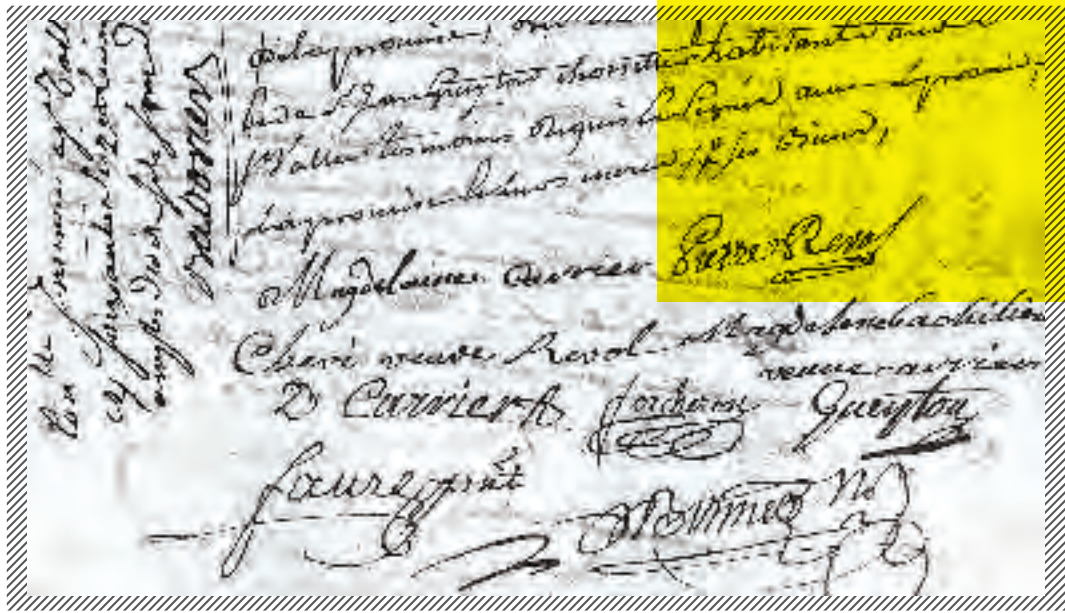




**R**  
**REVOL**  
FRANCE

**Revol**  
*SINCE 1768*





Marriage contract  
between Pierre Revol  
and Magdeleine Carrier,  
April 7th, 1768.

# 1768

History thumbs its nose at us!

In this year 2014, heavy with the memories of the events of World War I, Revol also wished to celebrate its own 225th birthday with the publication of a booklet retracing the saga of this company. Seeking to satisfy the numerous questions of its loyal clientele, its president, Olivier Passot, asked the team in charge of the company's historical patrimony to answer the first and foremost question: when and how was this company created? The 1789 date on the company's logo since the beginning of the 20th century has naturally piqued the curiosity of amateur historians. If archives reference 1789 as an important year for the history of the company – in particular the move from the manufacturing of earthenware to stoneware – we discovered during our research that the company was in fact founded by Pierre and Magdeleine Revol in 1768. And so, in the process of redacting this brochure to celebrate the 225th anniversary of the brand, this surprising discovery reveals a 246-year-long history!





**Discover  
the secret  
to exceptional  
longevity.**

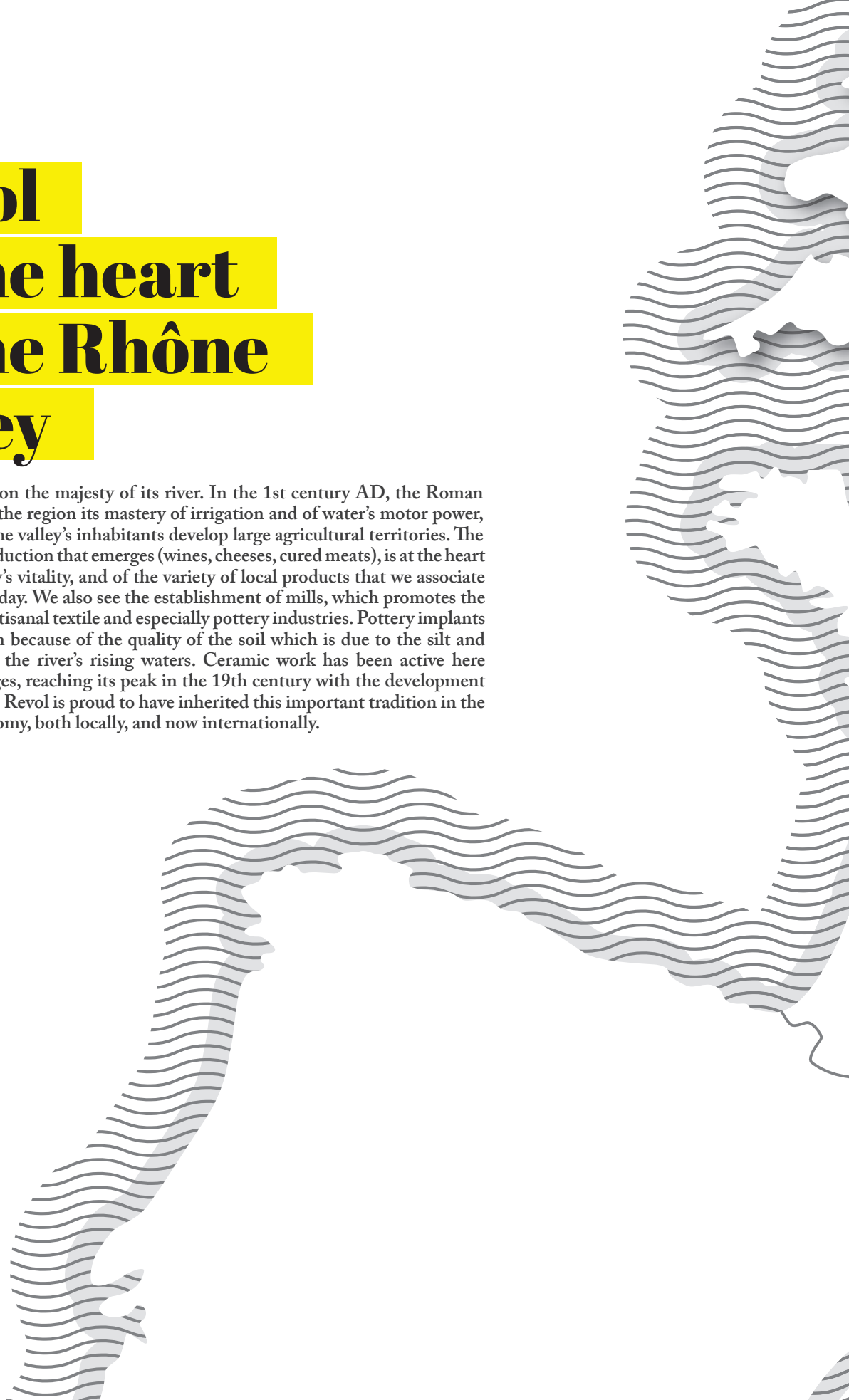
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Raw materials and unfinished pieces  
*Powdered clay, feldspar, kaolin,  
and porcelain clay patties.*

