which arouses one's curiosity and gives a punch, with its frank and clean flavours. A hint of something divine, that challenges and subtly mixes things up. A second, more sensual sensation comes with the eating. Plays in the textures, just like of a tightrope walker, balancing forces on the wire, increasing in sensation for a dense and voluptuous chew, a strong and powerful taste delight, increasing tenfold. Crunchy/melting, crispy/soft, he sets about addressing every gourmet sensation through his dishes, whether for the vegetarian or the meat-lover, all his creations receive this ultimate expertise.

Taking into account its character, its origin, its freshness and its maturity, a prime example of their expertise is the meat cooked outdoors in the closed barbecue. "We don't ask our guests how they want their meat cooked anymore. All meat is cooked just as they should be. There is nothing more emotional than meat that is crusty, lightly smoked, with subtly caramelised flesh. Along with the juice, everything explodes in the mouth, envelops the palate, and the tastes are heightened". With flame roasting, the textures come alive and respond, the flavours are concentrated and through this method of cooking, which is thought out, down to the smallest of details, the meat ends up at its absolute best. Chewing reveals full meatiness, intensity, and tenderness. And the intensely punchy juice, a message at the core of the dish, exposes the deep essence of its origin.

Just incredible!

For fish dishes, the technique is just as advanced. *"We offer fast-cooked salamander. It is cooked at 400 degrees in less than 30 seconds. The skins are crispy and the flesh soft and smooth. And then there is Trout Ikejime, salty and smoky. Here too we pay special attention to how the textures work together. We use tried and tested methods to create pleasure and bring out unexpected flavours".* And when the balance of textures finally levels out, pleasing and complex sauces, broths, infusions or extracts, all prepared to finesse and complement a dish, the soul is comforted. Rounded, sharp, unctuous or savoury, the juices and sauces bring together all the components of the dish, the essential role of a leader who unites, or a father who gathers the whole family under one roof on Sundays. Reminiscence, warming pleasure and calmness of being, the sauces put **the final touch on the painting, the subtle and harmonious climax, essential punctuation in a poem, the mirror image of naked man, as nature intended.**

Through this logic of unity, order and balance, the Chef offers a unique blueprint that can be experienced in either 5, 7 or 9 courses. The ultimate "Grande Symphonie" Menu is the perfect representation of his poetic and special world.

Whether it is vegetables, sustainable meat, wild lake or river fish, all constitute an emotional, culinary and all-embracing journey, a unique interpretation of Riquewihr and of its natural and cultural heritage.

ALONGSIDE THE CHEF, A PASSIONATE AND MULTI-CULTURAL KITCHEN TEAM

At main positions:

Stéphane Bourgoing, second chef since 2000

Ricardo Brenna, junior kitchen assistant since 2022

Ricardo Murguia Davalos, chef de partie since 2018

Florian Woelfflin, pastry chef since 2022



Arctic char & flat parsley.

ICONIC CREATIONS

Jean-Luc Brendel's cuisine is of the garden, to the core and in sync with the life cycle of each individual herb, vegetable or fruit. **Through their omnipotent embodiment of Mother Earth, plants retain the taste of authenticity and reveal incredible gastronomic potential.** It is no longer about seasonality but about **hyper-seasonality**, the **periodic calendar of Mother Nature**. Aromatic joy, flashes of creativity and subtlety, a concentration of everything to the point of exquisiteness.

Jean-Luc prefers not to use the term "signature dish", because the selected products, along with their paired wines are constantly changing. Depth of taste, characteristics, style, bitterness, variations in acidity, force one **to taste over and over, in search of the sometimes ephemeral and perfect balance.** Even more so, as it also involves the interaction of external factors: such as climate, temperature, light, the lunar calendar, all of which influence our palate and our mood.

It follows that a culinary creation is, by definition, constantly in motion, with subtle and precise variations. The cuisine is alive, free and without boundaries. But the Chef has also learned over recent years how to maintain precision and purity.

In the spirit the words of Nicolas Boileau, "Put your work twenty times upon the anvil", Jean-Luc juggles with the spirit of Riquewihr, the changing seasons and the challenge of an artistic mind.

In doing so, he follows an untrodden path, constantly deepening his research, and his dishes gain in clarity month on month. A prime example would be **Trout Ikejime with parsley, purple sorrel and cabbage flowers**: without doubt the **Chef's ultimate creation** of the moment, due to its delicacy, its overall harmony of taste, and the complexity of its sauce. A high-risk balancing act, which is well worth the visit!

HERE FOLLOW FURTHER EXAMPLES OF HIS OUTSTANDING CREATIONS, WITH ACCOMPANYING NOTES:

Caro snails in their natural habitat! - picture on right page -

Accompanied by young shoots from the garden and a cloud of potato, the snails reveal a previously unimagined fullness of flavour and delicacy. The tenderness, the silkiness of the emulsified potato, combined with the tiny croutons, enhance the snails' texture. Just like a bouquet of flowers, the herbs - in elegy to their natural habitat - bring an herbaceous or floral note to each mouthful. In summary, the entire aromatic palette of the garden can be found in this composition.

Carrot ovation - picture next page -

"Amongst all the varieties of carrots from our Kobelsberg Gardens, I have a real soft spot for the gniff, a heritage variety (250 years old) which is rich in carotene, with blush pink flesh and a white core. Its low yields normally discourage market gardeners. Yet the taste and tactile result it provides is totally unique. What depth of taste! I add nuance and complexity with the herbaceous notes of parsley and the powerful aniseed tang of marigold tarragon. And what amazing textures! Crunchy on the outside, melting, almost silky at its delicately scented core".



