

Les Arcs sur Argens

Sainte Cécile



Residual oil (=non food oil) and soap manufacture



In 1688, Colbert's decree regulated Marseille Soap manufacture by forbidding the use of tallow or animal fat that "jeopardize the soap quality and risk to damage the laundry".

In the 19th century hygiene became a national priority, especially to struggle against epidemics. The ads insisted on the importance of having clean private housing with a private bathroom equipped with a sink and a bathtub. Soap commercialization was developing.

The residual oil was then sent to soap factories. The residual oil is in other words inedible oil obtained after the grinding in the traditional mill. Fountains and washing places multiplied to be closer to the population and the "bugade" (in provençal), in other words, the great laundry, was done in Les Arcs in one of the five washing places built in town to not "be a nuisance to the fountains" (Saule Street, Baron Square, Horloge Square at the foot of the bell tower, cattle market (now 11th November Square), and Saint Roch district).

Rules of the main washing place (Signes, May 14th, 1934)

Housewives (...) This is not a decree, and the town council relies on your good sense to be convinced that it will never be necessary to make one about it.

- Each spot belongs to the first person who effectively occupies it (the one who presents herself). It is absolutely forbidden to mark a spot in advance, especially the day before.
- A specific area is reserved for the rinse of the laundry, under any pretext you can wash something in this area.
- places are not marked; the housewives have enough common sense to not take more space than they need and to make space, if necessary when one of their late neighbors is coming. Finally, the mayor reminds users of the municipal washing place that peace must prevail among them. They can say all the bad things they think about the government, town council, mayor, public administrations, etc. but they must never fight with their neighbors, and above all, malicious words must never worsen into beatings.



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Bastide Sainte Cécile



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