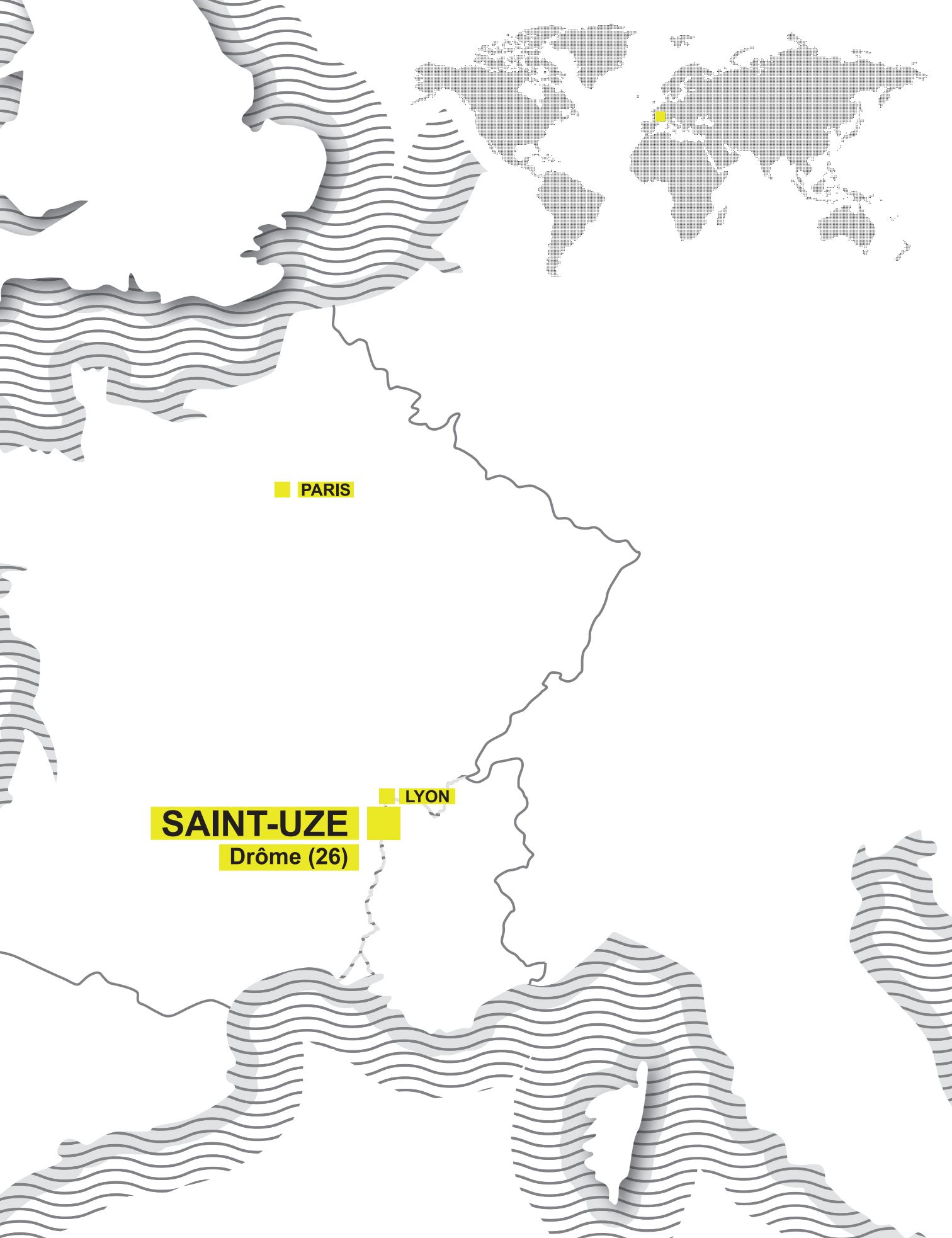


# Revol at the heart of the Rhône valley

Everything relies on the majesty of its river. In the 1st century AD, the Roman Empire brings to the region its mastery of irrigation and of water's motor power, thanks to which the valley's inhabitants develop large agricultural territories. The artisanal food production that emerges (wines, cheeses, cured meats), is at the heart of the gastronomy's vitality, and of the variety of local products that we associate with the region today. We also see the establishment of mills, which promotes the development of artisanal textile and especially pottery industries. Pottery implants itself in the region because of the quality of the soil which is due to the silt and clay deposited by the river's rising waters. Ceramic work has been active here throughout the ages, reaching its peak in the 19th century with the development of a local industry. Revol is proud to have inherited this important tradition in the service of gastronomy, both locally, and now internationally.







■ PARIS

■ LYON

**SAINT-UZE**

Drôme (26)

# 1768, founding of the company

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Revol SA is a French company specializing in culinary porcelain, located in the Drôme region since its establishment in 1768. For nine generations, the company has been managed by the same family – the Revols, then the Bourgognes and the Loires, and finally the Passots – whose origins go back to the 17th century, according to the most ancient records known today.

The Revols are manufacturers, traders, merchants, and master potters, from father to son. And while genealogy places this family in the north of the Drôme, archaeology shows that its regional roots extend all the way to the city of Lyon. It is there that the Pierre Revol's family (1742-1785) builds pottery studios throughout the 18th century, and he learns his craft.

At 26 years of age and already quite experienced, Pierre comes to Ponsas, in the north of the Drôme, to marry Magdeleine Carrier (1748-1833), herself the descendant of a long line of potters. Pierre, having married into the pottery guild, carries on the tradition by opening his own studios. His choice of location is not only motivated by a return to his family roots, but is also explained by the quality of the soil: it contains not only superior clays and sands, but especially deposits of kaolin that favour the manufacture of more resistant pieces that are flameproof. Were Pierre and Magdeleine aware of the amplitude of what they were about to embark upon?





**Town of Ponsas**  
*Land registry of 1807.*

**Portrait of Magdeleine Carrier**  
*Between 1785 and 1800.*

**Kaolin washing**  
*Purification of white clay called kaolin, essential to the manufacture of porcelain.*



Saint-Uze during *La Belle Époque*  
Postcard of a general view  
of Saint-Uze in 1935  
with Revol, Delaunay, Picolas  
and Michon factories.

# A burgeoning 19<sup>th</sup> century

Pierre dies prematurely at the age of 43, and not having lived long enough to personally transmit the studio to his sons, his wife watches over the training of her children, as well as over the financial security of the capital destined for their descendants. Magdeleine is helped in this task by the Carrier family. Two of the sons, Joseph-Marie and Nicolas Séverin, take over the torch and, as though to inaugurate the business' entrance into the 19th century, another studio is built in 1800 in Saint-Uze, not far from Ponsas. The studio quickly grows into a factory. The Revols have brought an industry to this town that had exclusively survived on its agriculture. To do this, they adapt an oil mill to produce their clays and glazes – a place known as *Le Battoir*, still in operation today – and acquire quarries of kaolin. The family's influence grows, first with the acquisition of lands, and then with the construction of a manor house that the inhabitants of the village still today call the Revol Chateau. Other trade guilds essential to the functioning of the factory progressively joined the industry: cardboard and papermakers, horse keepers, edge-tool makers, blacksmiths, sawmill workers, etc. Peasants progressively become factory workers, and men from other towns move to Saint-Uze for work. Attracted by the success of Revol's business, competitors begin to establish themselves in the town starting in the 1850s. Between 1800 and 1901, the population grows from 409 to 1646, a 75% growth.