Caro snails in their natural habitat!



Carrot ovation.



Beetroot flower, pike caviar, horseradish ice cream.

Beetroot flower with caviar of pike and horseradish ice cream - *picture previous page* -

This is an iconic vegetable from our garden. Its rustic nature is transformed by the magical balance between the strength of the horseradish ice cream - a mustard, peppery, spicy condiment with multiple medicinal properties - and the finesse of the pike caviar. The beetroot assumes a new dimension, both light and strong. The exceptional quality of our clay soil (adjoining the Grand Cru Schoenenbourg - one of the greatest white wines in the world -) is perfectly suited to growing beetroot. It gives it an unexpected flavour, with its natural sugar content and a surprisingly pronounced and intense bouquet.

Spicy red venison with buewespaetzle of ceps - *picture on right page* -

The Autumn hunts in Alsace bring the pleasure of fresh, local venison! Cooking over an open fire is always such a tactile experience. A smoky textured and smoky crackling, and a juicy flesh that explodes in the mouth. The cabbage adds both crunch and tenderness. But the real soul of the dish is the juice. An intense and tangy red broth, striking in its complexity, power and depth, just like a great wine! It's deep flavour and spiciness bonds the different elements of the dish, and gives a smooth and intense sensation of heat to the palate. It's intensity of concentration enhances and envelops the juicy flesh and crusty skin of the venison. To make this dish work, the juice must be made from our home-grown fresh gooseberries / raspberries / cherries, without the need for additional sugar.

The starchy " buewespaetzle of ceps " off-sets the intensity of the sauce and spices, a real symphony of Espelette pepper, 5 other peppers, orange powder, red pepper and cinnamon berry. It is a pleasantly filling delicacy in which the ceps provide a strong link to the surrounding forests.

The crispness of an autumn morning - *picture next page* -

Mounds of ice cream flavoured with oca leaves, wild mushrooms, crystallized herbs... a total immersion in the soul of autumn. As far we can tell, this is the first use of oca leaf in a dessert by a top, starred restaurant. The oxalic acid contained in the oca leaf brings a sweet and tangy flavour, mirroring the freshness of a crisp autumn morning! And in contrast, a hint of the earthy soil, reminiscent of the smell of the garden and the humid forest after the rain, with its scents of rich earth, mushrooms, and bark. The liquorice marigold and musky parsley add a slightly aniseed, liquorice touch and floral notes, for added complexity.



Spicy red venison, buewespaetzle of ceps.



The freshness of an autumn morning.



The freshness of a summer morning.

THE REVELATION OF FOOD & WINE PAIRINGS!

It would be an understatement to say that wine at La Table du Gourmet adds an unexpected dimension. At the centre of the oldest Wine Route in France (celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2023), and with the restaurant's gardens adjoining one of the most legendary Grands Crus - Le Schoenenbourg - promoting the fruit of Bacchus' labours is the natural way of things.

Wine at the Brendel's is like a revelation. A double emotional and intellectual shock. The culmination of a process started in 2014 (see *the Alsace winegrowers tasting workshops page 20*). In experiencing the Symphonic Menu and its chosen pairings, the potential of great Alsace wines is overwhelming. One can gauge the quality of culinary art, when food & wine complement each other to such an extent.

LA TABLE DU GOURMET SHOWCASES THE AMAZING SELECTION OF TERROIRS OF ALSACE

For those in the know, Alsace is an enigma. Why is one of the most exciting wine regions in the world adored by a circle of enlightened professionals and amateurs, but underestimated by the general public? If the top vintages of Weinbach, Deiss or Zind-Humbrecht are admired from the Americas to Asia, too many French people remain unaware of the significance of these wines. It must be said that no region offers such a variety of terroirs, choice of grape varieties (planted or not), characteristics ranging from extra dryness to honey-sweet, with wide range of complexity and purity. Especially when the names of localities, estates and winegrowers are not always easy to memorize; and the difference in weather conditions from one year to the next result in widely differing results for the same wines. It is easy to lose track of things. Without doubt it is easier to understand a great Burgundy Chardonnay than the salty, smoky, peaty character of Rangen de Thann Clos Saint Urbain from Domaine Zind-Humbrecht!

For Jean-Luc Brendel, his sister Fabienne, and their Head Sommelier since 2011 Anne Humbrecht, **the challenge was immense: to help convey the soul and grandeur of Alsace wines, and to enhance the culinary experience.**

With the help of the winegrowers, an encyclopaedic mission was embarked upon: **the classification of all the wines of the region by soil type, by analysing the influence of geology, terroirs and ecosystems on the characteristics of the wines. The result is the first wine list of over 500 entries dedicated solely to Alsace. A world first.** And an unparalleled educational tool for any wine lover. Through this undertaking, the House declares its profound love for the terroirs of Alsace. Altruism, audacity, unwavering dedication to such a project, and the breaking of new ground; all of this makes the experience at La Table du Gourmet stand out.

