



3rd
edition

Fondation | Bassin | Minier

LEGACY OF THE PAST

Industrial tourism
in southern Luxembourg

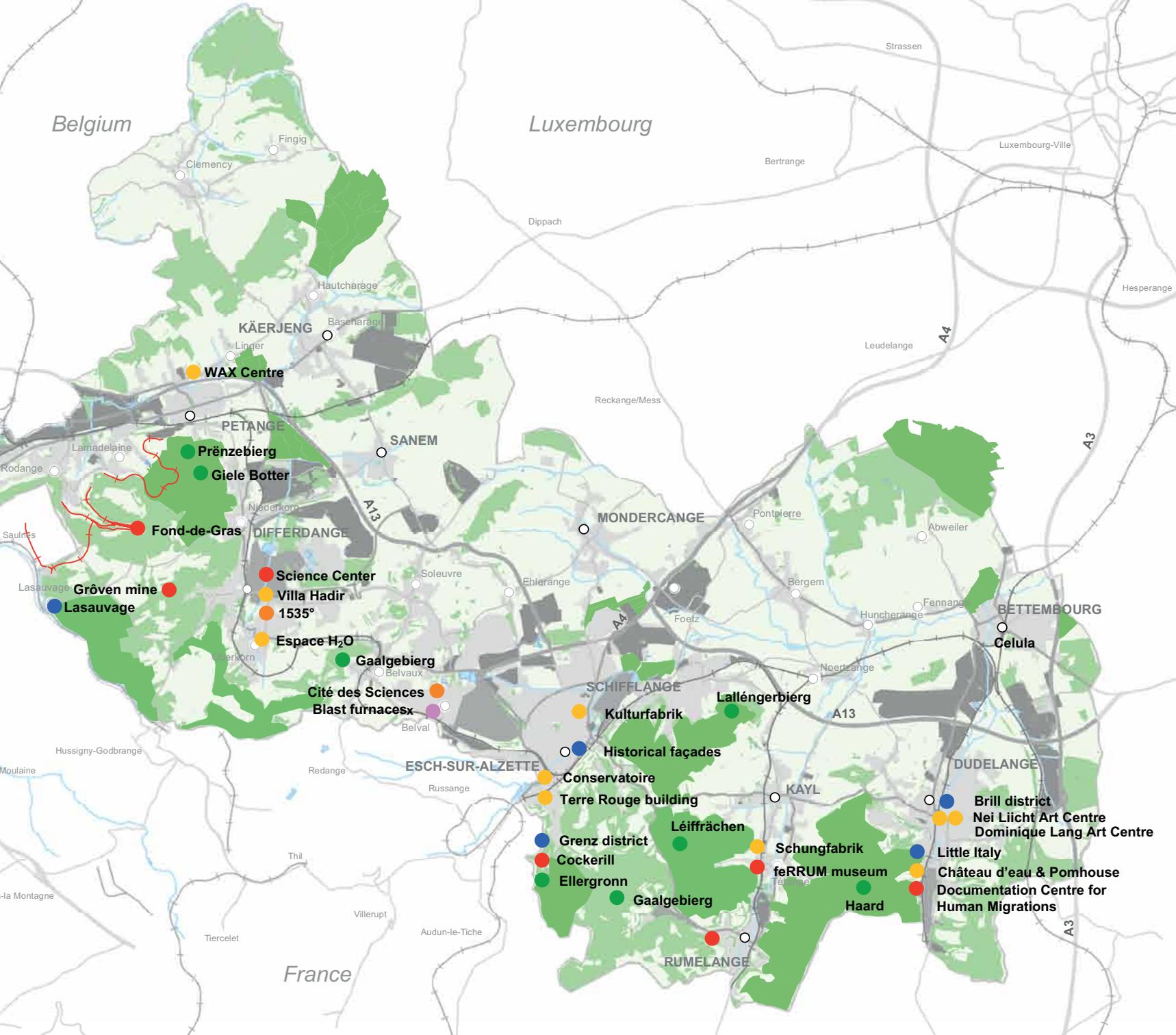
The aim of the **Fondation Bassin Minier** is to promote the rich cultural heritage of the “Bassin Minier”, the former mining region in southern Luxembourg. It is committed to bringing the region’s past to life and identifying future prospects by initiating and supporting projects in the areas of industrial heritage, culture, the environment, tourism and innovation. From its history forged by industry, workers and migration to its current development as a hub for research and technology, this fascinating region is brimming with things to see and do. The Fondation Bassin Minier is financially supported by the Luxembourg Ministry of Culture.

Cover

The Belval gas torch seen from below

Photo: AGORA

Industrial heritage in the Bassin Minier



- Industrial museums
 - Converted industrial architecture
 - Esch/Belval blast furnaces
 - Workers' districts and characteristic architecture
 - Nature site with industrial heritage
 - Research and innovation
-
- +— Tourist railway
 - Municipalities
 - Nature reserves



Production: PRO-SUD – I.Renoir / April 2021
 Background map: Luxembourg Land Registry and Topography Administration
 Source: Fondation Bassin Minier

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 Autorisation de publication du 3.07.2009.

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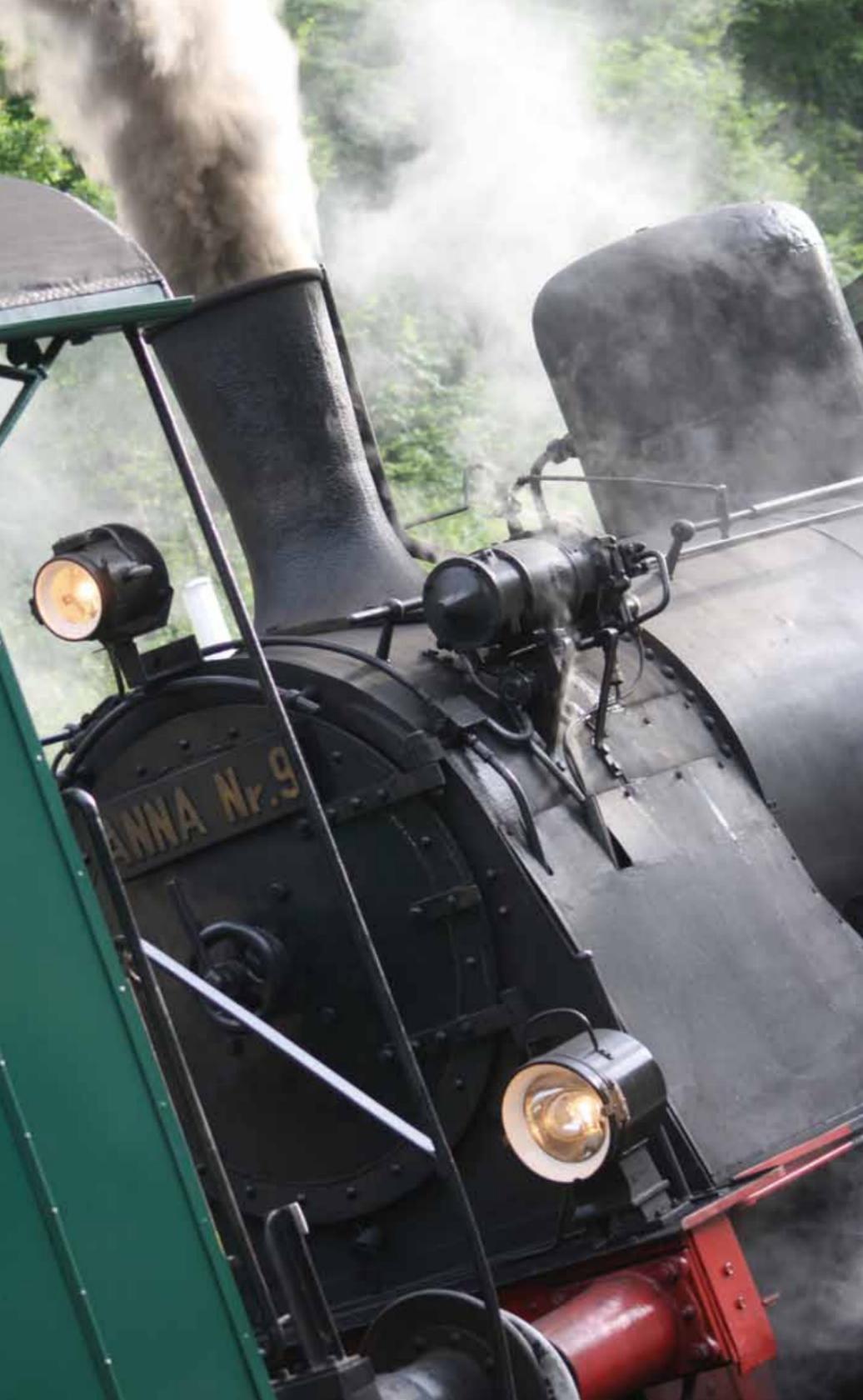


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	06
1. Industrial museums	08
Minett Park Fond-de-Gras	09
National Mining Museum, Rumelange	12
Cockerill mine, Esch-sur-Alzette	14
Grôven mine, Differdange	14
Science Center	14
Harnessing collective memory in Pétange	14
feRRUM Museum, Tétange	15
Documentation Centre for Human Migrations, Dudelange	16
National Centre for Industrial Culture	17
2. Esch/Belval blast furnaces	18
3. Workers' districts and affluent neighbourhoods	24
.....	26
The Grenz district around the Terre Rouge plant, Esch-sur-Alzette	27
The Léon Weirich and Dr. Welter districts in Esch	29
Esch-sur-Alzette and its historical façades	31
Lasauvage, a workers' village	33
The Brill district, Dudelange	35
Little Italy, Dudelange	37
The "Kasären" in the Cité CFL in Pétange	38
4. Breathing new life into old walls	46
5. Industrial nature	48
Prënzeberg – Giele Botter nature trail	49
Giele Botter geology trail	50
Poets' trail	50
From Ellergronn to Gaalgebierg	51
Haard nature reserve	52
Minett Trail: a project for Esch 2022	54
6. Industry and innovation today	58
7. Cultural life in southern Luxembourg	62
8. Sport and leisure	68
9. Worker' taverns and starred restaurants	70
10. Val de Fensch (France)	



INTRODUCTION

It was in around 1840 that layers of “minette”, a type of iron ore with a low iron content (less than 30%), were discovered in the plateau that runs along the French border. The mining of these deposits ushered in an era of industrialisation in Luxembourg. Open-pit mines and tunnels were soon built, and in 1870-71 the first steel plants opened in Esch-sur-Alzette. With the development of the first railway (from 1859 onwards) and the application of the Thomas process (1879), used to eliminate phosphorus from raw iron during smelting, steel production in the “Bassin Minier” (the mining region in southern Luxembourg) grew rapidly. Steel plants were built along the iron fields, first in Dudelange (1886), then in Differdange (1900), Rodange (1905), Esch/Belval (1912) and finally Schifflange (1913).