But what is most notable throughout the 19th century is the reputed quality of Revol products: stoneware and brown porcelain. Sandstone is a perfectly safe material, stronger than earthenware, and non-polluting thanks to the absence of metallic substances in

the earthy glaze used by the factory. This hygienic material is often referred to as "hygiocérame." Brown porcelain is actually very fine sandstone used for refined china or decorative pieces. In order to protect their invention, the Revols trademark this hygiocérame (now the official designation for this high-quality hygienic sandstone) in 1834. They also quickly understand the value of showcasing their product in national exhibitions for French products in Paris, for which they obtain numerous honourable mentions between 1801 and 1844.

Given the major added value of having a stand at these national exhibitions, gaining access to them is highly competitive. Regional judging panels must first recommend candidates before the Parisian commission ultimately selects the participants. The Revols also win medals in other exhibitions devoted to the industry between 1839 and 1869. At the same time, Revol products receive public recognition from a key figure in the world of ceramics: Alexandre Brongniart. Director of Manufacturing of Sèvres porcelain from 1800 to 1869, and founder of the National Ceramic Museum, he publishes *Treatise on Ceramic Arts and Pottery* in 1844, an encyclopaedic undertaking that summarizes the work of his life: gathering the totality of all technical and historical knowledge about ceramics around the world. Among the most worthy producers, Revol is cited for the quality of its sandstones, "well-known for a long time."