HEAD SOMMELIER AND WINEMAKER IN HER OWN RIGHT, ANNE HUMBRECHT CHAMPIONS ECO-RESPONSIBLE AND CREATIVE WINE ESTATES

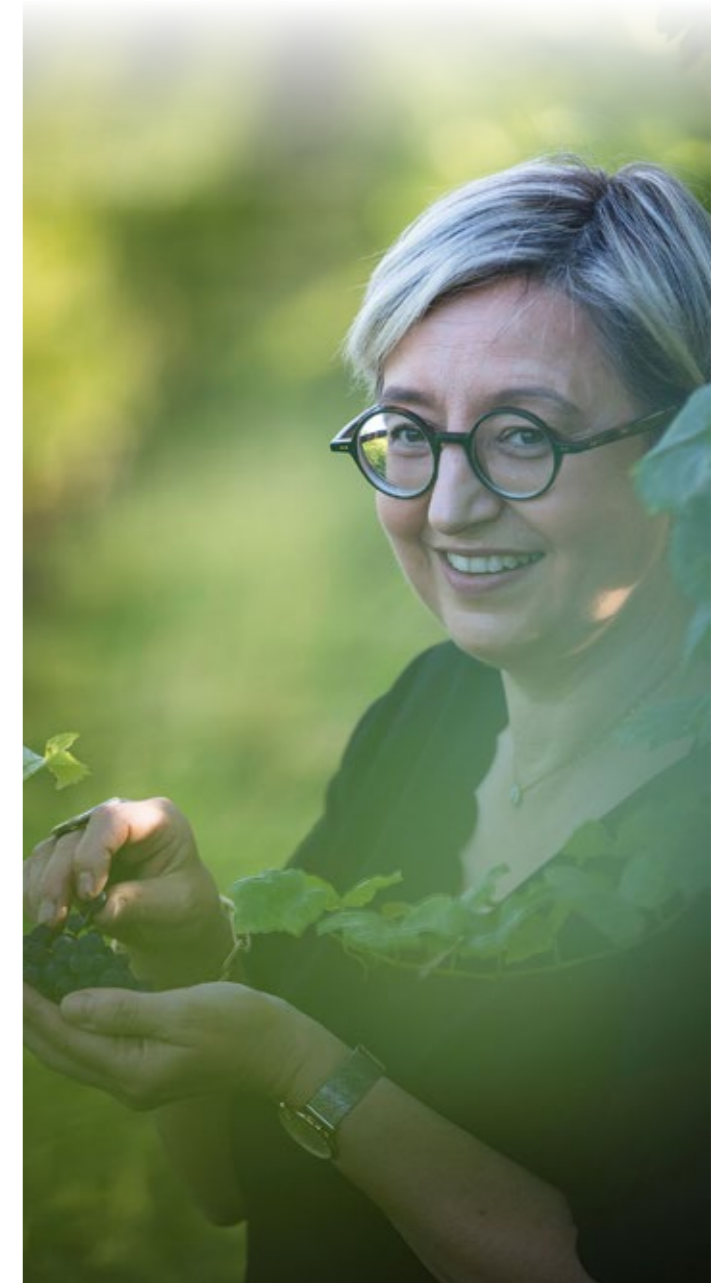
With over 170 km of the Wine Route, bordering Germany and Switzerland, and within easy reach of Luxembourg and Belgium, Alsace sets a high standard, not only by being home to fifty or so Grands Crus with prized labels, but also by the human investment in the region. A wine cannot be great without vision and human endeavour! Far less restricted than in Burgundy or Bordeaux where a wine's pedigree is required to meet market expectations, the great winegrowers of Alsace allow themselves autonomy of expression and the freedom to take risks, which leads to the creation of wines that are market leaders.



*« Gentle, sensitive and genuine
hospitality is required to touch
the emotions of others »*