The region attracted thousands of workers, initially from other regions in Luxembourg, then from Germany, Belgium and Italy, all keen to tap into the precious “red gold”.

Luxembourg was transformed from a primarily agricultural country into a major industrial centre. Its wealth depended on its iron ore deposits – the country supplied the entire world with steel. Production continued to rise, reaching its peak in 1971 with 6.4 million tonnes. During its heyday, the steel industry employed more than 30,000 people.

The economic crisis that emerged in 1973 sounded the death knell for Luxembourg's steel industry. Mine closures were followed by the gradual closure of the blast furnaces. The last remaining underground mine in Differdange, "Thillebiërg", shut down in 1981, three years after the closure of the last open-pit mine, "Schlammebiërg". The blast furnaces continued to process imported ore for a number of years before being permanently closed down in 1997. The ArcelorMittal company currently produces approximately 2.2 million tonnes of steel in electric furnaces (in Differdange and Esch/Belval) and now has just 3,700 employees.

The steel industry and its workers left a lasting mark on this region, known by its historical names of "Minett" (in reference to the iron ore deposits) and "Terres Rouges" (red earth). The region's emblematic figure is the "Minettsdapp" – a miner or resident of the mining region with a no-nonsense attitude, who doesn't shy away from a hard day's work and is not afraid to speak bluntly.

Nowadays, although ArcelorMittal maintains a significant operational presence in the Bassin Minier, the machines lie quiet, smoke no longer pours from the chimneys, the "buggis" (mine carts) and railways are slowly rusting away. The region contains brownfields, modern business and trading areas, industrial museums and rapidly growing urban centres. But it is also home to beautiful layered forests, their characteristic morphology a legacy of the former open-pit and underground mines that have now been reclaimed by nature.

The landscapes with their canyon-like red cliffs have become local tourist sites. Visitors can spot signs of the region's industrial past at every turn, from the blast furnaces in Esch/Belval – a listed national monument – to the locomotives and wagons displayed in public squares, from workers' estates to typical taverns. Former miners and factory workers now cultivate their memories in their gardens. In the "Minett", you won't be greeted by old ploughs or hay wagons but instead by artistically arranged drills, miner's lamps restored with painstaking precision, mine carts piled high with iron ore or illuminated statues of St Barbara, patron saint of miners.

Every year on 4 December, St Barbara's Day, the mining world comes back to life for a few hours. In some towns in the mining region, a Mass is still celebrated, followed by a procession during which former miners and steelworkers, railway workers and firefighters carry a statue of the saint through the streets. Throughout the entire Bassin Minier, monuments are decorated with flowers in tribute to the miners. A Mass is performed at the back of the National Mining Museum in Rumelange, and in the evening a dance is held with music from the Esch Miners' Band. In Rodange and Belval, trench mortars are fired to open the parade, and in Lasauvage, the last drink of the night is enjoyed in the mine tunnels.

BIOTECH



INDUSTRIAL MUSEUMS

Shortly after the first mines were closed and some of the steel plants were decommissioned, a number of former miners and steel workers, in agreement with local leaders, decided to try to save some of the physical fabric of this industrial culture. They collected objects linked to their profession and opened abandoned industrial sites to visitors.

In 1973, railway enthusiasts took over a disused line in Fond-de-Gras with the aim of bringing historical trains from the early 20th century back into service. This open-air museum, now known as the Minett Park Fond-de-Gras, offers a range of different activities all related to iron ore mining. It is spread over several sites: Fond-de-Gras, the village of Lasauvage, the "Giele Botter" former open-pit mine and the Titelberg Celtic oppidum. Also in 1973, Luxembourg's first mining museum opened in Rumelange. The Documentation Centre for Human Migrations (CDMH) in Dudelange carries out research on immigrant workers and hosts temporary public exhibitions. Newcomers to the museum scene include Cockerill mine in Esch-sur-Alzette (some of the buildings around the mine have been restored) and Gröven mine (fully renovated in 2010). Other recent developments include the restoration of the two remaining blast furnaces in Esch/Belval and the recovery of a fascinating industrial warehouse with a gas engine (a listed historical monument) in Differdange. The aim is to use the latter site for an industrial energy museum that will forge a link between the past and the energy challenges of the future.

MINETT PARK FOND-DE-GRAS

From former mine...

Nestled in an idyllic natural setting, the Fond-de-Gras valley was once a major industrial site in southern Luxembourg. The railway line which transported "min-

ette" iron ore extracted from Fond-de-Gras for nearly a century passed through thick woodland. The mine carts ("buggis") loaded with ore from the neighbouring mine would line up at the loading ramps, where their contents were tipped into train cars and transported to the nearby blast furnaces.

Since industrial production stopped, the valley has become a tranquil, romantic setting. It has been a listed historical site since 1986. As well as two trains, the Fond-de-Gras site has several adits, or underground mine entrances,

Victor Binck grocery store, Fond-de-Gras





Train 1900, Fond-de-Gras

a rail network with loading bays, and the “Bei der Giedel” miners’ tavern, still a popular haunt for visitors.

... to open-air museum

A wide range of technical equipment used for iron production, taken from other disused sites and reassembled at Fond-de-Gras, is on display as a legacy of the past for future generations. Visitors can admire a Bessemer converter, weighing two tonnes, in which pig iron was converted into steel, as well as a rolling mill from the Esch/Belval plant.

The former power station from the Paul Wurth Company was reassembled at Fond-de-Gras in 1988. Wurth, a steel industry pioneer, ran a steel foundry and metal construction works in the Hollerich district of Luxembourg City. Over time, the company came to specialise in engineering installations and equipment for the steel industry.

The Victor Binck grocery store in Differdange was dismantled and rebuilt in former workers’ houses on the Fond-de-Gras site.

Romantic railways: the Train 1900

The Fond-de-Gras mines closed in 1955, and in 1964 a landslide on the railway signalled the end of the line for rail traffic.

In 1970, the Association of Railway Museums and Tourism (AMTF) decided to relaunch the line as a standard-gauge tourist railway (with a track gauge of 1,435mm) for the “Train 1900”. In season, from May to September, this steam train with wooden benches, typical of the early 20th century, transports visitors over eight kilometres between Pétange station, Fond-de-Gras and Bois-de-Rodange, through a landscape shaped by a history of mining. The train crosses brownfields and housing estates in the Chiers valley, then runs along the “Tételbierg” – once colonised by Celts and Romans – and the “Giele Botter” former open-pit mine.

Minièresbunn

The former narrow-gauge mine railway network (with a track gauge of 700mm) is today used to run the “Minièresbunn”,

which links Fond-de-Gras with the village of Lasauvage. In season, from May to September, the train sets off a stone's throw from the Bei der Giedel café and restaurant. Old steam locomotives pull the convoy as far as the "Doihl" pithead. Visitors then switch to another train, and an electric locomotive takes them through a 1,400m mine gallery in around 15 minutes. Those who wish to do so can continue the journey to the end of the village and then in the opposite direction, travelling along the former French mines and the remains of the iron ore crusher, then crossing the border and arriving in the French village of Saulnes.

Pränzeberg and Giele Botter

The Fond-de-Gras mining area, much of which is now a protected site, is not only a wonderful place for finding out about the area's industrial history; it is also home to a wealth of flora and fauna and is a favourite spot for walkers and cyclists (see p. 46). Visitors can quench their thirst in one of the traditional taverns that were once popular with miners and their families, such as "Bei der Giedel" or "Bache Jang".

Eugène Pesch Museum, Lasauvage

The extensive collection gathered by Eugène Pesch contains an array of minerals and fossils that are characteristic of the Minett region, as well as a selection of former mining tools. The collection now belongs to the local municipality and has been on display since 2005 in the Depienne house near the pithead in Lasauvage. This little mining village has a rich history – many infrastructures and remains from the mining era can still be seen today, giving the place an unmistakable charm (see p. 31).



Minièresbunn, Fond-de-Gras

The Titelberg oppidum

If you are out and about in the region, make sure you don't miss the spectacular Titelberg site (or "Tételberg" in Luxembourgish). Perched on a 50-hectare rocky outcrop with a view over the Chiers valley, the site played a key role in the 1st century BC. A major oppidum was built on a spot that was ideally located for fortifications. Historians believe that the Titelberg was a site for communal celebrations and a marketplace for the Treveri, a Celtic tribe, and that it was a key political and economic hub. The remains of the fortifications and the *muris gallicus* can still be clearly seen and traced with remarkable precision.

With the Lasauvage mining village, the "Giele Botter" former open-pit mine and the Titelberg Celtic oppidum, the Minett Park has become a fascinating ecomuseum.



Café Bei der Giedel, Fond-de-Gras

NATIONAL MINING MUSEUM, RUMELANGE

The idea for a National Mining Museum dates back to the 1970s, when former miners persuaded the Rumelange local authority to convert the Walert mine, which closed in 1963, and open it to visitors. The museum offers a clear, lively presentation of the miners' work and tools, together with the machines and equipment used to mine iron ore in Luxembourg.

Among the items on display in the exhibition hall, which span the period from 1850 to the 1970s, are a large number of tools, lamps, helmets and measuring instruments. Old photos and archive documents offer a further glimpse into the miners' working routines and daily lives.

Visitors are then invited to don a helmet for the more adventurous part of the tour, on board one of two mine trains which transport them through the tunnels. In the underground spaces, a series of reconstitutions illustrate the changing techniques in iron ore extraction. Life-size mannequins are shown using machines and tools to illustrate the meth-



National Mining Museum (before renovation)

ods employed to extract iron ore and give visitors an idea of the working conditions. The permanent exhibition clearly shows how over time, technical progress (the introduction of electricity, the use of compressed air and explosives) made life easier for the miners.

It is cold in the mine galleries – the temperature remains at a chilly 10°C on average all year round –, so visitors are advised to bring warm clothes, even in summer. The guided tour lasts for two hours (including the train ride). And what better way to end the trip than with some refreshments in the delightful museum restaurant!

National Mining Museum



COCKERILL MINE, ESCH-SUR-ALZETTE

Cockerill mine is in Esch-sur-Alzette, by the entrance to the “Ellergronn” nature reserve. The mine was in operation from 1882 to 1967.