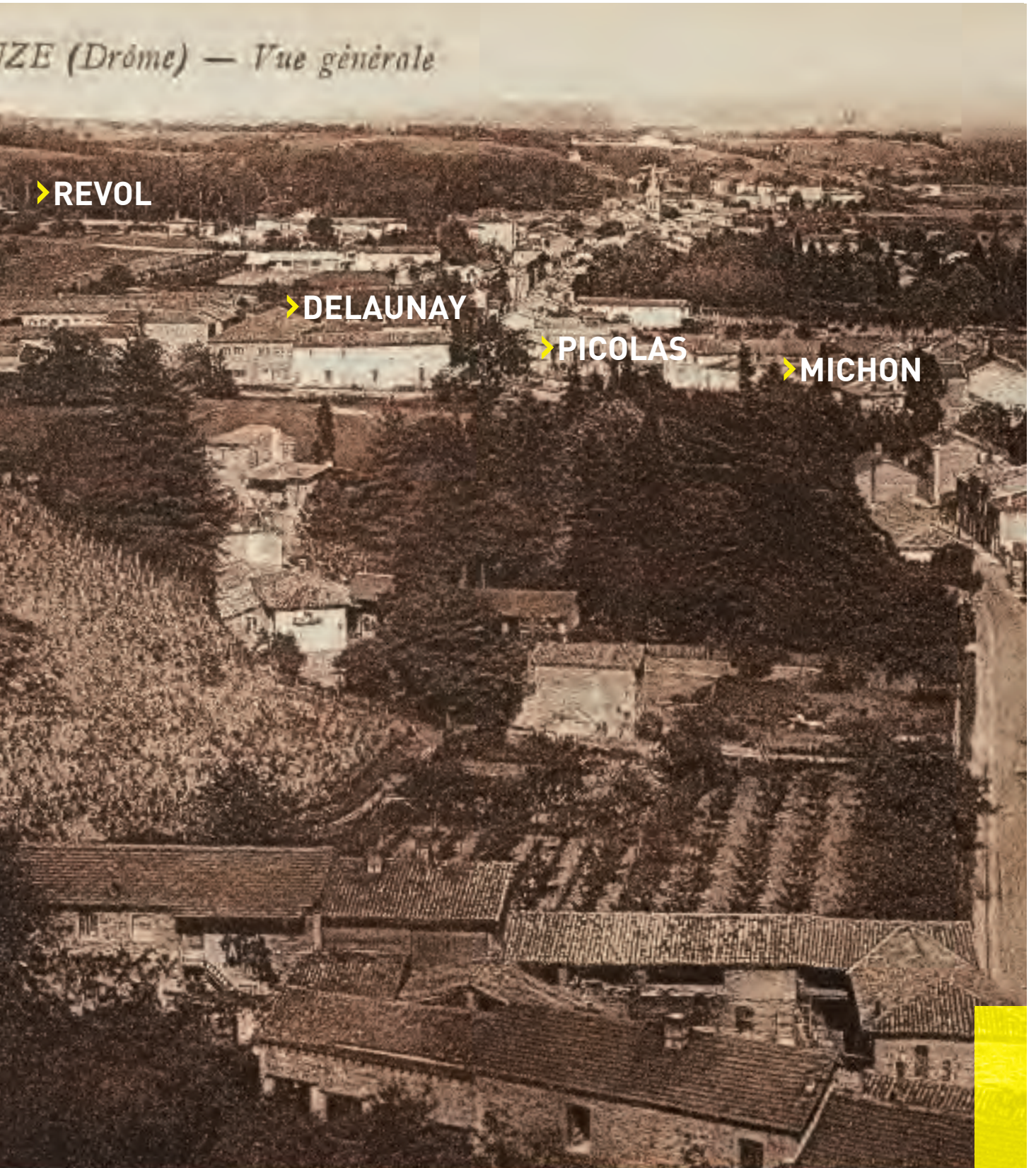
IZE (Drôme) — Vue générale

➤ REVOL

➤ DELAUNAY

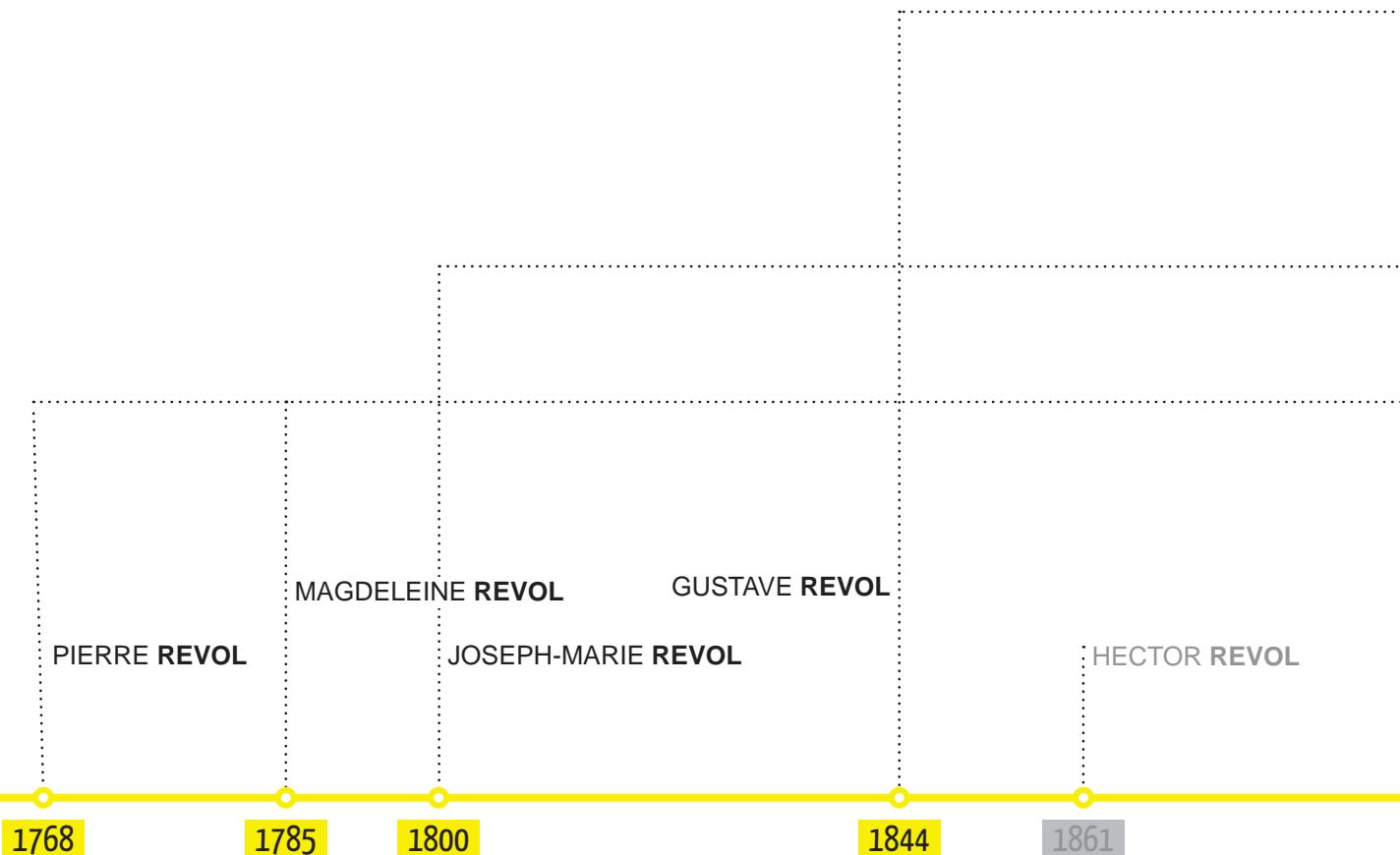
➤ PICOLAS

➤ MICHON



# Nine generations of directors devoted to Revol

*Pierre Revol is the founder of the 1768 company to which he gives his name, and which each of his descendants has taken pride in continuing. Indeed, despite the changes in surnames brought about by the introduction of the Bourgogne and Passot sons-in-law in the Revol lineage, all of the directors have been invested in belonging to one same and large family in the service of a trade and a company.*





**PIERRE REVOL**

*The Founder*

{1742-1785}

**MAGDELEINE REVOL**

*The Regent*

{1748-1833}



**JOSEPH-MARIE REVOL**

*The Architect*

{1772-1844}



**GUSTAVE REVOL**

*The Beloved*

{1806-1861}



At Pierre's death, Magdeleine Revol, née Carrier, takes over the regency of the studio until her sons' majority. One of them, Joseph-Marie Revol, becomes Pierre's true inheritor. He will be the one to initiate ceramic work in Saint-Uze. There, he opens a new studio in 1800, at the time of his marriage to Adélaïde Raymond, whose mother was a rich landowner and father a lawyer and then mayor of the town. The mother-in-law fronts the funds and the real estate to house the studio; Joseph-Marie brings his skills, as well as the Ponsas studio. The marriage promises to be prosperous as it gives this talented young man the means to realize his ambitions.

Thanks to Joseph-Marie, the Revol business strengthens and grows, becoming renown at national exhibitions, precursors to the World's Fair. Joseph-Marie's public influence also manifests itself in the political arena when he is elected mayor of Saint-Uze, a position he keeps for 14 years. Joseph-Marie is a visionary, and he thinks about the long term of the company. In 1827, he builds new buildings that are better suited to a higher yield. These buildings are still the premises used by the factory today. Also, let us not forget one of the most important elements in the history of the company: Joseph-Marie is without a doubt the one to begin this uninterrupted passing of the torch for nine generations. When his sons are old enough to marry, he changes the status of the company, turning it into a partnership in order to assimilate them into the succession. Adolphe Revol becomes responsible for Ponsas, and Gustave Revol for Saint-Uze. This will to perpetuate the lineage will be shared by Joseph-Marie's descendants.

Work at the father-and-son Revol business continues under the momentum and direction of Gustave in Saint-Uze. Like his father, Gustave marries a young woman from a wealthy family, Louise-Julie Aubenas, who is moreover a member of the local aristocracy, as she is the daughter of the Count of Aubenas. The Revols' social rise is evidenced by the construction of the Chateau next to the factory. Gustave will also become mayor of Saint-Uze, despite a short mandate interrupted by his death. Described as a good, honourable man of integrity, modest at that, his character makes him appreciated by citizens and employees alike. During his funeral, the local newspaper tells us, his workers carry his coffin while his closest collaborators hold the pall. His son, Hector, pays him tribute when he becomes head of the company and baptizes it *Gustave Revol, father and son*.

LOUIS-GUSTAVE REVOL

JEAN BOURGOGNE  
& FERNAND LOIRE

SUZANNE & ANDRÉ PASSOT

OLIVIER PASSOT

BERTRAND PASSOT

1901

1911

1955

1980

2007

From left to right  
Hector REVOL,  
Louis-Gustave REVOL,  
Jean Bourgogne,  
Suzanne Passot,  
André Passot.

### HECTOR REVOL

*The Precursor*  
{1836-1901}

Hector Revol is a man of his time: full of paternalist ideals, a promoter of his region, and progressive to the core. Throughout the second half of the 19th century, he continuously invokes the company's longevity when faced with the competition, modernises the Drôme by actively supporting the construction of railroads, and improves his workers' quality of life by the construction of housing.

Despite the closure of the Ponsas site, Hector inherits, like his father before him, a prosperous business that he continues to expand. Under his direction, the factory runs at full speed – the number of kilns is thought to have gone from one to two – and definitively becomes part of the landscape for ceramic consumers in France, thanks to pieces that are both resilient and attractive. He also profits from his proximity to the Galaure River – on which he already owns the aforementioned mill – in order to open a paper and cardboard factory in the adjoining town.

An active politically engaged man, he is the mayor of Saint-Uze for 22 years, then town councillor for 12 years, all the while being a member of the Chamber of Commerce of Valence. Locally, his aura will be such that in 1989, the town of Saint-Uze names a street after him.

### LOUIS-GUSTAVE REVOL

*The Industrial*  
{1867-1936}

Louis-Gustave Revol's role in this genealogy of company leaders is brief, but he holds an important role in the formation of the business as we know it today. He ushers it into the 20th century by turning the studio into a factory. The manufacturing process shifts from artisanal turning to industrial techniques of slip casting and jiggering, still used by the company today. The production capacity naturally increases, but the products also become more diverse. In the commercial catalogues of the time, there are over 80 designs. A true industrial entrepreneur, Louis-Gustave fully understands the importance of protecting designs and brands, and makes numerous deposits of models in the registry of commerce with the Court Service of Romans.

Louis-Gustave is also a bold man. Like his father, he opens an annex to the factory by taking over a pottery studio in Saint-Uze, in the Rivoires neighbourhood. Above all, he decides to open a new factory near Savona, in Vado Ligure, at the heart of the production of Italian ceramic. While the adventure is ultimately a failure, his tenaciousness in directing this project is noteworthy.

Louis-Gustave is the last Revol to lead the business. Father of three girls, he decides to pass on the business to his nephew, Jean Bourgogne, assisted in this task by his wife's brother, Fernand Loire, a finance inspector by trade.