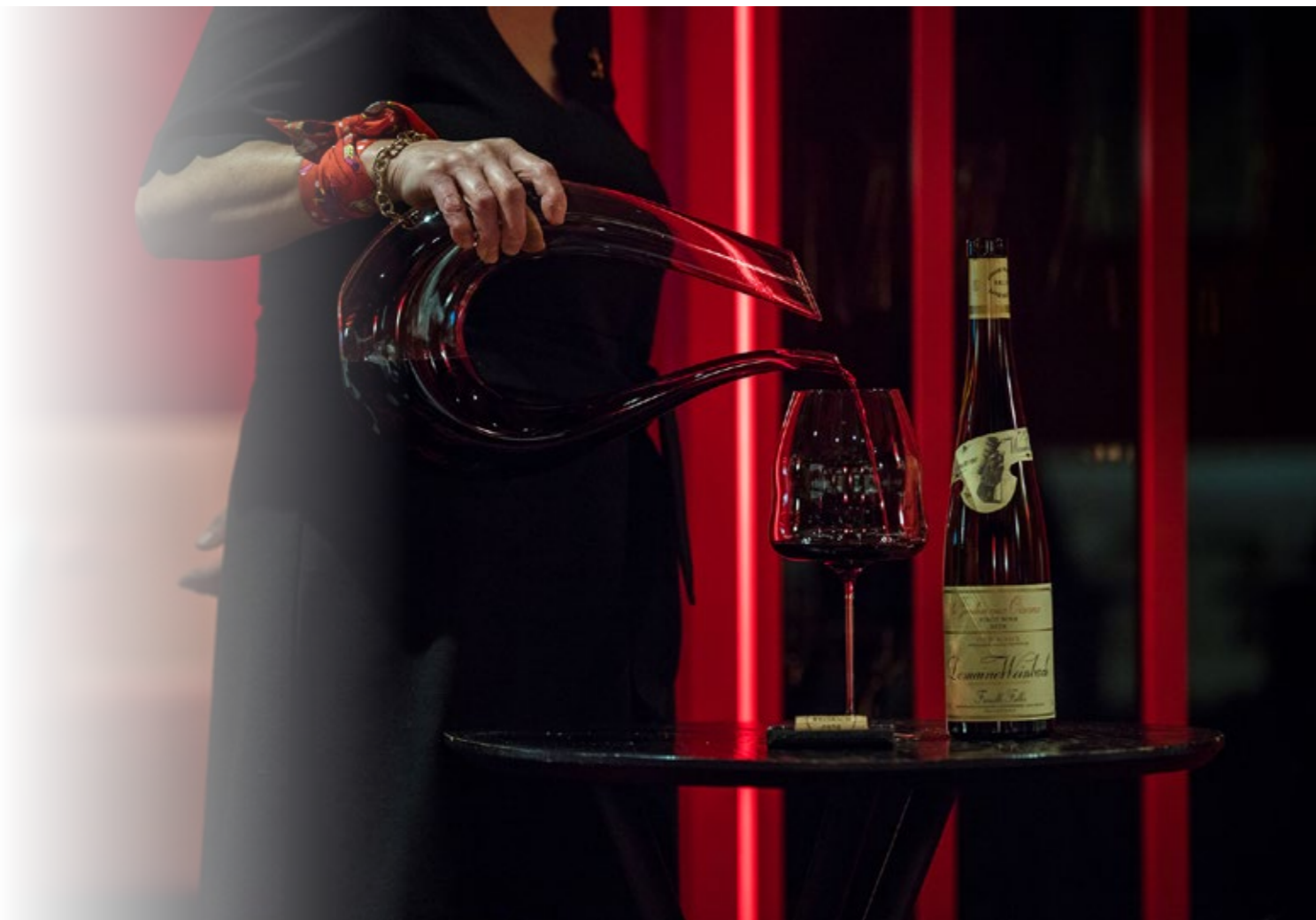
Fabienne Brendel

Fabienne Brendel



Anne Humbrecht





With the combination of generational savoir-faire, continually improving technical knowledge, a new understanding of ecosystems, and the emergence of personal visions, Alsace has risen to the challenge. As in gastronomy, there is no single, dominant model, but many methods, multiplying the interest in the region. So many different paths for Jean-Luc to follow: from dancing acidities to great bitterness, from suggestion to affirmation, great wines that challenge him, and encourage him to constantly question himself as he continues to push the limits of his cuisine.

While his sister Fabienne was sommelier and dining room manager for many years, the Chef has now put his oenological passion in the hands of **Anne Humbrecht, renowned and committed Head Sommelier**, with 30 years in the business. Having worked for two other starred restaurants in the region, and a **winegrower of Riquewihr in her own right, working with Marc Tempé - one of the pioneers of biodynamics -**, since 2011 Anne has been compiling **two wine lists for La Table du Gourmet, with a firm philosophical base**. Two wine "bibles" that are constantly edited. The first a celebration of Alsace. The second, a selection of her favourites from all the French regions and other countries. 500 entries in each, a total of **1000 entries**, leaving the cuvées that don't make the grade to age gracefully and quietly in the dark.

Anne favours winegrowers who demonstrate respect for the environment, who invest time and effort in learning to understand their terroir. Subtlety, clarity, minerality, tension, but also texture, density, complexity, depth in the mouth are the benchmarks of her research.

With a strong attachment to Alsace, the region of her birth, **Anne champions the viticultural identity of the region with a mixture of passion and subtle confidence**, in respect of both the vineyards and also its culture. But she is also constantly on the lookout for information about vineyards throughout France, and beyond. **Always aware of emerging labels, the latest natural and organic products, she likes to be at the forefront, looking to uncover future talent, while closely monitoring the evolution of the well-established domains.**

"I only select creative wines. As the kitchen discloses its secrets, the wine must also tell a story. From the roots and depths of life, a lifting of the spirits for the devotees of Brendel's poetry to the heights!"

SOME OF THE MOST INSPIRING FOOD & WINE PAIRINGS IN FRANCE

You have to be extremely knowledgeable and erudite to articulate all the wealth of the Alsace terroirs, in accords fused with Jean-Luc's dishes. A perfect connection to the poetic, experienced and gourmet world of the Chef.

To meet the expectations of guests and marry with the culinary ideas, Anne is constantly altering the food and wine pairings, on offer at five price levels. Understandably, opting for the fully immersive and unique culinary journey into the heart of Alsace, allows you to experience the full potential and nuances of its heritage.

Anne also knows when to select wines from other areas. Alsace winegrowers - many of whom come to eat here - are often inquisitive about her latest discoveries, full of treasures, from Burgundy to the Jura, from Champagne to the Rhône Valley.

The combination of her encyclopaedic knowledge of terroir, geology and the winegrowers, her close working partnership with the Chef, whose creations she tastes daily, the results of food and wine pairings are of a rare intensity.

Of course, **Anne is looking to create both unions and balances between taste and smell**. But she is also very attentive to the **relevance of the textures** (a dish with a delicate touch calls for a silky and subtle wine, while a complicated dish requires a wine with more depth). **Energy, strength, bouquet - all must be taken into account. A successful marriage requires a common alignment of philosophy, spirit and vision of the world.** There are multiple parameters, including conditions at the moment of tasting (choice of carafe, glassware, serving temperature, etc.). Everything is thought through, considered, measured... to ensure that the cuisine and wines resonate in harmony, in a quest for passion and perfection.