A series of fortunate circumstances led to the entire site around Cockerill mine remaining in its original condition, despite the fact that it was gradually abandoned and fell into state ownership in 1986.

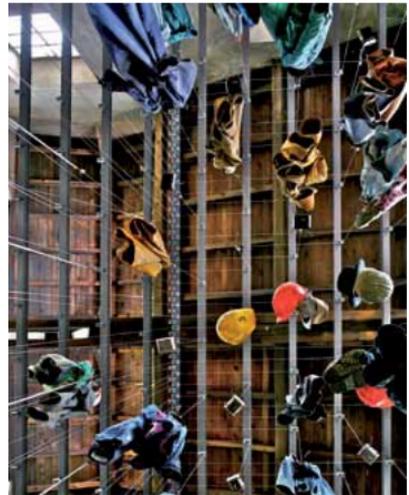
In 1990, a handful of local history and industrial archaeology enthusiasts, aided by some former miners, launched a project to renovate the site and began the first light-handed restoration work. They were soon joined in the task by state-supported teams, which embarked on a wide-ranging renovation of the entire site.

Since the late 1990s, the “Entente Mine Cockerill” (EMC) has managed the site in collaboration with the government’s Nature and Forest Agency. Cockerill mine is well worth a visit for three reasons:

- all the buildings have remained in their original condition;
- a museum has been opened, with an outdoor space showcasing mine carts, mine locomotives and a variety of machines, and an indoor area with tools, lamps and miners’ belongings; the former forge has been fully restored and is in working condition, and there is a documentation centre with written archives and photographs;
- there is a regular programme of tours, exhibitions, workshops, con-



Inside view of the museum area



“Salle des Pendus” in Cockerill mine

ferences, slideshows and film screenings, country fairs and folk festivals.

Cockerill mine is in the “Ellergronn”, an officially listed nature reserve. An informative 3km tour has been developed by the Nature and Forest Agency, with a series of information boards telling walkers about the history and specific characteristics of the site. Another 5km tour – “Humans and Woodland” – sets off from the Ellergronn visitor centre and runs along the former “Eisekaul” iron ore mine (see p. 50).

GRÔVEN MINE, DIFFERDANGE

This former mine, in operation until 1957, has been turned into a place of memory that now houses exhibitions about mining. The mine gallery, tucked away in woodland in Grôven park, now contains a series of historical photos. For several years, the mine was entirely abandoned and reclaimed by nature.

In 2008, local authorities in Differdange decided to restore the site and installed a series of explanatory panels outlining the history of Grôven mine. The other part of the site is used for temporary exhibitions related to mining. The mine is only open by reservation.



Grôven mine

SCIENCE CENTER

The Differdange Science Center opened in 2017 with the aim of promoting science and technology among the general public, especially young people. In the "Explorations" room, more than 75 interactive stations available in five languages give visitors hands-on experience with extreme low temperatures, low pressure and gravitation, as well as the chance to perform experiments on different materials. A host of surprises are in store for visitors, from gigantic arcs of 1.5 million volts to a table foot-

ball match against a robot, a cookery session and steel brought to melting point in a matter of seconds. The plan is for the Science Center to move a short distance away to the former gas turbine in the Differdange steel plant, a building that dates from 1905 and contains the "Groussgasmashinn", the largest combustion engine in the world, listed as a national monument. This mecca of science is already proving popular among the public, and it has big ambitions for the future.

HARNESSING COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PÉTANGE

The "An der Uecht" collective remembrance centre has its home in the former presbytery in Lamadelaine, which dates back to 1889 and has been su-

perbly renovated. The centre has extensive collections of newspaper cuttings, old documents, books and periodicals, as well as the comprehensive archives

of local associations. There is a reading room that also serves as a venue for seminars and screenings. The Pétange local history association, “Geschichts-

frënn vun der Gemeng Péiteng” (Friends of History of Pétange), is based there and is always on the lookout for old photos or documents to scan.

FERRUM MUSEUM, TÉTANGE

A brand new museum is set to open in early 2022 in the buildings adjacent to the Schungfabrik in Tétange (see p. 41 for more about the history of this factory that manufactured shoes for miners). The museum will feature a permanent exhibition about the history of the Kayl valley based on two themes: “Local history – the land” and “Industries – people”. Visitors are introduced to the historical development and changing landscapes of the area through four stations. The central thread is reflected in the name of the museum: feRRUM, the Latin name for the chemical element iron, which shaped the development of the region

and the Kayl valley from 1840 onwards. The building includes a space for visits from primary school classes during the week, with workshops to help familiarise children with the history of their region.

The complex will also contain an art gallery, which will host events run by the MUAR association (Musée vun der Aarbecht/Museum of Work).

Two different walking routes have their starting point outside the museum. The “Minettswée” in particular can be seen as an extension of the museum, as it takes walkers past sites linked with the area’s mining past and provides additional information.

Visitors follow the historical development of the Kayl valley through four stations



DOCUMENTATION CENTRE FOR HUMAN MIGRATIONS, DUDELANGE

The Documentation Centre for Human Migrations (CDMH) was set up in 1995 in the railway station in the “Little Italy” (“Kleng Italien”) district of Dudelange. The station and railway line, built in 1897, were used to supply the new steel plant with coke and to transport iron. It was here that large numbers of Italian immigrants set foot on Luxembourg soil for the first time, having come to earn a living in the mines and factories.

From the 1880s onwards, emigration and immigration became major factors in Luxembourg’s history and economy – and also played a key part in its cultural identity. Before the industrial era, many Luxembourgers emigrated to America or left to work alongside their French or Belgian neighbours. But the advent of the steel industry reversed the trend, with workers converging on Luxembourg both from neighbouring coun-

tries (Germany, France and Belgium) and from more distant lands, including Italy.

The industrialisation of Luxembourg in the late 19th century saw the creation of the Italian quarter in Dudelange, populated primarily with Italian immigrant workers. Set between the steelworks in the valley and the mines on the hillside, the district is now a key place of memory for the history of migration in Luxembourg. Its typical tiered buildings are linked by a network of outdoor stairways and covered passages.

The CDMH regularly puts on exhibitions on the topic of human migrations. But since it is housed in a district characterised by multiple cultures, it aspires above all to be a “museum without walls”, a living testament to the history of its inhabitants, who today come from all parts of the world after a period of mainly Portuguese immigration (see p. 36).

Immigrants (CDMH exhibition)



NATIONAL CENTRE FOR INDUSTRIAL CULTURE

Industriekultur-CNCI (the National Centre for Industrial Culture) is a non-profit association set up in 2019 to develop a cooperative network that brings together all the stakeholders in Luxembourg's industrial heritage, as well as those with an interest in industrial culture. The association aims to become a place of reference for industrial culture in Luxembourg, to raise awareness among the public by organising events, projects and activities to save the country's en-

dangered industrial heritage, and to propose and support potential repurposing opportunities.

Dudelange-Usines railway station



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Minett Park Fond-de-Gras (Train 1900, Minnièresbunn, Titelberg, Eugène Pesch Museum, Espace muséologique Lasauvage)

2, Fond-de-Gras, L-4576 Nieder Korn,
Tel.: (+352) 26 58 20 69 (Monday to Friday)
info@minettpark.lu, www.minettpark.lu

Train 1900

12, rue de Lasauvage, L-4829 Rodange,
Fax: (+352) 50 94 85
train1900@pt.lu, www.train1900.lu

Minnièresbunn Doihl

BP 60, L-4701 Pétange
info@minieresbunn.lu, www.minieresbunn.lu

Mine Cockerill, Esch-sur-Alzette

Centre d'accueil "Ellergronn", L-4114 Esch-sur-Alzette,
Tel.: (+352) 26 54 42-1
ellergronn@ef.etat.lu, www.centresnatureetforet.lu,
ellergr@pt.lu (Entente Cockerill)

Musée national des mines de fer luxembourgeoises (National Mining Museum), Rumelange

Carreau de la mine Walert, L-3714 Rumelange,
Tel.: (+352) 56 56 88
info@mnm.lu, www.mnm.lu, www.brasserieumusee.lu

Mine Grôven

Rue de Hussigny,
Tel.: (+352) 58 77 1 1900
culturel@differdange.lu, www.differdange.lu

Luxembourg Science Center

50, rue Emile Mark, L-4620 Differdange,
Tel.: (+352) 28 83 99 1
reception@science-center.lu, www.science-center.lu

Maison de la Mémoire collective an der Uecht ("An der Uecht" collective remembrance centre)

1A, avenue de la Gare, L-4873 Lamadelaine,
Tel.: (+352) 50 12 51 6250
www.petange.lu, geschichtsffrenn@petange.lu

Centre de documentation sur les migrations humaines (Documentation Centre for Human Migrations), Dudelange

Gare-Usines, L-3481 Dudelange,
Tel.: (+352) 51 69 85
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Industriekultur-CNCI asbl

info@cnci.lu, www.cnci.lu



ESCH/BELVAL BLAST FURNACES

An integrated plant: Adolf-Emil-Hütte

In 1907, the company Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG, which owned the former “Brasseurschmelz” in Esch following a company merger, decided to build a new integrated plant. Since the company’s directors, the brothers Adolf and Emil Kirdorf, had not been able to acquire the land they needed for their project in the town of Russange in France, they turned instead to Esch-sur-Alzette – whose mayor, the industrialist Léon Metz, agreed to sell them the area of woodland known as Clair-Chêne.

Located between Esch-sur-Alzette and Belvaux, the Adolf-Emil-Hütte plant, built between 1909 and 1912, performed all the steps in the steel production process, from the preparation of iron ore to the finished product. It had blast furnaces, a steel mill and rolling mills.

The plant was spread over a vast 222-hectare site. With six blast furnaces offering a daily production capacity of 200 tonnes each, a huge blowing engine, a Thomas steel mill with two mixers (800 t) and four converters (18 t), and a series of rolling mills, it was able to produce a wide variety of objects, from intermediate products (ingots and bars) to finished products coming off the rolling mills (girders, channel bars, angle irons, steel sheeting and heavy iron products). In 1913, the 3,131 workers (65% of them foreigners) produced 400,000 tonnes of pig iron, 360,000 tonnes of steel and 297,000 tonnes of laminated products.

A modern plant: ARBED Esch/Belval

The plant underwent a costly process of modernisation in the 1960s. Three new blast furnaces replaced the previous six.

The Esch/Belval plant still in operation





Belval, a site with a future outlook...