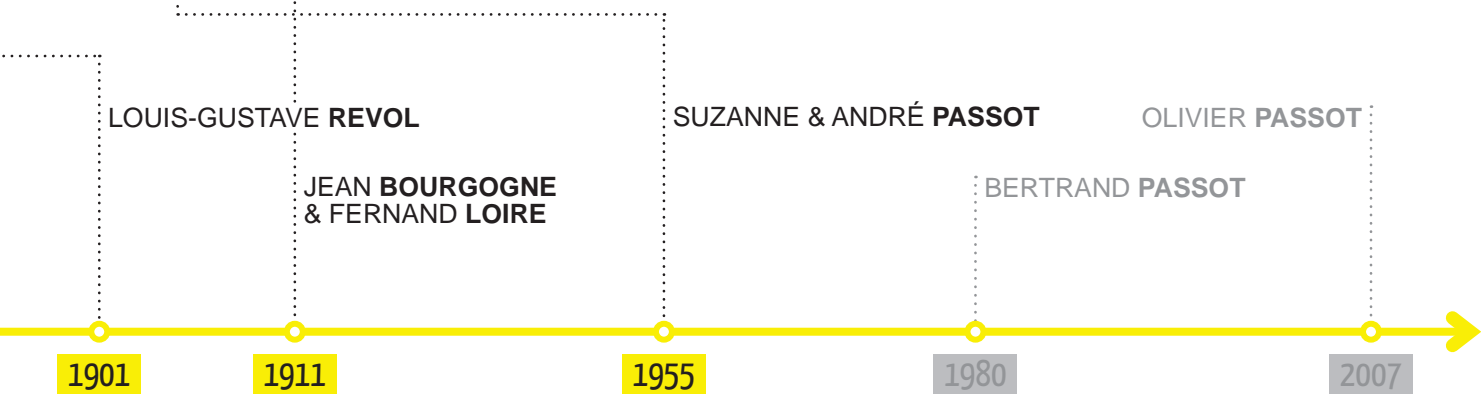
**JEAN BOURGOGNE & FERNAND LOIRE**  
*The Entrepreneurs*  
 {1886-1983} & {1876-1972}

The business has now taken the name of Etablissements Gustave Revol, father and son, Bourgogne and Loire successors. Like their predecessors, Jean and Fernand are confronted with the modernisation of the factory, motivated this time by the establishment of a firing technology hitherto unknown: the tunnel kiln. Aiming for a full-fledged production chain, the entrepreneurs start building a new factory in Épinouze, to the north of Saint-Uze, in 1919. This episode will also be a failure, in part due to the lack of funds and raw materials brought about by World War I, but especially due to recurrent problems with the kiln. This perfect storm will lead to the loss of the new buildings, sold slightly before World War II.

This unfortunate undertaking should not cast a shadow over the 44 years of Jean and Fernand’s leadership, since we owe the development of new markets to them. Already in the 1930s, they develop their offer of “bistrot” products with flagship pieces such as advertising pitchers and ashtrays. In the beginning of the 1950s, they hire a new commercial director, Marcel Desproges. Originally from Limoges, he brings with him numerous clients – wine and spirit makers – for whom Revol develops a range devoted to bottling, which has become one of the brand’s distinguishing features during the second half of the 20th century.

**SUZANNE & ANDRÉ PASSOT**  
*The Investors*  
 {1912-1980} & {1913-2011}

Suzanne Bourgogne is Jean’s daughter who, with her husband André Passot, takes over the torch. The latter, originally from the Loire region which is known for its textile industry, is at the time managing the family business Les Tissage Jean Passot in Saint-Victor-sur-Rhins. The Revol business, still dynamic, has managed to survive the pangs of two World Wars, but it is in debt. The couple stabilize the finances. Moreover, their investments allow them to finish what their predecessors had attempted: install a tunnel kiln, and expand the factory in order to increase the means of production and give it the size it deserves.





Bertrand and Olivier Passot in 2013





**BERTRAND PASSOT**

*The Porcelain-maker*  
{1947}

Bertrand Passot is the investor couple's eldest son. Having entered the company in 1972, he is appointed to lead the company in 1980. He undertakes a rigorous restructuring of the factory. The purchase of new machines and the implementation of a training program for employees over 10 years, have left their mark. The project "Revol 2000" marks an important industrial turning point for the business, with the destruction of the old brick tunnel kiln, replaced by a new model, 70-meter long, and partially automated.

Bertrand reveals himself to be intransigent when it comes to valorising the skills and craftsmanship of this two-hundred-year-old company, and decides to ennoble the "rustic" material being produced at the time. He decides to push for an increase in the quality of the clay, and perfect firing techniques. He develops a porcelain that is specific to the north of the Drôme region, henceforth recognized and sought-after. The business now only manufactures porcelain, and to further this resolution, he changes the name of the company, which becomes Revol Porcelaine.

This new porcelain favours the creation of a culinary range that blends aesthetics and functionality. Culinary porcelain has now become Revol's signature product. Armed with this distinguishing feature, the business moves to conquer new international markets. Bertrand creates partnerships with great chefs such as Régis Marcon in 1996, a recent recipient of the Bocuse d'or, who has made regional and national gastronomy famous.

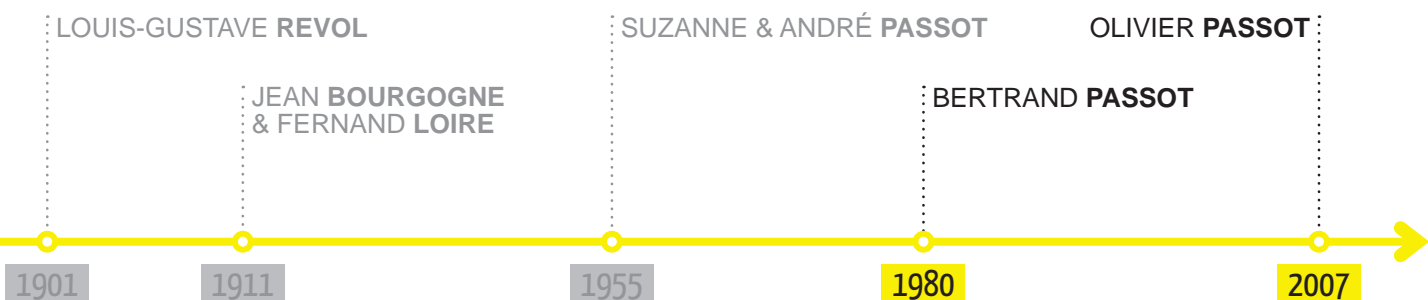
**OLIVIER PASSOT**

*The Pioneer*  
{1971}

Having come into the business in 1999, Bertrand's eldest son first cut his teeth working in exports, in particular to the United States. Convinced by the potential of this market, he creates the first distribution branch for Revol in Florida in 2005. Six people today work at Revol USA, now established in Atlanta.

In 2007, Olivier Passot takes the helm of the company. The first seven years of his presidency are marked by his desire to promote strong branding. Design and communication play an increasingly important role. At stake is contending with cheap imported products that represent a real threat for the company. Innovation is at the heart of his strategy, with emphasis placed on research and development. Two major creations contribute to Revol's success at the beginning of the 2010s: the Basalt and Revolution ranges. On June 26th, 2014, the company launches the use of a new 40-meter-long tunnel kiln, so as to give this ambitious company the means with which to continue growing in France as well as abroad. The international market in fact takes on an increasingly important role under Olivier Passot. The commercial department grows, and exports come to represent 72% of the revenue in 2013. The brand is commercialized in 83 countries spread out among all 5 continents.

