

# COGOLIN

## *History*

Whatever the origin of its name, the rooster remains dear to the heart of the "Cogolinois". From the small fishermen's hamlet to nowadays town, Cogolin has always been attached to its Provencal roots. Whether they come from the world of the arts or have discovered the village in the course of their campaigns, many personalities have been seduced by Cogolin.

Finally, our beach was one of the gateways to the Provence landings which led to the liberation of Provence.

## *Craftsmanship*

As everywhere, the "Cogolinois" have known how to take advantage of the richness of their natural environment. From the crops along our rivers (cane), or from the vegetation of the Maures massif (heather, cork), the craftsmen have imagined unique accessories that make Cogolin famous. Today, they are proud to perpetuate this know-how through productions exported all over the world.

### THE PIPE FACTORY

Since the middle of the 19th century, heather stumps collected in the Maures massif have been used to make pipes. This wood is renowned for its resistance to heat and the aromas it gives off. Of the 5 factories that existed in Cogolin, only the Courrieu company continues this know-how today. The pipes are cut, chiselled, calibrated, "sealed", turned and then milled in the briar stumps of the Maures massif by this factory which is said to be one of the oldest in France.



The factory welcomes visitors free of charge all year round.



## THE MANUFACTURE OF CARPETS IN COGOLIN

From this long building with its green shutters, unique pieces have been produced which yesterday adorned the Normandie cruise ship, today the Grand Trianon of Versailles, the White House, the Elysée Palace, ministries and palaces, foreign embassies, yachts and private jets, villas and salons of grand hotels.

And yet, one lives here to the sound of the clattering of looms (which date from 1880), cylinders and "cartons" used by the weavers to produce very high quality carpets, made exclusively by hand and to measure. Concerned about the respect of traditions, the craftsmen of the factory are nevertheless committed to developing new ranges which are taken up by the greatest decorators in the world.

Show-room : 6 Boulevard Louis-Blanc à Cogolin

## THE RIGOTTI REED FACTORY

The cane dresses the landscapes of our coastal plains. In addition to the screen formed by the cane trees to protect the crops near rivers and waterholes, the Provençal people have been able to take advantage of this raw material for their daily use (the canes) and, more recently, for the manufacture of an accessory with a more artistic use: the reeds.

Several professionals maintain the cane trees and work the cane for the production of these small tongues that musicians adapt to their saxophone and other wind instruments and which, when vibrating, produce the sound. All are made from Cogolin reeds and 90% are exported, used by the greatest musicians in the United States, Japan, Germany or England..

## FORGOTTEN TRADES

Before the boom in tourism that began in the 1960s, the inhabitants of the Maures lived mainly from agricultural resources. They exploited the riches of their natural environment.

Cork: 2nd most wooded department in France after Les Landes thanks to the Massif des Maures which abounds in cork oak. Unfortunately, competition from neighbouring countries and the arrival of plastic corks have taken their toll on the activity.



Narcissus: These flowers grow wild in the wetlands around Cogolin. This harvest was a supplemental income. They were used for decoration and perfumes in Grasse. Here's a little anecdote: women could collect up to 50 kilos (a kilo of which was traded for 6 francs). To earn more money, some women would wet the daffodils to sell them for more money.

The "escoubes" (or brooms in Provençal): were made by the "bouscatiers", from heather branches. They were favoured by the town halls of the Mediterranean coast.

Other arts and crafts enrich the reputation of Cogolin:

- Ironwork
- The pottery of Cogolin
- Manufacture of canisses and reeds
- Glass and mirror work
- Stone cutters

## *Heritage*

Here the heritage reveals its resources to those who know how to observe. Church, chapels, old craftsmen's houses, basalt or serpentine porches, the clock tower are all witnesses to our history and local life.

Guided walks, digital walks or discovery maps are all ways to venture beyond the porches and alleys of the old village.

### **THE CASTLE**

In 1651, Jacques De Cuers (son of Henry De Cuers) bought the house from Honoré Marquesy, Lord of Ramatuelle and adviser to the King. It is from this moment that this beautiful house will be called Château, because of the quality of its new occupants. There lived five successive lords of Cogolin and their descendants until the eve of the Revolution.



The castle was almost in ruins after the Second World War.

In 1961, Lucien Sellier and his wife bought the castle and restored it. They donated it to the municipality, which decided to turn it into a major exhibition space.