The magic works to such a level that **Atabula's Franck Pinay-Rabaroust describes the food and wine pairings of La Table du Gourmet as "a total success", "one of the most successful in France".**

And **Stéphane Davet goes further in Le Monde: "We don't know of a better storyteller of food and wine pairings than Anne Humbrecht, whose 500 Alsace wine citations, encompassing both quintessential classics and daring newcomers, bring Riquewihr a thousand variations on the vegetable and sauce cuisine of Jean-Luc Brendel".**

It is hardly surprising that **Anne** was named **Sommelier of the Year in the Pudlo Guide 2023**.

AN OUTSTANDING SETTING

La Table du Gourmet's dining room went through numerous changes of décor, before settling on a décor of **deep red, the colour of passion**. Vitality, energy and commitment. Surrounded by the memories of the **16th Century winegrower's house** (1539 to be exact), this legacy of the past cannot be surpassed. A friendly spirit, the nurturing instinct of the farmer, a multitude of protective souls survive in every stone. And what striking energy emanates from the vaulted ceiling, with its subtle and sympathetic lighting.

The table décor is being continuously refreshed in beauty and relevance. The immaculate new white "Knoll" inspired tables, elegantly punctuate the room. Carole Neilson from Wangen has been designing **bespoke ceramics for Brendel's individual culinary creations since 2021**. This synchronous approach with the Chef, involves choosing the materials, colours and shapes according to the requirement of each dish, the soul of the products presented and their seasonality. This is complicity in its finest form, Jean-Luc having great appreciation for her refined, delicate and feminine style, the delicacy of the plates and their natural pigments. And **Joël Matter from Munster has created 24 knives**, unique pieces of art, that combine wood, bone and precious materials - some very rare - with the blades that he forges himself. Every guest is given the opportunity to choose a knife of their dreams, to cut their plate of meat.

The atmosphere of intimacy - 25 to 30 covers - is a perfect setting for the clarity of chef Jean-Luc Brendel's gastronomic story. In an expression of timelessness, history merges with the here and now. The heritage of Riquewihr, the soul of Alsace shines out, through the natural and poetic gastronomy laid out on the table. Just as with the pictures and paintings we own, this is an exhibition of design and gourmet art, with the idea of a voyage at its heart. It is a true culinary and oenological journey that you will experience.





*« Receiving, sharing,
well-being and being well »*
Jean-Luc Brendel



FABIENNE BRENDEL, ANNE HUMBRECHT, FANNY GROSHENS : 3 WONDERFUL WOMEN WORKING AND CREATING IN HARMONY

In a world constantly in search of benchmarks, La Table du Gourmet is both rejuvenating and comforting. Rare are the places where such creative energy is concentrated, where a culinary statement is so strongly connected to natural and cultural elements. And rare are the places where the French art of living, the sharing of a well-established identity (Riquewihr and Alsace) merge; where the credo is based on deep respect for others and for all things living. Here is consideration, thoughtfulness but also character and the delight in sharing their message. A very rare and authentic way of living, which brings to mind another landmark of Alsace: the Weinbach estate, where Catherine Faller invites her visitors into the heart of their family home, with a unique sense of hospitality. This convergence of values has created an unbreakable bond.

At La Table du Gourmet, hospitality is lead by 3 wonderfully colourful women. **Fabienne Brendel** has been working alongside her brother Jean-Luc from the beginning of the venture in 1983. Articulate, with the knowledge of the cuisine and region at her fingertips, bringing pleasure to others is her "raison d'être"; to transform the ephemeral moment of a meal into lasting memories. **Anne Humbrecht**, Head Sommelier Emeritus, joined the team in 2011. She alone knows how to play with all the crus and geology of Alsace. Her credo: ground-breaking chemistry between the culinary creations, great wine and the personal expectations of each guest. Inexplicably, without force or imposition, but with diplomacy and tact, she manages to open new doors and enhance the knowledge of the guests, for the greater good and their happiness. Finally, **Fanny Groshens**, the youngest, has been taking part in this adventure since 2022, after a great career at the Auberge de l'III. She brings with her the freshness of youth, ambition and proven professionalism.

THE BRENDDELSTUB

In time, with a mind brimming with ideas, and wanting to start a new chapter, offering a different experience, Jean-Luc Brendel opened a new restaurant in 2005 and embarked on the hotel experience. "A need arose. With the Michelin star, we were classified in the restaurant category, we had to come up with a solution that was more affordable. At the time, one didn't come across quality accommodation that was also something out of the ordinary. Since one couldn't buy a historic building purely for use as a hotel business, I opted for a bistro with rooms. I had to fight for it. But it all came good in the end, and the sun shone for us again".

The Brendelstüb was born.



In Riquewihl's main street, an old mansion and authentic winegrower's house, which was built between the 13th and 17th centuries, now houses the Brendel-style Winstüb.

With a burgundy painted facade, diamond lattice windows, the architecture belies the style of the past. It is the interior decor that sets the scene: **a pop design in an energetic orange, galleried walls, a convivial and gourmet living space under the leadership of Anne Brendel, his wife.**

Munificent in the art of living. The cuisine is renowned for its tartes flambées, wood-fired specialities, spit-roasted ham and traditional charcuterie, but the experience extends to the wineglass, where oenological expertise again is in action. From the specially selected wines to the tasting of local products, life is good at the Brendels'.