Is it in the spirit of the times – that of the company becoming aware of its own heritage – or is it the weight of history that calls out to the new leader? Maybe both. As a descendant of this genealogy, an inheritor of this story and of the pieces and documents accumulated by his predecessors, Olivier decides to invest in a patrimonial project. He puts together a team dedicated to valorising collections of objects and archives, as well as factory and residential sites.



From left to right  
Salt-varnished sandstone jugs.  
The bleus of Saint-Uze REVOL.  
First advertising catalogue, April 1937.



# 246 years of production, responsiveness and adaptability

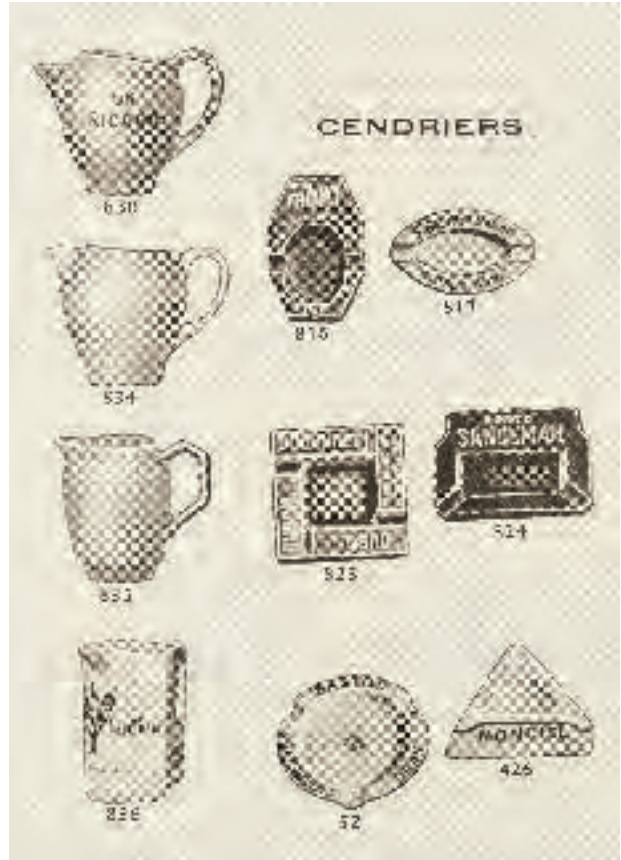
*The history of taste and consumption, as well as changes in lifestyles, have led to the manufacturing of specific pieces for each epoch. Nevertheless, Revol has consistently continued to produce dishes that respond to both culinary and aesthetic needs.*

1768 – 1830s

*Healthy products for everyone*

The studio founded by Pierre and Magdeleine Revol in 1768 is producing, by the end of the 18th century, fine sandstone. The company receives an honourable mention at the National Exhibition of 1801 for the quality and the hygiene of its products. The pieces are “subjected to corrosive substances, to being moved from incandescent red to cold water and then back to red,” and pass these tests with success. In this resistant material, they can manufacture crucibles for chemistry labs, pharmacies and silversmiths. Revol is also especially known for its small beer jugs sold in Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, and at Algerian and Dutch trading posts. In 1834, 150 000 jugs come out of the ovens.

Domestic pottery – pots for daily and varied uses – are made from different types of earth (grey, red, white). Starting in the 1830s, the manufacturing process is simplified and all of the culinary pieces are made exclusively in brown porcelain. It is particularly appreciated in the north of France. Revol produces pieces that are affordable, since their goal is to offer “healthy products to everyone.” For example, in 1827, the 1-liter coffee pot costs 0.75 centimes, the 18cm saucepan goes for 1 franc, and the stew pot for 1.25 francs.



### THE YEARS 1870-1910

#### *Decorative arts*

In the 1870s the Revols break ground with a new process for decoration. Up to that point, pieces were glazed in colour. They could also be hand-painted, but as a result were more expensive. Henceforth, decorative patterns are made into rubber stamps that serially affix the decoration on the pieces, either in cobalt blue or sepia brown. Those in blue are incredibly successful, such that today they have become a collector's item under the name "les bleus de Saint-Uze." At the time, many households indulge in decorative culinary dishes, and thus usher in a taste for aesthetic tableware in modest homes. In 1883, the company pushes the concept further by, along with a competitor, filing a patent for the technique of polychromatic decorations.

The end of the 19th century is also notable for special products, mainly decorative. The factory manufactures hanging light fittings, as well as perfume vials with flower decorations. A notable example is the perfumer from Toulouse, Berdoues – founded in 1902 and made famous thanks to its violet essence – for whom Revol manufactures bottles until the 1960s.

### THE 1930s AND 1940s

#### *Advertisement products*

The 1930s are also marked by a special type of manufacturing, that of funerary art: wreaths, baskets, crosses, flowers, etc. This production, though short-lived in the history of Revol products, is nevertheless among its most delicate. Each flower, for instance, each anemone, iris, chrysanthemum, lily, or daisy, is hand-made – from the formation of the petals to their painting and assembly.

Revol becomes well-known in the inter-war years for its food packaging, such as Danone yogurt pots, or Maille mustard jars. Moreover, the company launches a new market: advertisement products. Its designs are commissioned by many brands such as Lustucru pasta, Bastos cigarettes, and Ricard's anisette, whose yellow pitchers have left their mark on many generations of bistrot lovers. These markets are made even more accessible by the new technique of chromolithography, or transfer printing, that allows for detailed decorations in colour. The technique remains rudimentary, and requires multiple stages of immersion and drying, but it makes serial production possible.





1. SAN FRANCISCO CABLE CAR, 1954 2. MAUPETIT AMPHORA, 1903 3. BAUDOU BOOT AMPHORA, 1953 4. SEILLE BUCKET BUTTER DISH, 1880  
5. GOLD CRUMPLE CUP, 2006 6. DANONE YOGURT POT, 1945





7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14

7. RAMEKIN 214, 1905 8. SILVER TEAPOT, 1880 9. "FLAMMÉ" PITCHER, 1970 10. "VICTORY" SHEPHERD PROTOTYPE, 2000  
11. MINER LAMP, 1954 12. CYRANO LASSAOUVAJEU, 1952 13. GARNIER AMPHORA, 1937 14. AMPHORA N°1 BARDINET, 1873



#### FROM THE 1950s TO THE 1970s

##### *Special markets*

The post-war years mark an important stage in the bottling of alcohol by liquor-makers and venders, and Revol is an expert in this domain, having been manufacturing bottles for distillers since 1875. It becomes in vogue for big alcohol and aperitif brands to present their products in sandstone bottles. The market clamours for beautiful objects, and Revol turns to artists such as René de Valence or Paul Gouazé to create their designs. Starting in 1951, and until the 1960s, the production of bottles is higher than that of culinary pieces.

At the same time, Revol continues producing advertisement products for Ricard's anisette, but also for brands of beer, champagne, wine, liquor, etc. But in 1959, Mendès France issues a decree regulating the advertisement of alcohol. This deals a fatal blow to the company, which sustains a revenue loss of 60 million francs. In order to repurpose its products and markets, the company quickly reacts and creates a new product: liquor service sets. It is a great success up through the 1970s.

The company continues to make tableware. As it did for bottles, it works with a designer: Jean Luce. A self-taught artist, he wishes to transform tableware, from the most humble to the fanciest. Recognized for his work at Limoges and Sèvres, he also designs for Revol from 1953 to 1955.