Blast Furnace A, with a daily production capacity of 2,300 tonnes, was installed in 1965. Blast Furnaces B (3,000 t) and C (4,000 t) followed in 1969 and 1979 respectively. The new LD-AC steel plant (Linz-Donawitz-ARBED – Centre de Recherche), with two 125-tonne converters, was built in 1967.

In 1973, shortly before the economic crisis, the integrated plant, which employed 6,875 labourers and 1,006 non-manual staff, posted its highest ever annual production figures: 1,782,000 tonnes of steel and 1,513,000 tonnes of iron.

From blast furnace to electric furnace

The steel crisis which lasted until the 1990s forced the ARBED group to engage in a process of technical restructuring. Of the three blast furnaces, Blast Furnace C was sold to China, while the two remaining furnaces (A and B) were shut down and are now part of the region's industrial heritage. The last blast

furnace ceased operation entirely on 28 August 1997. Since then, steel production has taken place a few hundred metres away in an electric furnace, which is supplied with scrap iron. The first electric furnace manufactured by Mannesmann Demag Hüttentechnik (MDH), with a diameter of 7.6 metres and a capacity of 155 tonnes, was commissioned in May 1997, shortly after the new rolling mill built by SMS/Paul Wurth, which since it began operating in September 1996 has produced steel in four formats: bars, ingots, girders and sheeting.

Belval, a unique site in Europe

As production continued on the east side of the plant, another future lay in store for the brownfield site on the west side. In the 1990s, the Luxembourg government decided to support the economic development of the southern region as part of a decentralisation policy for government departments with the aim of spreading jobs more

evenly across the country and improving residents' quality of life. It launched one of the most ambitious urban development programmes in Europe for the conversion and repurposing of former brownfield sites, with Belval being the prime example.

Nowadays Belval is a new urban district, home to the "Cit  des Sciences, de la Recherche et de l'Innovation". What made this conversion project unique was that it incorporated elements of the former industrial site, based on the concept of showcasing monuments in urban spaces. The industrial remains do not just point back to a past era; they are also emblematic of the new Belval and its new public function. The Cit  des Sciences, built on the "Terrasse des Hauts Fourneaux", comprises around twenty buildings which form a coherent architectural complex and operate

in synergy, with the buildings of the University of Luxembourg, public research centres, cultural and leisure facilities and shops all coming together to create an urban centre. Although Belval is divided into four districts serving specific purposes (Terrasse des Hauts Fourneaux, Square Mile, Parc Belval, Belval Nord et Sud), the principle of combining different dimensions of life can be seen throughout, with housing, workplaces, public squares and commodities (services, shops, etc.) spread over the entire site, together with facilities for secondary education, sport and government agencies. The new National Archives building is currently being developed opposite the "Halle des Soufflantes", an imposing industrial building dating from 1910 that is awaiting refurbishment.

The Technoport, a business incubator in Esch/Belval





Visiting Blast Furnace A in Belval



The Luxembourg Learning Centre is housed in the former "Möllerei"

The Belval blast furnaces, monuments of industry

In a bid to save the industrial heritage of this outstanding site, Blast Furnace A was painstakingly restored in its entirety, with its cast house and the corresponding part of the "Möllerei" building,

where raw materials were prepared for the blast furnace. The silhouette of Blast Furnace B has been preserved, incorporating the gas cleaning system and the Cowper stoves. The north part of the Möllerei has become a remarkable university library (the Luxembourg Learn-

ing Centre), which is well worth a visit. A public space designed by landscape architect Michel Desvigne has been created between the blast furnaces, with water features, cafés and restaurants. The night-time illumination of the blast furnaces with white lights, devised and implemented by industrial designer Ingo Maurer, draws attention to the unique appearance of these imposing industrial remains.

Blast Furnace A is open to visitors on a self-guided basis in season, from spring to autumn. Guided tours, lectures, debates and educational activities are regularly organised. Guided tours for groups can be arranged on request: visite@fonds-belval.lu

The Möllerei, now a university library and exhibition space

The new university library, the Luxembourg Learning Centre (LLC), has been incorporated into the “Möllerei”, once used to store and prepare the mixture of coke and iron ore that supplied the blast furnaces. The long building designed and constructed by VALENTINY hvp architects, set between the Belval Plaza complex and the University in the centre of Belval Campus, never fails to draw the eye. The translucent white exterior, composed of geometric elements, calls to mind a cut stone. In the south part of the Möllerei, a new space was developed to serve as an exhibition area for digital installations in connection with Esch 2022 – European Capital of Culture.

The Massenoire – an information, exhibition and visitor centre

The “Massenoire” building (Avenue du Rock’n’Roll, opposite the Rockhal), restored and repurposed by the Fonds Belval, was used from 2010 to 2020

to house exhibitions and conferences about the Cité des Sciences, the urban development of Belval, industrial history and other topics related to the site’s development. As the Massenoire is one of the industrial buildings set to host cultural events for Esch 2022, a new information, exhibition and visitor centre and starting point for guided tours opened in 2021 at 5, Avenue des Hauts Fourneaux.

INFORMATION

www.fonds-belval.lu

Website of the Fonds Belval, the public organisation set up as project owner of the Cité des Sciences

www.uni.lu

Website of the University of Luxembourg

www.c2dh.uni.lu

Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History, a research centre at the University of Luxembourg

<https://llc.uni.lu>

Virtual tour of the university library housed in the “Möllerei” building

www.esch.lu

Public information website for the town of Esch-sur-Alzette

www.heichiewen.lu

The association founded to preserve the former blast furnaces

www.rockhal.lu

Programme for the Rockhal concert venue in Esch/Belval

www.agora.lu

The development company for the Belval site

www.nci.lu

Website of Industriekultur-CNCI asbl



29

WORKERS' DISTRICTS AND AFFLUENT NEIGHBOURHOODS

The mines and factories attracted large numbers of workers to the south of Luxembourg. Luxembourgers and foreigners alike migrated to the mining region in search of work. Workers' towns and districts began to spring up, characterised by architectural homogeneity and typical houses that still dominate the region's urban landscape today.

From 1870 to 1900, the population of Esch-sur-Alzette grew fourfold, and it became the centre of a thriving mining region. In 1906, Esch was officially granted town status, followed the next year by Dudelange, Differdange and Rumelange.

The ironmasters bought mansions in Esch-sur-Alzette and Differdange, displaying their power for all to see. At the same time, the families of workers were living in poor conditions, often in overcrowded and squalid housing. In what can only be referred to as dormitories, one large bed was often shared by four workers, who would sleep in "shifts", two at a time.

Companies in the metal and mining industries gradually took the initiative to build the first workers' houses in many parts of the Bassin Minier, soon followed by entire districts. They ran the gamut of housing styles, from barracks to cottages, from rows of identical houses to "garden cities". Most of the workers' districts still exist, and they invariably form consistent architectural ensembles that are easily recognisable in the landscape. In the 1970s, most workers' houses were sold to their tenants, who often set about renovating them to their own taste – sometimes to the great regret of heritage advocates. Also of interest are the imposing houses built by major steel companies for their senior and middle management staff, generally around the factories, some fine examples of which can still be seen today.

The former mining village of Lasauvage, the oldest workers' district in southern Luxembourg, is well worth a visit. Surrounded by woodland, it has its own museum (the "Espace muséologique") and a rail link with the Minett Park Fond-de-Gras via the narrow-gauge "Minièresbunn" train (see p. 9).

In Esch-sur-Alzette, we would particularly recommend two tours of former workers' districts: the "Grenz" district, with housing estates for workers, the former casino and engineers' houses around the "Terre Rouge" plant; and in the north of the town, the "Cité Léon Weirich" and "Cité Dr. Welter" quarters and the housing district built by ARBED and the Société Métallurgique des Terres Rouges in the 1920s in Clair-Chêne, at the same time as the Church of Saint-Henri, a convent and a nursery opened in 1934 by the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Elizabeth.

Dudelange has two particularly interesting districts: first the "Little Italy" quarter mentioned above, set between the steelworks on one side and the mines on the other, with its winding streets and split-level houses; and then the "Brill" district, built around 1900, enlarged during the 20th century on the basis of the "garden city" model and brought into line with modern housing standards following a large-scale renovation programme in the 1980s.

Industrialisation brought a degree of comfort to certain strata of society. The industrial and commercial bourgeoisie that emerged from the economic boom put their newfound wealth to good use, creating a rich architectural legacy. Noteworthy examples can be found in Esch-sur-Alzette with the "Dellhéicht" district, the rue de Luxembourg and the rue de l'Alzette, currently the country's longest shopping street.

THE GRENZ DISTRICT AROUND THE TERRE ROUGE PLANT, ESCH-SUR-ALZETTE

In 1870-71, two blast furnace plants were built in Esch-sur-Alzette: the Brasseur plant to the south-west and the Metz plant to the south-east, named after their respective developers, Norbert Metz and the Brasseur brothers. The factory owners were soon faced with a shortage of housing for the workforce needed to operate the plants, so they gradually began to build workers' houses around the industrial sites.

The "Hiehl" district grew up near what would later come to be known as the Esch-Terre Rouge plant and the pitheads, along the loading bays. This quarter, once a lively hub packed with bars and rental properties, was mainly home to immigrant Italian workers, as reflected in the names of the establishments – Rossi, Scarassa, Carola –, most of which unfortunately no longer exist.

In 1873, the Luxemburger Bergwerks- und Saarbrücker Eisenhütten-gesellschaft built eight houses, each containing two semi-detached units, in

rue des Mineurs. Although the houses were surrounded by gardens, they were soon nicknamed "d'Saarbrécker Kasäre" (the barracks of Saarbrücken). In 1894, seven properties were built on the "Kazebierg", each containing four housing units. These fell victim to the enlargement of the factory in the early 1950s.

But the first real workers' district was only built some thirty years after the first factory opened, in 1901 and 1904 (rue des Mines and rue Renaudin). It was constructed by the German company Aachener Hütten-Aktien-Verein, which in the meantime had taken over the Brasseur plant and the plant in Audun-le-Tiche, just over the border in France.

The estate, located in the district known as "op Barbourg", had 35 identical pairs of semi-detached houses with double-pitched roofs, lining the two streets. The houses had a ground floor and an upper floor under the roof. The



Worker's house in the Hiehl district, Esch-sur-Alzette

stucco façades featured modest decorative brick elements. Each individual family house had a separate entrance, an outhouse for small livestock with a toilet, and a garden. At the time, for workers' families living on a tight budget, keeping small livestock and growing vegetables provided precious resources to help feed the household.