«Surprise, attention to detail, simplicity... The Brendelstüb is the beating heart of Riquewihl»
says Charles Dias Hestin, Anne Brendel's right arm.

CHARMING ACCOMMODATION STEEPED IN HISTORY

Over the years Jean-Luc and his wife Anne have created three uniquely different styles of accommodation, merging nature and culture, luxury and simplicity.

The **B. Suites** are in the heart of the medieval town of Riquewihr, on the upper floors of the Brendelstüb. The **B. Vintage**, a tribute to the Roaring Twenties and the 1950s, is an independent building on the Medieval ramparts.

Finally, The **B. Cottage** and its Spa embody an earthly paradise surrounded by nature, in the heart of the Kobelsberg Gardens.

Let's now discover the soul of each of these places.



The B. Vintage



The B. Cottage



The B. Suites

THE B. SUITES

To complete the laughter and feeling of well-being prevalent in the Brendelstüb on the ground floor of the 14th Century winegrower's house, the B. Suites replicates the atmosphere on the upper floors by extending the experience. Firmly upmarket, stylish, the bedroom suites take inspiration from the history of the medieval city, whilst being modern and sympathetically adapted. Designed, decorated and beautifully presented, they are the work of Jean-Luc Brendel, once again revealing another passion – architecture – an artistic language that he understands. Merging tradition and modernity, they bear the name of their creator, his feeling, poetic, delicate and committed, calm and poised.

This sense of well-being being the predominant theme, the B. Suites calls on the heritage of Alsace, through unearthed frescoes, period wardrobes, log burners. *Lumière (Light)* is a baroque inspired space, the use of dark foliage and lacquered furniture draw on Zen influences. Nature, as it suggests, is represented in the exposed stonework and the use of wood, but given a shake-up with an opulent four-poster bed, the medieval mixed with modern design, a striking juxtaposition. *Songe (Dream)* is a place of purity, the dolce Vita, with a few splashes of colour to raise the spirits, a half-timbered ceiling under which to dream, somewhere to lose yourself. *Apparat (Splendour)*; Alsace opulence, contrasting styles for effect, warm metallic touches from the gold-framed mirror, the contrast between the period setting, shaken up by touches of modernity.



Climb a little further, higher up, pushing the boundaries, is an apartment that has designed with luxury at its heart. *Luxe (Luxury)* is an eclectic mix of pop and contemporary style, a 5-star hideaway within the 17th Century walls; an atmosphere both strong and powerful, bright and colourful, a timeless escape with a view of the grands crus of Schœnenbourg; a place that is unique.

The highlight of the show, *Design* is a room with no restraints. Sheltered high up under the roof, it is a cocoon, aflame with the colours of passion. From incandescent white to deep red, the symbol of love, it is the ideal hideaway for discreet and romantic evenings, a few purple rose petals at the heart of the story.



« Six luxurious guest rooms
have been created in a medieval house
in Riquewihr. »

Anne Brendel

THE B. VINTAGE

In the spirit of the Roaring 20s and the 1950s, the B. Vintage opened its doors in 2017, high up on the 13th Century ramparts of the town. It is a guest house out of its time – a throwback to Jean-Luc's favourite eras, a "time of grace" between the two Great Wars. Laid out over 3 floors, this cosy, standalone accommodation is just like a film-set, which goes overboard in projecting a past era. One can't but admire the amazing detail that has been put into this project: the faded prints of vintage newspaper clippings, the muted colours, the use of blues and brick red, the free-standing bathtub, photos of the Brendel family on display. There is an undeniably strong emotional investment in this place, memories guiding the layout of the different areas, like a lucky charm which one deposits to bring luck everywhere.



"I am the sole creator, the architect, the interior designer of the B. Vintage. It was a ruin. The roof was rotten, the corridor did not exist, the passageway was walled up - and yet today it is the largest house in Riquewihr. The House is listed as a Historic Monument, as is the town. For the works to go ahead, we had to open the building up from the basement to the roof. The challenge was to architectural redesign the building from top to bottom and in the vintage style! I carried out the research, made notes, designed the staircase; the spindles were made by a foundry, the kitchen hood constructed by a coachbuilder, a chest of drawers was sourced from an antique dealer. I had to store tons of items until the house was no longer a construction site. Each object here has a story and I can remember them all. Today it is the only 100% vintage guest house that exists and I am happy to have been able to create it," says Jean-Luc Brendel.

A perfume bottle left out, a few engravings hung on the wall, dusty books lying open, refurbished cast iron radiators, a traditional wooden child's bed, a few heated blankets, wood, the use of wood and stone and an authentic gentleness, Jean-Luc Brendel knew just how to re-create the beauty of yesteryear with the comforts of today, to take this Alsace house back in time, to its earliest years. It is a joyful and timeless journey that the B. Vintage offers you through its private entrance in the alleyway. All that remains is to stroll along the passageway, at dawn with the sun on your face, in the evening at dusk, a glass of Alsace wine in hand, tradition at your fingertips...



*« I wanted to create something different,
something that has never been done before »*

Jean-Luc Brendel

THE B. COTTAGE

At the entrance to the 7,500 m² Kobelsberg gardens, is the B. Cottage, overlooking the ramparts, drawing you in to the heart of the place, a romantic and country setting, surrounded by plants and overwhelming calm. Feng shui, cosy, cocooning or simply a place to relax completely – this is a comfortable family home that awaits you. A return to one's roots and the essentials of life.