Since 1955, Revol has been making vials for Berger perfume diffusers. Among all of those working for this leader in home fragrances, Revol stands out thanks to the elegance and the simplicity of the models it offers, which have made them timeless. Paradoxically, it is the classicism of Revol's vials that explains the record longevity of Revol's collaboration with Berger.



#### FROM THE 1980s TO 2000

##### *From the oven to the table*

Revol appears on a new market between 1987 and 2001, by adapting its pieces to the format used by the culinary services of train and air travel companies. No less than ten French, Belgian, African and Brazilian air travel companies, as well as TGV Atlantique and the International Sleeping-Car Company, serve their meals in Revol porcelain.

The bottling market intensifies in 1984 thanks to bottles manufactured for whisky and cognac brands such as Chivas, Johnnie Walker, Rémy Martin, and Hennessy. Revol continues to make ashtrays for advertisement purposes, notably for the champagne companies Jacquart, Moët & Chandon, Roederer, and Ruinart. Again, in 1991, the company must react quickly: the Evin law forbidding the advertisement of alcohol, forces it to adapt its products to public health legislation.

In the early 1990s, Revol manufactures entire ranges for professional use, such as dishes for regethermic catering. The company's collaboration with chef Régis Marcon leads to the production of a set of dishes specific to his restaurant.

Nevertheless, Revol does not ignore the general public. Developed to work alongside modern household appliances and made to simplify the lives of active households, the porcelain developed by Revol can go from the freezer, to the microwave, to the table, and finally in the dishwasher. The pieces conceived under the rubric "from the oven to the table" are designed to be practical but attractive. Decorative patterns increase in numbers and diversity, such that at the beginning of the 1990s, three or four decorative patterns are being produced each month. Revol comes to the end of the 20th century having secured two markets: that of cooking enthusiasts, and professionals.



*From left to right  
Liquor bottle and shepherd lamp,  
beginning of the 1950s.  
Whiskey and Armagnac bottles,  
and the collection "Grands Classiques," the 1980s.  
Retail catalogue 2014 featuring the "Revolution" cocotte.*

## TODAY

### *Culinary porcelain that is increasingly specialized*

The particularity of this start of the century is the reinforcement of the company's brand, whose signature is henceforth affixed on each article. Out of a haphazard collection of pieces emerge coherent ranges, both from the perspective of the pieces' design and properties. This begins as early as 1999 with the Alexandrie collection, designed by the artist Régis Dho, who made a name for himself in part for the tableware he designs for Michel Rostang. For each range subsequently designed, the company chooses the designers with whom it will collaborate according to their understanding of the brand. Revol wants to offer functional pieces that fulfil thermal and mechanical requirements, but that nevertheless allow the chef to express his or her creativity, without forgetting to also provide diners with a pleasurable sensory experience. Despite all of this, 50% of the designs are conceived by the company itself, which, thanks to the deployment of international teams, is in tune with the tastes and culinary trends around the world.

Revol takes yet another step towards the general public with modern and original designs: the Pill+ collection in 2007, or the Crumpled collection in 2000, are perfect examples. In fact, the little cup achieves such success that it has become iconic, to the point that it has spawned multiple counterfeits, much like for luxury products. Wishing to satisfy everyone's desires, Revol now makes the Crumpled cup in seven formats, 22 colours, and 41 decorative patterns.

As for innovation, Revol perfects a technically high-performing ceramic that is compatible with all types

of heat sources, including induction, the new must-have of modern kitchens. Over two years of research and development went into the design and perfection of this collection, appropriately named Revolution.

As mentioned earlier, Olivier Passot does not hesitate to rock the boat. He is the first to invent a high-resistance black ceramic, used most notably in the Basalt collection released in 2009. This collection first of all responds to the needs of restaurants, fond of natural slate, which is unfortunately too delicate to be used by chefs. The company fills this lack by creating a resistant, nonporous product that can be used in the oven and cleaned in the dishwasher. The same approach leads to the development of a new collection, Belle Cuisine black cast-iron style: a similar texture effect, for a dish that is lighter and doesn't rust. A need emerges, Revol seeks to satisfy it. The company remains adaptable and reactive, a reflex that has continued to guarantee not only its survival, but especially its success.









Workers gathered  
at the factory gates,  
*June 1936.*

**A unique  
set of skills  
passed on from  
generation  
to generation**



**RENÉ DELAUNAY**

**PORCELAINE A FEU**



**ST UZE**

(DRÔME)

MANUFACTURE DE  
**PORCELAINE A FEU**

FONDÉE EN 1896 PAR F. REVOL



**PAUL FRACHON & FILS**

GABRIEL FRACHON Successeur

**ST-VALLIER**

(DRÔME)

NOUVEAUX ETABLISSEMENTS

**PRÉCIEUX**

SOCIÉTÉ À RESPONSABILITÉ LIMITÉE AU CAPITAL DE 100000 N

FONDÉS EN 1856

**ST-UZE - (DRÔME)**

MANUFACTURE DE  
**PORCELAINE A FEU**  
DITE TERRE DE FONTE

ARTICLES FANTAISIE  
DECORS RICHES & BON MARCHÉ

AMPHORES, LAMPES, GRÈS AU SEL  
POTERIES ARTISTIQUES, DOUBTS-TIRELIXES ETC  
POTERIES & FAÏENCES CULINAIRES  
TERRE DES ALPES RECTIFIÉE, Breveté S. G. D. G.  
Créait Hygiénique

TERRE ANGLAISE EMAILLÉE  
POTERIE ROUGE A FEU

**BOISSONNET**  
SAINT-VALLIER  
(DRÔME)

EXPOSITIONS ET CONCOURS

Catalogue covers  
for competing products  
From 1907 until 1960





# The Competition

We narrated the circumstances leading to the establishment of the factory in Saint-Uze, and the impact of this business on the life of the town, particularly in terms of demographics. But this is not solely attributable to Revol, who, as early as the middle of the 19th century, sees many competitors set up shop in the village and its surroundings. We will only mention the most aggressive. In 1850, a first pottery studio opens under the name of Picolas. In 1865, Georges August Delaunay establishes his own studio of red pottery and sandstone. The same year, the Saint-Uzienne is founded by Mathieu Michon, who makes pottery and flameproof porcelain.

The competition is stiff, especially from 1870 to 1900, during which time these companies compete on the same markets with similar pieces. Far from threatened, Revol continues to improve its quality to keep up with the competition. Its resilience and adaptability is the reason for the business' survival. In Saint-Uze, it becomes the only one, buying out Picolas in the beginning of the 20th century, and Delaunay in 1993. As for the Saint-Uzienne, it files for bankruptcy in 1962. In the region, a few studios still produce artisanal tableware, but Revol is the only standing business, along with Jars Céramistes in Anneyon.

Globalization has made foreign competition fiercer, notably with the emergence of cheap foreign labour in countries such as China. Throughout the 1990s, Revol must valorise more than ever the innovation and added value of its products, all the while ardently defending its creativity and its designs. Yet again, it manages to stand up to the competition thanks to its quick responsiveness.

# The skills

If we have spent a long time talking about the leaders of this company, what about the men and women who have worked by their side? Many employees, workers and executives, without names or faces, must be thanked for their labour, their craftsmanship, their passion for ceramic, and their involvement in the life of this business. Many testimonial documents, photos or correspondence, have reached us and reveal to us their journeys, their movements in the factory, the atmosphere in the studios, their perceptions of technological evolutions, or their assessment of the company's management. The richness of the stories they tell makes these documents invaluable.