During construction of the modern Adolf-Emil-Hütte plant (1909-1912), Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks A.G. also built two large estates for workers,

supervisors and foremen (Cité Léon Weirich and Cité Dr. Welter), twelve homes for non-manual staff, an administrative building and a casino. The houses for non-manual staff were larger than those intended for labourers and even had their own bathroom.

Around the same time, two series of terraced workers' houses (10 and 13 houses) were built in rue Barbourg along the same lines as those in the Léon Weirich and Dr. Welter estates.

THE LEON WEIRICH AND DR. WELTER DISTRICTS IN ESCH

Between 1909 and 1912, the company Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks A.G. built a new modern steelworks in Esch-sur-Alzette, the Adolf-Emil-Hütte plant (now known as the Esch/Belval plant). At the same time, it developed two large housing estates for workers with 283

housing units, villas for engineers (1-6, rue Bessemer), housing for non-manual workers (4-20, avenue des Terres-Rouges), a casino (50, rue d'Audun) (see p. 39) and an administrative building (1, Avenue des Terres Rouges). The German architect Paul Tafel was commissioned



Cité Léon Weirich, Esch-sur-Alzette

to plan all these buildings, giving the architectural complexes a uniform appearance.

The "Auf der Acht" (Léon Weirich) and "Ehleringerstraße" (Dr. Welter) estates brought an entirely new style of workers' district to the Luxembourg

mining region. The overall plans and architecture of the two estates marked a clear departure from the uniform workers' colony built in rue Renaudin and rue des Mines by the predecessor of the Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks A.G., the Aachener Hütten-Actien-Verein. These new estates, inspired by the British "garden city" model, eschewed straight lines; the houses were grouped together around small squares or wide avenues, where residents could meet and children could play together. Large gardens, criss-crossed with paths, and ornamental trees created a pleasant green setting. Most households had a stable in a small outbuilding. It was expected that residents would raise small livestock and grow vegetables to help feed their families.

The estates comprise groups of houses of different types. They feature a host of architectural details, including an impressive variety of forms of gables, roofs and canopies, bay or recessed sec-

Cité Léon Weirich, Esch-sur-Alzette



tions, bow windows, porches, and verandas leading out onto gardens.

Most of the properties were detached and intended to house one family. The size of the dwellings depended on the professional status of the tenant: supervisors were entitled to six bedrooms, foremen to five and workers to four. Each household had a cellar, a loft and a garden. The properties were offered for a very reasonable rent. In exchange, the tenants were subjected to strict controls and inspections regarding both their behaviour and the upkeep of the houses.

The estates have undergone considerable renovation work since the houses went into private ownership from the 1960s and 1970s onwards.

The houses for non-manual staff resemble a larger version of the typical



Cité Dr. Welter, Esch-sur-Alzette

workers' house, while the houses in rue Bessemer were grand semi-detached villas with spacious bedrooms and large gardens, providing managerial staff with very comfortable living conditions.

Gate 1 of the factory, opposite the engineers' houses – now converted into a veterinary practice –, was another one of the buildings designed by Paul Tafel.

ESCH-SUR-ALZETTE AND ITS HISTORICAL FAÇADES

With the boom in the steel industry, Esch soon developed from a rural village into an industrial town. The capital of the canton of Esch-sur-Alzette became the country's second largest economic and commercial centre. Over time, it acquired infrastructures and facilities commensurate with its urban development.

In the early 20th century, Esch wanted to develop its role as an economic centre to rival the country's political and administrative capital, Luxembourg City. A first urban development plan was drawn up by local architect Paul Flesch (1870-1955). In 1924, the famous German urban planner Joseph Stübgen was tasked with coming up with a plan for the extension of the town. His plan

is now displayed in the municipal architecture department.

The flourishing local trades and the thriving industrial sector vied for architectural supremacy in Esch. General contractors came from Germany, Belgium, France, Italy and Luxembourg,

Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, Esch-sur-Alzette





Rue de l'Alzette, Esch-sur-Alzette

and they tended to incorporate typical features from their home countries into their houses and businesses. This led to a patchwork of different styles in the town, in the chic new "Dellhéicht"

Rue de Luxembourg, Esch-sur-Alzette



quarter and on the long boulevard that was the rue de l'Alzette: Art Nouveau inspired by the École de Nancy, German eclecticism, French neo-Gothic, Flemish Renaissance and neo-Baroque, Art Deco and modernism.

Over and above their immediate aesthetic quality, façades were designed to reflect moral, ethical, cultural and religious values. They glorified work as a path to personal fulfilment by means of ornamental features in vogue at the time such as horns of plenty, garlands, cartouches, draperies, spirals, etc.

A walking route reveals some of Esch's rich and largely preserved architectural heritage. The 5km tour starts at Berwart Tower, the only surviving remnant of Berwart Castle, which dates back to the 1200s and was rebuilt and renovated on several occasions from the 17th to the 20th century. The seigneurial residence was demolished in 1956. Walk down rue Emile Mayrisch, with its fine historicist, Art Deco and

modernist houses, continue along the similarly named square (1930), home to the monument erected in honour of the steel industry magnate Emile Mayrisch, designed by French architects Gustave and Auguste Perret; walk past Dellhéicht primary school (1916) and the hospital (1930) and turn onto rue du Fossé. From the Lycée de garçons (1909), continue via the Church of Saint-Joseph (1873) and head down towards the Town Hall (1937), then turn onto rue de l'Alzette, now a pedestrian area. Follow rue de l'Alzette until you reach Brill school, then take a detour by rue Zénon Bernard – admire the Art Nouveau-style house “Villa Olivo”, built by a rich Italian immigrant (1907), and the Church of the Sacred Heart (1931) –, before ending up at place de la Résistance, home to the National Resistance Museum, built in 1956 to document the response of the people of Luxembourg to the Nazi occupation. The renovation of the

museum will be completed in 2022. Head back onto rue Zénon Bernard, cross rue de la Libération and turn onto rue Bolivar, then onto avenue de la Gare to return to your starting point via rue Boltgen. A full detailed description of the route is available in French, German, Luxembourgish and Dutch from the Escher Infobabrik at 85, rue de l'Alzette. Guided tours for groups can be booked at (+352) 541637 or by email: tourisme@esch.lu.

Town Hall, Esch-sur-Alzette



LASAUVAUGE, A WORKERS' VILLAGE

In Lasauvage, a village nestled in the valley and named after “la femme sauvage” (“the wild woman”), industrialisation resulted in a unique “urban” area: a workers’ district in the middle of the forest, immediately adjacent to the pithead, with its own village infrastructure.

At the sight of the many relics of the industrial era – the pithead, the mine entrances, the narrow-gauge railway –, visitors can be forgiven for thinking that time has come to a standstill. A walk through the village is highly recommended, as is a trip on the “Minièresbunn” narrow-gauge railway through the mine tunnels (see p. 11) and a tour

of the “Espace muséologique Lasauvage”, which showcases the village’s history and legends and has a dedicated section on Luxembourgers who were hidden in a mine to escape forced conscription. The “Salle des Pendus” – the miners’ former changing rooms –, and the collection of fossils and miners’ belongings in the Eugène Pesch Museum are also well worth a visit.

Before industrialisation, Lasauvage was the only iron ore processing site in southern Luxembourg – a certain Gabriel Bernard secured permission to smelt iron ore in Lasauvage in 1623, but the furnaces closed down in 1877. The

remains of the former dam and the bed of the lake, which dried up in 1957, are the only legacies of the pre-industrial production site.

In the late 19th century, Count Ferdinand de Saintignon (1846-1921) began mining iron ore and built the first workers' district in Lasauvage (1880): 45 two-storey houses, spread into four groups located respectively near the château and on the outskirts of the village.

Originally, the "um Balcon" complex, featuring relatively luxurious architecture, was not intended for workers. Saintignon's plan was to turn the nearby French town of Longwy into a spa town. He built thermal baths and a hotel, and created a park with a belvedere. Spagoers would be able to hop over to the romantic valley of Lasauvage by train – and Saintignon built the "Balcon", with a restaurant, lounge and reception area, in Lasauvage for this purpose. But the First World War put paid to his plans, and the building was turned into ten workers' dwellings.



Workers' houses, Lasauvage

In the same paternalistic spirit, Count de Saintignon built a school, a grocery store, a bakery, a canteen and a church.

The church was built in 1894 on the former slag heap and consecrated to St Barbara. On the stained glass windows in the choir, some members of the de Saintignon family are represented as saints. The cemetery is actually in France, on the other side of the river Crosnière. In a fascinating quirk of geography, the border once ran directly through the local inn, literally cutting the place in

Place de Saintignon, Lasauvage





Worker's house, Lasauvage

two – the counter was in France and the tables were in Luxembourg!

The count died in 1921. The plant in Rodange (S.A. Ougrée-Marihaye) acquired the mines in Lasauvage, and the district around the church was taken over by the Jean Raty company based in the nearby French village of Saulnes.

In the 1920s, the Rodange plant built a canteen and 48 two-storey workers' houses to the north of the site, and ten more houses at the opposite end of the village in the "Raty Quarter". The façades are partly covered in brickwork, adding a discreet decorative touch.

THE BRILL DISTRICT, DUDELANGE

When the S.A. des Hauts-Fourneaux de Dudelange was established in 1882, the aim was to build an integrated steel plant where the Thomas process could be used.

In 1889, Emile Mayrisch (1862-1928), director of the plant and a key figure in developing the company's social responsibility, initiated the development of the "Um Brill" workers' district – 23 four-unit properties and 17 houses con-

taining two semi-detached units were built before the First World War. The properties intended to house four families had two dwellings on the ground floor and two on the first floor, each with its own entrance and a small garden. The brick façades were decorated with modest friezes on the upper floor. The west gable was protected from bad weather by sheets of fibre cement. The houses were set relatively far apart from



Brill district, Dudelange



Brill district, Dudelange

each other to avoid overcrowding between households.

In 1919, the ARBED-Dudelange plant ran a competition for Luxembourgish architects to enlarge the estate. The winner was architect Léon Muller (1885-1959) from Mondcrange. When the building work was finished in 1926, 101 individual dwellings had been constructed, as either semi-detached houses or properties with multiple units.

The overall look of the charming complex reflected the influence of the British garden city, from the street pattern to the architectural layout and design of the houses and the large gardens.