From the start, the idea was to restore completely the derelict building, reinvent it and give it purpose. A way to bringing the walls back to life, to give meaning back to the lives lived here.

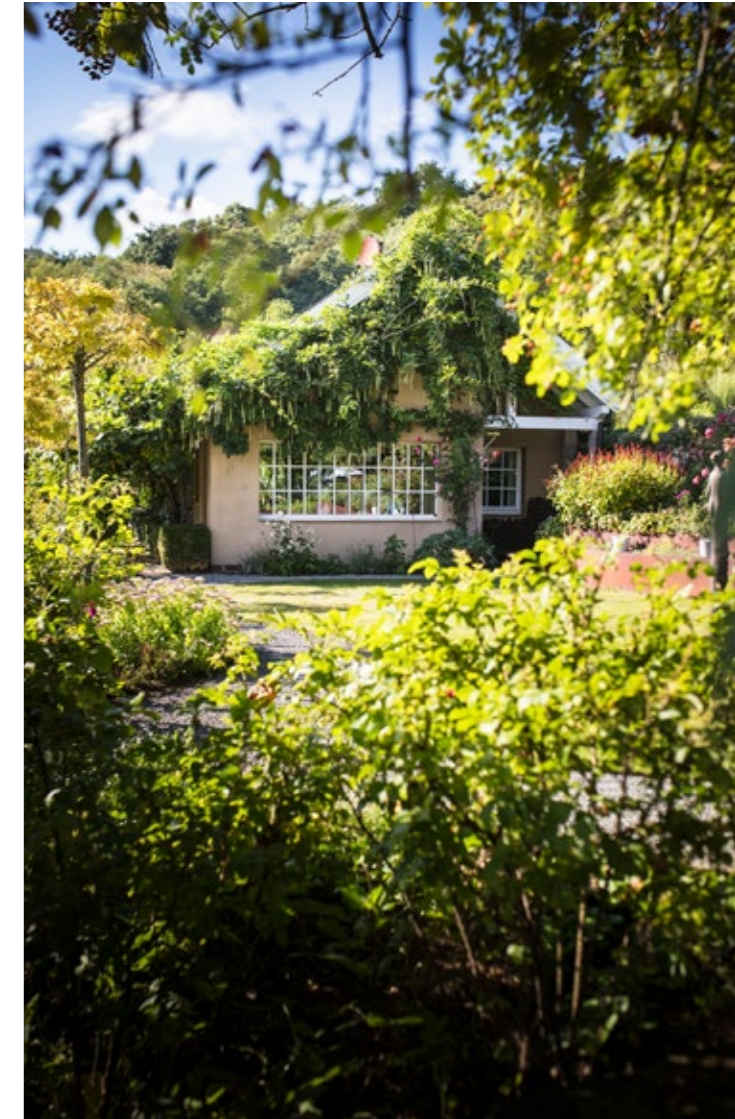
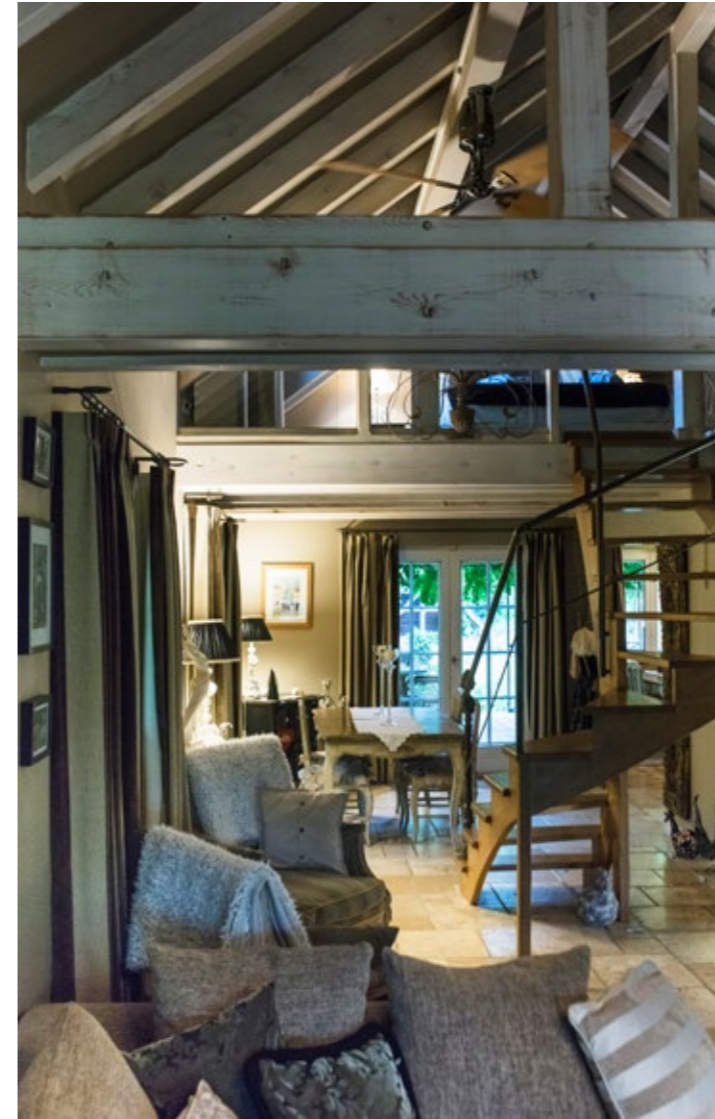
Jean-Luc and his wife Anne have created a cottage as faithful as possible to a dream holiday destination, surrounded by vines. A place where everything is elegant, light, sunny and simple. Encircled by flowers and aromatic herbs, the B. Cottage draws its beauty from the charm of its natural surroundings, its beautiful and powerful environment, the rejuvenating energy that envelops it. Dedicated to the art of good living, freedom is the ability to wander out onto the terrace in a setting that is nothing less than idyllic.