In a factory such as Revol's, if machines have now made their foray into the system of production, they have not replaced the Human hand. Workmen and women keep in contact with the material, and are present at each stage of the manufacturing process. Their gestures are similar to those performed by previous generations,

for many centuries. Despite the arrival of resin, mould makers have still been making plaster moulds for over a century. The unpackers continue to push their carts full of pieces recently turned out from their moulds, then fired. Those involved in hand-glazing, their arms elbow-deep in liquid glaze, perform the same gestures as their predecessors, with the same care and the same passion. Only time and experience can give them the mastery of movements that they will one day themselves pass on, and that no machine can replace. Chromatists and decorators remain, sponge or paintbrush in hand, ready to make the final touches on each of the decorated pieces. All of these movements, performed daily by over 175 highly qualified workers, are the fruits of a rare set of skills passed on from generation to generation by men and women for whom it is also important to pass on this unique story.



**Left**  
*Modelling, creation  
of a plaster mould, 2000.*

**Right**  
*Decoration studio  
at the beginning of the 1970s.*







# | The factory

As we stated in the beginning of this work, the buildings in which the factory is housed today are those built by Joseph-Marie Revol starting in 1827. They continue to evolve to adapt to technical evolutions, new machines, and the production process. Since the purchase of the mill in 1829, the business produces its own clays and glazes, a rare occurrence today.

We referred to that important moment in the history of the company when Louis-Gustave Revol decides to introduce techniques of slip casting and jiggering, perfected by the Sèvres Manufactory. However we did not describe the context of that year, in 1903. The decision occurs within a global movement towards industrialisation. With its success at the World's Fair in Paris in 1900, followed by the appearance of electric supply and telephone lines in the Drôme, the factory enters into the 20th century.

1936 is a key date in the history of industrial France. A new social order forces management to raise salaries and provide paid vacation. For Revol, this leads to a rise in sale prices reaching as much as 50%, and thus a reorganization of the workrooms so as to increase productivity.

In the mid-1950s, two tunnel kilns are installed in the factory. These giants yet again force an expansion of the premises. They also impose a different work rhythm, as they cannot be stopped. It is the beginning of teams of three for 8-hour shifts at Revol (the three 8). The ovens are hungry, and are continuously filled. Under the flames, the pieces become incandescent red. The workers, in the heat, are constantly moving around these impressive machines.

In 1985, glazing and firing techniques are revisited. Revol keeps its immersion technique in liquid glaze for certain pieces, but others are sprayed using carousel machines. The pieces swirl around in a coloured mist, giving the entire glazing process an aura of ball dancing. In order to produce stronger pieces as well as reduce production costs, a single-fire process is implemented, meaning the simultaneous firing of the clay and the glaze.

The 1990s usher in larger markets. The demand is so high that production must yield more and faster. In 1995, Bertrand Passot implements the technique of pressure slip casting, producing higher quality pieces at faster speeds.

Since 2009, Revol has recorded a 50% cumulative growth rate. It must therefore increase its production area and put in a new tunnel kiln. An extension is built in 2014 in the place of old obsolete buildings disused for many years, thus immediately providing an area of 3000 m<sup>2</sup>. Despite all of the construction and expansions mentioned earlier, the workers have always managed to evolve in the restrained workspaces of the 19th century factory. This massive construction site is a symbol of this French company's ambition and belief in the future.

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Man carrying raw pieces to the dryer  
*In front of the wall made of non-conforming pieces, started in 1830.*

Revol factory  
*Aerial photo, 2013.*

The new tunnel kiln, 40 meters long  
*Inaugurated in June of 2014.*



# A reputed historical and technical heritage

Storage of early moulds and plaster models,  
dating back to 1903  
*Edifices built starting in 1827*





Revol has obtained many honourable mentions in recognition for its history and heritage. Because it is over 2-century old and has been led by the same family since its origin, Revol is a member of the Henokiens association. This prestigious international association includes approximately 40 companies that fulfil those two criteria. It is dedicated to promoting the long-term philosophy of family businesses as an alternative to multinational companies.

It's also because Revol has been on the same lands since its creation, because it has settled in buildings that have historical and architectural value, and that it continues to produce at the site of its origins, that it has obtained the EPV (Living Heritage Company) label in 2012. The label is awarded to companies whose attachment to their region and whose exceptional technical mastery justify the support of the French state.

In 2013, BFM Business, the well-known business television channel, awarded Revol the Family Saga prize. On behalf of all of the company's employees, Olivier Passot, joined by his father Bertrand and his brother Amaury, proudly accepted this award that underscored the exceptional longevity of this family business.

Olivier is aware of the rarity of the company's heritage. It is no longer only about

highlighting the history of Revol, but also that of French industry itself, of its social and local scope, of the trade, of its techniques, its tastes, its habits, its consumer trends, and of commerce, particularly internationally... He wishes to showcase this history thanks to the Historical Patrimony department, which currently looks after a collection of ceramic pieces dated as far back as 1800 for some, as well as moulds manufactured and stored in the factory since 1827. Numerous archives, manuscript or iconographic, such as miniature models, or photographs of the work studios, complete this collection of objects and bring depth to these witnesses of the company's work. Furthermore, as this is a factory, the collections are also justly comprised of tools, machines, and materials. Today, these Revol collections represent a 4 000 meter-long archive of over 21 000 objects. This little book dedicated to Revol's origins, to celebrate the company's 225-year anniversary in 2014, reveals this extraordinary heritage that we wish to share with you. This exceptional research project has also given us the opportunity to update the true foundation of our company to 1768. We now have 4 years to think about the best way to celebrate, in 2018, the 250-year anniversary of this unique human and industrial adventure.





# Acknowledgments

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The passion of some for the history of this company and the family saga of its leaders has inspired them to write a book, published in 2003. This initiative of Bertrand Passot, Jean-Yves Passot, Henri Guillermain, and Marcel Desproges, gave us impetus to establish a true understanding of Revol.

Many people are to thank for their contributions and the help they have brought to the Patrimonial department: engineer and historian Yves Herbet and his wife Nicole; genealogists Marie-Renée Bassal and Michel Giroud; collectors Danielle Petit, Martine Michel, Christian and Gisèle Delonca, Christian and Bernadette Magnant, Annie Leroux, Gérard and Myriam Arnaud; as well as the team of the Drôme Departmental Archives in Valence, and their director, Benoît Charenton.

For their support and their interest, Revol wishes to thank the mayor of Saint-Uze, Jérôme Caire, and the mayor of Barthélémy-de-Vals, Pierre Montagne; also Sébastien Durieux and Jeannine Cabouillet, from La Maison de la Céramique in Saint-Uze; also the Patrimonial Committee of Drôme's Departmental Council, especially Chrystèle Burgard, curator for the department's patrimony.

This booklet is the result of long-term research led by Claude Franco and Claude Lagrange who, after a rich 40-year career at Revol, accepted, in 2011, the challenge to establish the Patrimony department. This brochure is brought to you thanks to an original idea from Alexia Fontaine, doctoral student in museology, in charge of the text. It would not have seen the light of day without the precious help of graphic designer Thibaut Godard, as well as Olivier Passot's intimate look into his own history.

This little book is not only the culmination of three years of meticulous research, but also the beginning of a "patrimonial" adventure which, we hope, will lead us to the construction of a museum that will allow us one day to share all of the richness of this beautiful enterprise.





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