In 1979, the "Fonds pour le logement à coût modéré" (low-cost housing fund) commissioned architects Christian Bauer, Jean Goedert and Claude Schmitz for a large-scale project to renovate the Brill district. Given that the structural work

Brill district, Dudelange



was still in good condition, the brick houses were maintained and enlarged by moving the staircases to the outside and grouping two dwellings into one. The project to overhaul the district's heritage was accompanied by a programme of new-build properties that fit perfectly into the existing architectural landscape.

The former director's villa today houses the "Musée des enrôlés de force" (Museum of Forced Conscription) and the "Nei Liicht" art centre (see p. 42). Opposite the villa, a small park features a monument in tribute to Emile Mayrisch by Luxembourgish sculptor Albert Kratzenberg (1931).

LITTLE ITALY, DUDELANGE

Little Italy ("Kleng Italien") stands in stark contrast with the Brill workers' district. While the latter was carefully planned out on the drawing boards of the steel company, the former grew up naturally and resembles an Italian mountain village.

The district developed in the late 19th century at the foot of the factory,

on the slopes between the steelworks in the valley and the multiple mine entrances. The workers who settled here (many of whom were Italian) built their homes in a Mediterranean style. The district's unique charm comes from the haphazard jumble of houses in nooks and crannies, linked together by an impenetrable network of winding streets

Little Italy, Dudelange





Little Italy, Dudelange

and a hotchpotch of steps, terraced gardens, straight stairways and dim passageways.

This was an independent district, densely packed and overcrowded, with grocery stores, cafés and bars. The quarter remained predominantly Italian until the mid-1960s. With the steel crisis that followed the 1973 oil shock, as well as a general trend of social mobility, the original inhabitants left the district, but it remained a migratory hub, and the arrival of new residents from Spain, Portugal, Cape Verde and the former Yugoslavia has opened a new chapter in its history.

The Documentation Centre for Human Migrations (CDMH) is housed in the railway station in the centre of the district (see p. 16). Since 1993, in collaboration with Miami University (in Oxford, Ohio), the CDMH has developed a concept of a “museum without walls” for this district. In 2007, it launched a discovery tour entitled “Mémoires

croisées au quartier Italie” (Interwoven memories in the Italian quarter). A digital discovery route is also accessible via the “izi travel” application.

Little Italy, Dudelange



THE "KASÄREN" IN THE CITÉ CFL IN PÉTANGE

The "Compagnie des chemins de fer Prince-Henri" (Prince Henri railway company) was founded in the spring of 1869. The idea was to create a secondary network of railway lines that would supplement the main lines run by the "Société Royale Grand-Ducal des Chemins de Fer Guillaume Luxembourg". The Prince Henri company had its headquarters in Pétange. From 1880 onwards, the company built a series of small houses for its workers, along the same lines as those that had been built for the miners in the mining region. They were originally located just outside Pétange, but since the town has



Cité CFL, known as the "Kasären", in Pétange

grown they are now well within its borders. The "Cité CFL", known colloquially as the "Kasären" (literally the barracks), has retained some of its initial charm.

TO FIND OUT MORE

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Georges Buchler, Jean Goedert, Antoinette Reuter, Antoinette Lorang and Denis Scuto, published by the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH) at the University of Luxembourg, copybarabooks and the Ville d'Esch, ISBN 978-99959-43-27-1

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Christian Kandzia, Centre de Documentation sur les migrations Humaines, Dudelage 2008, ISBN 978-1-922-05213-1

Luxemburgs Arbeiterkolonien und billige Wohnungen, 1860-1940

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Fonds pour le développement de l'habitat, Luxembourg 2009, ISBN-13: 978-99959-617-0-1

Société Nationale des Habitations à Bon Marché. Album du Centenaire – 1919-2019

Text by Antoinette Lorang and SNHBM, Luxembourg 2019, ISBN 978-99959-0-475-3

Du fil au fer. Industries et industriels de la Vallée de Barcelonnette au Luxembourg

Laurent Surmely, Armand Logelin-Simon, Barcelonnette, Sabença de la Vallée, 2019



Former Celula dairy, Bettembourg

BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO OLD WALLS

The end of the steel boom changed the landscape. Abandoned industrial plants became industrial brownfields, imposing buildings gradually fell into ruin and sites reverted to wastelands. Mine carts were claimed by rust, and wild grasses grew up between rails that no longer went anywhere. Most of the former production centres, workshops and offices no longer served any purpose and were demolished. Luckily, thanks to a handful of private and public initiatives, some historically important buildings were able to be preserved. Turned into cultural centres, museums, homes, restaurants and bars – and sometimes requiring a complete overhaul –, these edifices have been given a new lease of life.

Repurposing projects have saved these emblems of the industrial era. Some particularly interesting buildings, not accessible to the public because they now house new businesses, are still well worth a visit for their exterior architecture: the former gas turbine hall at the Esch/Schifflange ARBED plant is a superb example of a successful renovation of industrial architecture. It now houses the headquarters of the power company Encevo. Further examples are the former abattoir in Rumelange, now home to the municipal technical department, and the former administrative building of Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks A.G., converted into a photo library and an extension of the Esch Conservatoire.

From mine galleries to art galleries...

The former casino once built by Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks A.G. to host events and provide entertainment for employees subsequently became the ARBED Casino, then the Esch-sur-Alzette Casino. It was the social and leisure hub of the "iron metropolis". The local population enjoyed dance evenings, concerts, theatre productions and other festivities there. The casino was turned into the municipal music conservatoire in 1993. Since then, the strains of clarinets and trombones have echoed around the historical buildings, and the great hall is used for public concerts. The former building, renovated with a new contemporary-style annex, has been given



Administrative building at the plant in Esch-sur-Alzette

a new lease of life. The grand entrance hall, which rises three storeys high and features original wooden panelling, has retained all its charm.



Gas turbine hall, ARBED Esch/Schifflange

The **Kulturfabrik** in Esch-sur-Alzette is the country's only alternative cultural centre. In the 1980s, a group of young squatters took over the former abattoir and set up concert halls and thea-

tre venues there. The original building, located on rue de Luxembourg on the outskirts of the town, dates from 1885-86. Enlarged between 1900 and 1939, it served as a slaughterhouse until 1979. Since then, the Kulturfabrik and its varied programme of events have become a key part of the nation's cultural landscape. Following a respectful, light-handed renovation project, the former livestock slaughter hall has been converted into the architecturally stunning "Brasserie K116".

ARBED Casino, Esch-sur-Alzette



The mining industry required a whole host of suppliers. The Massard company in Rumelange produced mine carts. The Pierre Schiltz company in Kayl invented miners' lamps that were even exported abroad. In Tétange, Mathias Hubert built a facility in 1912-1913 for the production of special miners' shoes. The trade in cleated safety

shoes was so successful that he employed up to 70 workers.

Production was discontinued in 1966 and the **Schungfabrik** was closed, before the municipality of Kayl reopened it as the Schungfabrik cultural centre in 1990. The centre continues to attract growing numbers, and several famous musicians and actors have performed there. The new ferrUM museum (see p. 15), currently under construction in the adjacent agricultural buildings, will open to the public in 2022. In addition to the existing structure, a new building has been constructed in the inner courtyard to house the “Espace Kirscht” art gallery.

The national monument to miners and the “Notre-Dame des Mineurs” cave (**Léiffrächen**) are in Kayl. The monument, erected in 1957, is the nation’s tribute to the 1,400 miners who died in the mines. From the top of the hill, where a 41m tower made of Grey beams manufactured at the Hadir plant in Differdange stretches skywards, the view extends over the entire valley of Kayl.

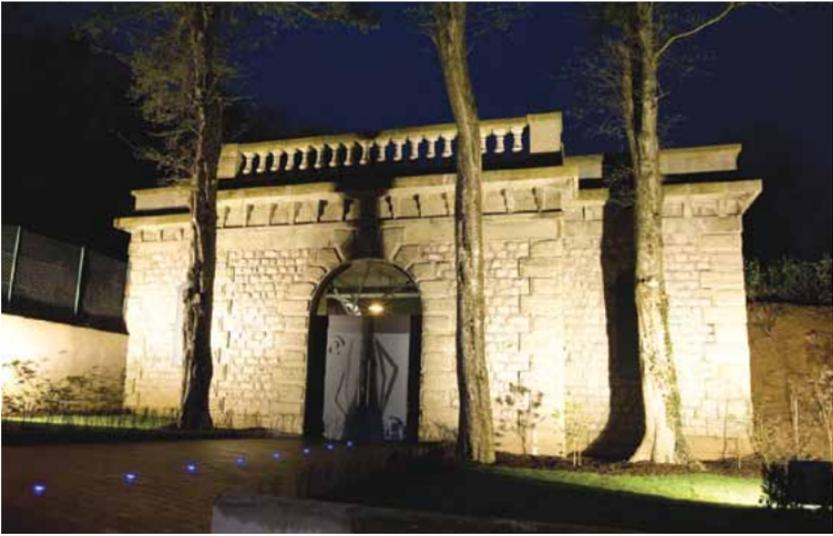


Kulturfabrik, Esch-sur-Alzette

In 2008, to mark the centenary of Differdange, the former water tanks in rue Ratterem, Oberkorn, were converted into an exhibition space. Since then, the **H:0 gallery** has regularly hosted temporary exhibitions. The **Waasserturm & Pomhouse** site, composed of the water tower and pumping station at the Dudelange plant, form a unique architectural ensemble that has been converted by the National Audiovisual Centre (CNA) into an exhibition and event space for the audiovisual arts. It hosts temporary exhibitions and for a long time housed “The Bitter Years”, a

Schungfabrik, Tétange





H₂O gallery, Oberkorn

renowned collection of photographs compiled by Edward Steichen (1879-1973) for the MoMA in New York. The former Town Hall in Differdange – the **Aalt Stadhaus** – has been turned into a cultural centre and also houses a library and a music school.

More than any of the other former mining towns, Dudelange has achieved a successful balance between industrial heritage and contemporary art. What was once the factory director's house in the "Brill" district has been the **Nei Liicht Art Centre** since 1982.

Dominique Lang Art Centre, Dudelange



And in 1993, Dudelange-Ville railway station became the **Dominique Lang Art Centre**. Dominique Lang (1874-1919) was an artist from Dudelange who was inspired by the Munich School and French Impressionism. His works include the Stations of the Cross in the Church of Saint-Martin in Dudelange (which he began in 1901).