## CHURCH SAINT-SAUVEUR SAINT-ETIENNE

In Cogolin, a first parish church is attested as early as 1079 but, in the absence of archaeological remains, it is not known where this place of worship was located. The present building, dating from the 15th and 16th centuries, is dedicated to Saint Saviour and Saint Stephen. Its construction required the use of basalt, a grey-black alveolate lava stone

extracted from quarries located in the Cogolin area.

But its originality lies in its atypical architecture. Indeed, a church always has one nave or three. This one has two, with a Romanesque style in the first nave and a Gothic style in the second.

Its liturgical furniture is also remarkable. Several works are classified as Historic Monuments, including the triptych of Urlupin (1526), which remains one of the most beautiful works in the Gulf of St Tropez, and its polychrome marble high altar from the 17th century. The Gothic nave features contemporary works by local artists. Its exterior architecture, sober and massive, contrasts with the works inside.

## THE CLOCK TOWER

The clock tower and the surrounding wall of Cogolin constituted a defensive system which included the houses and the seigniorial castle. This gate tower, dating from the end of the 11th - beginning of the 15th century, was one of the entrances to the village. It was accessed by a ramp and then a drawbridge over a moat.



A portcullis, called a Saracen, protected the village in case of danger. This tower was built in basalt, a grey-black alveolate lava stone, the rock on which the village of Cogolin was established. At the beginning of the 15th century, the village of Cogolin had about 500 inhabitants. In the second half of the 16th century, a clock was installed on top of this tower. A person, usually a locksmith, was appointed and paid by the community to "drive the clock".

This fragile device operated with a counterweight and required regular repairs. The hours were rung by a bell dated 1587.

During the French Revolution, this bell was saved because it was part of a civil building. Thus, it was not melted down to serve as a cannon for the Republic. It is now in the bell tower of the parish church.

Its Latin dedication "Sancta Maria ora pro nobis" means "Holy Mary pray for us". As early as 1911, the town council considered buying a new clock, which was installed on the pediment of the town hall in 1930.

## THE FOUNTAINS



Water in Cogolin has never been too much of a problem, unlike other Provençal villages.

The old town is set on a volcanic hill and is surrounded by the foothills of the Maures. The water which flows in abundance in this wooded massif, trickles down from these mountains and feeds our underground reservoirs. Water supply as we know it today did not exist in the town until the early 19th century.

In 1821, a spring was discovered which flowed all summer and supplied a public fountain on the outskirts of the village. The first fountain was built in 1857, in the heart of the old village.

In 1867, a public drinking trough was built: the "Font Vieille". In 1913 and 1914, two fountains were built on the avenue de la gare (now avenue G. Clemenceau). Then, two circular basins were built: one in the centre of the Place de la Mairie, surrounded by a gate to avoid accidents, the other in Place Victor Hugo, which was short-lived. At the end of the 19th century, in order to increase the number of fountains in the streets, a system of underground basins, supplied by a pumping station, was built. The water reached the fountains through pipes and intermediate basins according to the laws of gravitation...

The fountains that can be seen today: the Town Hall fountain, the Sellier residence fountain (with 3 spouts), the fountain in Abbé Toti Square (called the mushroom fountain) and the fountain in Victor Hugo Square.

Fountains that no longer exist: the old fountain (watering hole), Jean Moulin Square, rue Marceau, rue de la Résistance, rue Carnot and the watering hole (in front of the Tourist Office).

## THE PORCHES

If there is one particularity in our village, it is the porches. It is difficult not to notice these doorway ornaments when strolling through these narrow and charming streets.

These porches are always sculpted in two types of rock, easy to recognize after this description:

- Serpentine, a dark green mineral (copper



oxidation) with white or yellowish veins. Its shiny patina and very fine grain make it look like a snake's skin. It is mainly used as an ornamental stone.

- Bubbly basalt is a grey lava stone, which forms the geological substratum of the village. It comes from a volcanic flow that dates back more than 5 million years. The holes are oxygen bubbles caught in the lava.

Note that in this rural village, with its modest houses, it is surprising to find so many porches and so many architectural styles (classical, gothic, roman).

## **THE CHAPELS**

The first chapel on the right was built around 1630 and was transformed into a farm building with a stable on the ground floor and a barn on the first floor. Restored between 2010 and 2012, it is now an exhibition space.

The second one, on the left, replaced the oldest one around 1820. These chapels were home to the brotherhood of white penitents. They accompanied the deceased to their final resting place...

*Source : <http://www.cogolin-provence.com/destination/village/>*