The spa nestled in an outbuilding at the edge of the garden, with a jacuzzi, hydro massage, complete with a Bose speaker system, a natural solarium and finally the sauna, time seems to stand still. Cradled by the gentle sound of the fish breaking the surface of the pond, and nature rustling with a thousand and one notes from sunrise to sunset, the B. Cottage is the ultimate place of pleasure and contemplation. A journey within the journey.

"At each step, the challenge was extraordinary. I used my love of different materials, of art and of craftsmanship across all trades. I have always been involved in interior design. Each achievement is a challenge, each piece of work is different, as if it corresponds to the steps in a lifetime."

Jean-Luc Brendel is highly sensitive, connected to the world of feelings and souls with the desire to repair and help, to restore a church to the centre of its village if necessary. To immerse himself in places with deep roots, in these buildings with strong identities. To seek correlation between everything, to give history a voice, to freely declare his individualism and identity. To encourage nature to provide... from the land to the plate and to the hotel.



*« A place that inspires contemplation
and imposes a form
of essential sustenance »*

Anne & Jean-Luc Brendel



*« A blend of calm
and strength »*
Anne Brendel

PRACTICAL INFORMATIONS & TARIFFS

SITUATION

Riquewihr is a sanctuary at the crossroads leading to Germany and Switzerland from Alsace.
Colmar is just a quarter of an hour away, Strasbourg less than an hour away.
GPS coordinates: latitude 48.166158 / longitude 7.299822

By car, to access the medieval city:

From Strasbourg:

take the A35 and exit towards the D416b "Ostheim / Beblenheim / Riquewihr".

From Mulhouse or Guebwiller :

take the A36 then the A35 towards "Strasbourg / Colmar" and take exit 23 towards "Bennwihr / Houssen / Aérodrome". Then follow "Kaysersberg / Bennwihr / Houssen".

By train:

Colmar station 15 kilometres away | Sélestat station 21 kilometres away

By plane:

Colmar airport 15 kilometres away | Strasbourg airport 71 kilometres away
Basel-Mulhouse airport 72 kilometres away

LA TABLE DU GOURMET

Red star and green star in the Michelin Guide | 4 Gault&Millau Toques | 3 Ecotable macaroons
Power and delicacy of the plant world, and highly inspired food & wine pairings.
25 to 30 covers. Team of 15 people (10 in the kitchen, 5 in the dining room).

5 courses "Garden" Menu: €120

7 courses "Awakening of the Senses" Menu: €150

9 courses "Grande Symphonie" Menu: €175

Cellar: 1000 references with 2 wine lists.

500 Alsace wine references, classified by type of geology from €50 to €350.

500 references of wines, Champagnes and spirits from other regions and other countries
from €50 to €7,000 (*for la Romanée-Conti*).

Food & wine pairings from €45 to €150

THE BRENDELSTUB

Plate in the Michelin Guide.

70 covers divided between the main room and a large cellar.

Alsace cuisine in a 14th Century vineyard house with modern decor.

Regional menu at €29.

A la carte dishes (flambé pies and cooking over a wood fire in the rotisserie) from €9.5 to €38

THE KOBELSBURG GARDENS

500 m from La Table du Gourmet, 10 min. on foot, 4 min. by car

Over 7500 m² cultivated in permaculture and organic farming, 350 species
for one of the incredible Chef's gardens on the planet.

Discovery Gardens & Kitchen from €180 for a single person and €310 for 2 people:

lunch at La Table du Gourmet, visit of the Kobelsberg Gardens with Chef Jean-Luc Brendel as a guide,
tasting of plant extracts and basket of seasonal vegetables to take away.

Sundays, by reservation 48 hours in advance.

ACCOMODATION

B. SUITES

On the upper floors of a 14th - 17th Century Vineyard House, above the Brendelstüb.

B. VINTAGE

Independent house of 120 m on the 13th Century ramparts.

"An ode to the 1950s for one of the most historic and romantic accommodations in Alsace".

B. COTTAGE

Paradise in the heart of the Kobelsberg Gardens, a sanctuary home complete with a Spa.
"A dream to enjoy the cultural and natural heritage of Riquewihr out of the world and out of time".

From €165 to €700

For more information:

<https://jlbrendel.com/fr/hebergements/sejourner.html>

and equipment and rates on the reservation page of the website.

LA TABLE DU GOURMET OPENING HOURS:

From Thursday evening to Monday evening, service from 7:15 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.

From Friday noon to Monday noon, service from 12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

ANNUAL CLOSING DATES FOR ALL ESTABLISHMENTS:

From 27th June to 12th July, 2023

From 3rd January to 8th February, 2024

« One cannot be a poet without some madness »

Democritus

Jean-Luc
Brendel
jlbrendel.com