In 2016, during the biennial of industrial culture and innovation initiated by the Fondation Bassin Minier, the DKollektiv, with its "Atelier D" initiative, moved into the former locomotive maintenance facility ("Hall Fondouq") on the rolling mill site in Dudelange, initially for one month, inviting artists, architects, designers, historians and citizens to consider the past and future of industry as a topic for reflection, discussion and creation. Nowadays, **Atelier D** continues to host a wide range of temporary events, exhibitions, concerts, performances, readings, lectures and film screenings. With the develop-



Waassertuerm & Pomhouse, Dudelange

ment of the new "NeiSchmelz" district covering the entire site of the former industrial plant, Hall Fondouq is set to be demolished. As part of plans for Esch 2022 – European Capital of Culture, the "Schmelzkeís" project will provide a new home for Atelier D in the **Vestiaires-Wagonnage** (changing rooms/wagon maintenance) building, which will undergo a participatory renovation to create a space that reflects both transformation and renovation, a process that is at once endless, unfinished, undefined, always awaiting completion and never completed...

... and even kitchens

In Differdange, Villa Hadir, which dates back to 1897, was originally an administrative building, part of the steelworks that was acquired by the Hadir company after the First World War and became internationally recognised for the production of Grey beams. In 2006, Villa Hadir was carefully restored to its origi-

nal appearance. The traditional façade with light plaster and corner stones forms a striking contrast with the modern entrance featuring Corten steel.

The former **Celula** dairy in Bettembourg was the site of one of the first loft construction projects in Luxembourg in 1998. The elegant main building from the 1930s is flanked by functional secondary buildings dating from the 1950s and 1960s, around a verdant inner courtyard where dairy farmers once made their milk deliveries. The main building now houses a restaurant and lounge. The apartments have retained some original features, including ceramic tiles, transformers and switches.

The **WAX Centre** in Pétange is a former mill belonging to the Waxweiler family. In 2000, it passed into the hands of the municipality of Pétange, which converted it into a socio-cultural venue. During the renovation works, emphasis was placed on preserving the basic

structure of the building and restoring the former machines. The centre now houses a restaurant and brasserie, as well as meeting rooms for courses, workshops and exhibitions.

From Rout Lëns to Esch/Schifflange, a living heritage

In the new districts currently being created on former industrial brownfields,

many remarkable remains from the steel industry era are being given a new lease of life. On the Rout Lëns site, set to become a new neighbourhood that will house 3,000 residents, some of the industrial relics will be preserved and repurposed. According to the developer, the "TT" building, which dates back to the early days of the plant in 1871, will become a site for the production and

The Esch/Schifflange brownfield site in 2021



Rout Lëns, the blower hall



sale of local produce. The turbine hall will be converted into a space for culture and creative industries, while the blower hall will be used for sports and leisure. The "halle suspendue" will house a co-working and co-living space. In the district being developed on the Esch/Schiffflange brownfield site (the former "Metzschmelz"), a number of buildings, including a water tower, will

be preserved. **Administrative building IV** is already being used for artistic creation.

The new FerroForum association runs a variety of participatory activities to preserve and promote the rich heritage linked with local culture, industry, crafts and trades, as well as expertise in iron and steel production. It is based in the **central workshop** of the former factory, which will also be preserved.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Conservatoire de musique de la Ville d'Esch-sur-Alzette

50, rue d'Audun, L-4018 Esch-sur-Alzette,
Tel.: (+352) 54 97 25
contact@conservatoire-esch.lu,
www.conservatoire.esch.lu

Kulturfabrik

116, rue de Luxembourg, L-4221 Esch-sur-Alzette,
Tel.: (+352) 55 44 93 1
mail@kulturfabrik.lu, www.kulturfabrik.lu

Centre d'Art Dominique Lang

Gare Dudelange-Ville, L-3401 Dudelange,
Tel.: (+352) 51 61 21 292
marlene.kreins@dudelange.lu,
www.centredart-dudelange.lu

Centre d'Art Nei Liicht

25, rue Dominique Lang, L-3401 Dudelange,
Tel.: (+352) 51 61 21 292
marlene.kreins@dudelange.lu,
www.centredart-dudelange.lu

Waassertuerm & Pomhouse

1b, rue du Centenaire, L-3475 Dudelange,
Tel.: (+352) 52 24 24 1
pomhouse@cna.etat.lu, www.cna.lu,
www.steichencollections.lu

Atelier D

Site du Laminoir,
Route de Thionville, L-3475 Dudelange
<https://dkollektiv.org>, info@dkollektiv.org

H:O

Rue Ratten, Oberkorn,
Tel.: (+352) 58 771-1900
info@stadhaus.lu, www.stadhaus.lu

Aalt Stadhaus

38, avenue Charlotte, L-4530 Differdange,
Tel.: +352 58 771-1900
info@stadhaus.lu, www.stadhaus.lu

1535° Creative Hub

115, rue Émile Mark, L-4620 Differdange,
Tel.: (+352) 58 77 11 535
1535@differdange.lu

La Celula

67, route de Dudelange, L-3222 Bettembourg,
Tel.: (+352) 26 51 00 38

Schungfabrik

Cultural centre, feRRUM museum and art gallery
14, rue Pierre Schiltz, L-3786 Tétange,
Tel.: (+352) 621 378 156 or (+352) 621 215 771
hello@schungfabrik.lu, www.schungfabrik.lu

Centre WAX

2, rue d'Athus, L-4710 Pétange
commune@petange.lu, www.konschtmillen.lu

FerroForum

Workshop: former Esch/Schiffflange plant
Portail Lallange, Boulevard Aloyse Meyer,
Tel.: (+352) 621 417 628
moien@ferroforum.lu, www.ferroforum.lu



INDUSTRIAL NATURE

From Dudelange to Rodange, the landscape is characterised by a wooded “cuesta” underlain by an iron-rich, chalky substratum. After more than a century of iron ore mining in both underground tunnels and open-pit mines, nature has regained control of these sites that lay abandoned for years.

Nowadays all the sites enjoy European protection as Natura 2000 areas, and six are designated nature reserves at national level: Prënzeberg, Kiemerchen-Scheiergronn-Groussebësch, Ellergronn, Brucherberg-Lalléngerberg, Léiffërchen and Haard-Hesselsberg-Staebierg. These protected areas form important habitats for a wide variety of animal and plant species, especially orchids, with some 30 species identified in the former open-pit mines. Some species of butterflies, birds and bats have found precious refuge here.

What were once “industrial areas” have become local tourist sites that are much appreciated by the region’s residents. Many walking trails have been carved out, and themed circuits provide explanations about the particular characteristics of the landscape, drawing visitors’ attention to its industrial past, its geological structure, the mining region and the diversity of fauna and flora.

In the “Prënzeberg” nature reserve between Pétange and Niederkorn, visitors can choose between the “Prënzeberg – Giele Botter” nature trail and the “Giele Botter” geology trail. They can also follow the “Poets’ trail”, created in 2011 in connection with the International Year of Forests, in collaboration with the National Literature Centre in Mersch.

At the southern tip of Esch-sur-Alzette, the “Gaalgeberg” recreational area and the “Ellergronn” nature reserve feature a number of fascinating trails, including the “Ellergronn” and “Natura 2000” nature discovery walks. The “Déierepark” (animal park) next to the Gaalgeberg campsite is also well worth a visit (see details on p. 63).

Another “Gaalgeberg”, a former iron ore extraction site, can be found in the municipality of Sanem, between Belvaux and Oberkorn. These nature reserves created on former mines are constantly changing all year round, with each season revealing new natural wonders. In spring, flowering dogwood dabs the landscape with a sprinkling of golden yellow and woodlarks burst into melodious song as they circle high above industrial brownfields. In summer, the dry grasslands come alive with colourful orchids and a rich variety of flowers. The blazing autumn offers further marvels to walkers, while in winter, stripped bare, the contours of the land become more visible, showing the full impact of humans and their industry on the natural landscape.

On 28 October 2020, the Minett region became a Biosphere Reserve recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (the “Minett Biosphere Reserve”).

PRÄNZEBIERG – GIELE BOTTER NATURE TRAIL

The “Pränzeberg – Giele Botter” nature trail takes visitors through a disused open-pit mine. During its industrial heyday, the site, now a protected area, was a bare landscape characterised by red iron-rich earth. After the closure of the mine, a new type of living space began to take shape. Nowadays the site is characterised by its wide-ranging flora and the sheer diversity of its plant colonisation and biotopes.

The landscape can be explored from two different angles: by delving into the industrial past, which left such a mark on the region, or by observing the plant colonisation (or plant succession).

The last remaining open-pit mine, the “Schlammeberg”, closed in 1978. But the marks that it left on the landscape, the multiple tiers and alternating layers of iron ore and rocky ground, are clearly visible.

Giele Botter





The landscape of the Pränzeberg

Twelve themed information boards provide explanations for visitors. Part of the trail crosses through woodland. Apart from one narrow, steep section, well indicated in green and white, the

route (7km, 120m elevation gain) is perfectly suited to walkers of all levels – although appropriate clothing is recommended.

GIELE BOTTER GEOLOGY TRAIL

The “Giele Botter” geology trail runs along the cliffs of the former open-pit mines and offers a clear view of the different geological layers. Eleven information boards provide details about the formation, characteristics and extraction of layers of iron ore.

The trail (2.5km, 50m elevation gain) was developed in cooperation between

the National Museum of Natural History (MNHN) and several other regional and local organisations. The information boards explain the successive geological layers, the iron ore cycles and the various deposits: iron ore, ochreous limestone and micaceous marl, as well as iron oxide and fossils.

POETS' TRAIL

Set between Lamadelaine, Rodange and Fond-de-Gras, the Poets' trail is no ordinary walking route. It reveals the beauty of the landscape through poetry: walkers are presented with 12 waypoints featuring literary texts by

Luxembourgish authors on the theme of the forest. There are three starting points: the Doihl in Rodange (6.9km), rue du Titelberg in Lamadelaine (4.9km), and Fond-de-Gras (3.9km).

FROM ELLERGRONN TO GAALGEBIERG

To introduce visitors to the unique character of the natural landscape and the region's industrial legacy, the Luxembourg Nature and Forest Agency has created a number of discovery trails in the iron ore region to the south of Esch-sur-Alzette.

The starting point for these trails is the Ellergonn nature and forest centre, housed on the former Cockerill site (see p. 13).

Ellergonn nature trail

This 3km trail crosses the Ellergonn nature reserve, a listed site because of its distinctive ecological characteristics. The information boards dotted along the way provide walkers with details about the nature and history of the site. The trail takes visitors through the region's typical beech woods, past the ash and alder trees that line the streams and along several lakes, before arriving at a

Near the Eisekaul mine



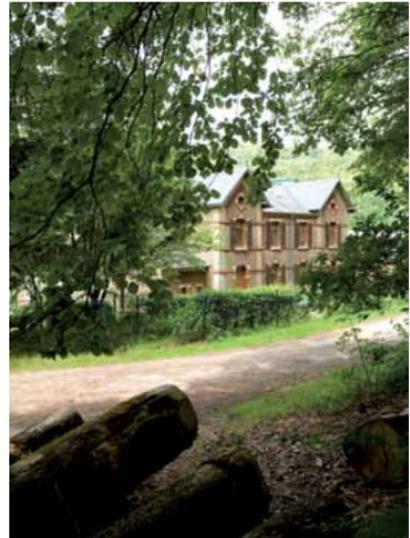
riparian forest and dry grassland. Each habitat is presented on panels which explain the geological characteristics, the environmentally respectful forest exploitation methods, and the history of the minette and limestone industry in the “Ellergronn”.

Natura 2000 trail

The Natura 2000 trail is part of the eponymous European network of trails created to preserve biological diversity throughout the European Union. Four to five hours are needed to complete the 12km trail while taking the time to observe the natural surroundings and read the information boards.

The trail is divided into three sections. “Humans and Woodland” (5km) mainly crosses through wooded areas on which humans have left their mark. The second section (4.5km) runs along the “Gaalgebierg” and focuses on the extraction of iron ore deposits in the past and today (starting point: “Gaalgebierg”).

The third and final section (2.5km) looks at plant colonisation on disused sites in the mining region. Nature is gradually gaining ground in the former open-pit mining areas (starting point: the “Bourgronn” animal shelter).



Cockerill mine, Ellergronn, Esch-sur-Alzette

HAARD NATURE RESERVE

The 594-hectare “Haard” nature reserve straddles the three municipalities of Dudelange, Kayl and Rumelange. It is prized and protected by national author-

Haard open-pit mine, Dudelange



ities because of its unique characteristics and remarkable ecological qualities. The exposed fault lines and dry grasslands make it an ideal refuge for many endangered plant and animal species, creating unique communities of outstanding biological diversity.

Walkers are spoilt for choice when it comes to paths and routes, or they may opt for one of the two nature trails (8.6km and 5.8km respectively, average difficulty). Nature lovers can explore the area at their leisure, enjoy a picnic in unique surroundings and witness the imposing legacy of the region’s mining past.



Haard open-pit mine, Dudelange

MINETT TRAIL: A PROJECT FOR ESCH 2022

In connection with Esch 2022 – European Capital of Culture, the Minett Trail, a 90km route punctuated with 11 unusual places to stay for visitors, explores the industrial landscapes of southern Luxembourg within the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. In Pétange, a railway carriage from Fond-de-Gras has been turned into overnight accommodation; in Linger, a former school has been converted; in Lasauvage, a miner's house; in Schiffflange, a former water tank has undergone a spectacular transformation; in Bettembourg, a cottage has been erected at the entrance to the Parc Merveilleux; and in Dudelange, interested visitors can dream the night away at the centre of a cooling pond! The most surprising project of all is Pumpitup!, in Esch – a transparent bubble available to rent, which can be transported by road and sleeps six people.



The former "Polverhaus" repurposed as a centre for walkers



A railway carriage converted into a holiday cottage in Fond-de-Gras



Haard nature reserve, Dudelange

TO FIND OUT MORE

Rules of behaviour

When exploring the nature reserves, make sure you stick to these basic rules to help protect the natural landscape:
https://environnement.public.lu/fr/publications/conserv_nature/Centre_d_accueil_Ellergronn2.html

Nature trails in the Prënzeberg, Ellergronn and Haard nature reserves

www.emwelt.lu
 or directly: <https://environnement.public.lu/fr/natur-eriewen/sentiers-nature.html>

Ellergronn nature and forest centre

www.emwelt.lu
 or directly:
https://environnement.public.lu/fr/natur-eriewen/centres-d_accueil/ellergronn.html

Historical and cultural discovery walk in Kayl and Tétange

http://www.kayl.lu/docs/circuit_kayl.pdf

“Sentier de la minette”

Cross-border walking and mountain-biking trail – 10km, with 5.5km in Dudelange and 4.5km in the French town of Volmerange-les-Mines.
www.dudelange.lu/fr/visiteurs/sports-loisirs/nature

Minett UNESCO Biosphere

<https://minett-biosphere.com>

Minett Walks

16 walks in the municipalities of southern Luxembourg
www.visitminett.lu

Walking tours around Esch-sur-Alzette

https://citylife.esch.lu/circuits_autopedestres



INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION TODAY

For more than a century, the steel industry in southern Luxembourg was the basis for the country's prosperity. But the steel crisis in the 1970s hit the region severely. Mines were closed and blast furnaces were shut down and replaced by electric furnaces for steel production.

The region, still densely populated, underwent an economic transformation, with the arrival of innovative new companies and a complete overhaul not only of industry but also of the architectural and urban landscape.

The creation of the University of Luxembourg on the Belval brownfield (a unique site in Europe, see p. 20) and the development of the Cité des Sciences gave new momentum to the region and turned what was once an economic area dominated by industry into a hub of learning and research. Efforts to transform and repurpose the industrial brownfields in southern Luxembourg are continuing with unique projects like Rout Lëns and Esch/Schifflange (see p. 44), demonstrating the region's vast potential. In Dudelange, the artists' collective DKollektiv and the Innovation Hub, an incubator for start-ups in the field of environmental technology, have moved into the former steel plant pending the development of the new NeiSchmelz district.

Education and research

The "Cité des Sciences, de la Recherche et de l'Innovation" on the site of the former blast furnaces (the "Terrasse des Hauts Fourneaux") in Belval is now home to the headquarters of the University of Luxembourg, two of its faculties (the Faculty of Science, Technology and Medicine and the Faculty of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences) and its three interdisciplinary centres (the Luxembourg Centre for Systems Biomedicine (LCSB), the Interdisciplinary Centre for Security, Reliability and Trust (SnT) and the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH)). It also houses a number of public and private research centres including the Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (LIST) and the Luxem-

bourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER). Other thematic research centres, laboratories and research companies such as the Luxembourg Institute of Health (LIH) and the Integrated Biobank of Luxembourg (IBBL) are also based around the Cité des Sciences, especially in the House of Biohealth, or elsewhere in the southern region, like the Laboratoire national de Santé (National Health Laboratory) in Dudelange. Incubators for innovative young companies like the Technoport (housed in the former changing rooms of steel workers in Belval and also in converted industrial buildings in Foetz) and the 1535° Creative Hub in Differdange are creating a burgeoning ecosystem of initiatives and new ideas (see the end



House of Biohealth

of this chapter). A new incubator specifically aimed at health technologies has recently been created for start-ups and spin-offs in Belval. Finally, Luxinnovation, the national innovation agency tasked with the economic promotion and management of most of the country's sector-specific clusters (including the Automotive, Cleantech, ICT, Health, Logistics, Materials, Space, Creative Industries and Wood clusters) is also located on the Terrasse des Hauts Fourneaux, as is the National Research Fund (FNR), which funds Luxembourg's ambitious public research policy. In Belval, the paths of some 5,000 students and 3,000 researchers cross on a daily basis!

Innovative companies

One in every twenty jobs in industry in Luxembourg is in R&D, placing the country in third position in Europe. Innovation has been the guiding principle in Luxembourg for more than a century, whether in its industrial plants or its business incubators. Everyday items continue to be designed, developed and produced here, from the electronics in your car's airbags (IEE) to the tablets for your dishwasher (Chemolux, Foetz). Other innovative companies include Borg

Warner (formerly Delphi Automotive Systems) in Bascharage, Emtronix (automotive electronics) in Sanem, Luxscan in Ehlerange, Wagner-Biro Luxembourg Stage Systems (electricity) in Rodange, Saint-Gobain Abrasives in Bascharage, Waterjet Cutting in Ehlerange, Avery Dennison (paper/labels) in Rodange, Corex in Differdange/Nieder Korn and Offergeld (transport logistics) in Bascharage.

A specialist field: steel

Despite the general decline in the sector, metallurgy and steel production continue to play an important role. Plants in Differdange and Esch/Belval still produce steel in electric furnaces fed with scrap iron and steel. A number of state-of-the-art metal companies have been set up or developed in the mining region: Liberty House in Dudelange (laminated aluminium/zinc), Steligenca (an ArcelorMittal subsidiary specialising in construction) and Novelis Luxembourg (aluminium sheets), also in Dudelange, ArcelorMittal Stainless Service (cutting and punching) in Rodange and ArcelorMittal (steel wires) in Bettembourg. The ArcelorMittal group is investing in decarbonisation technologies for its steel production (especially using hydrogen

Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology



technologies) and has set itself a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Economic diversification

Companies from other sectors have located to the region's many business parks, fostering economic diversification and the development of wide-ranging expertise, especially in the field of glass, with Calumite (Schiffange), Guardian Luxguard (Bascharage), Vitrum Lux (Rodange) and CRVC (Dudelange). There are also a number of companies in the areas of plastics processing: Mondo Luxembourg (Foetz), Keter (formerly Curver, Differdange), Ampacet (Dudelange), LuxPET (Bascharage), PCP Lux (Rodange), Rotomade (Ellange), Tontarelli (Bascharage) and Famaplast (Sanem); the wood industry: Kronospan (Sanem) and Leko Labs (Foetz); and recycling: Catalyst Recovery Europe (Rodange). Then there are the automotive suppliers Estra Automotive, Borg Warner (formerly Delphi Automotive Systems), Raval Europe and Katcon Global (all four in Bascharage), and aviation suppliers like Airtech Europe (Differdange). A major intermodal logistics park, Eurohub Sud, also opened in Bettembourg-Dudelange in 2017. Located on the North Sea-Mediterranean Rail Freight Corridor and at the intersection of Europe's main trunk roads, it is leveraging the new trend towards rail freight, in collaboration with road and river transport.

Other industries in southern Luxembourg

There is great diversity in the region's industrial sector, as shown in this non-exhaustive list of the major companies in southern Luxembourg: Husky Injection Molding Systems (for plastics manufacture) and John Zink Interna-

tional (production of ovens, furnaces and burners) in Dudelange, Air Liquide (wholesale distribution of liquid fuels) and Met-Lux (food packaging) in Rodange, Moog Hydrolux (hydraulics) in Bettembourg, the Brasserie Nationale (beer brewery) in Bascharage and Oerlikon Balzers Coating (coatings for mechanical parts and supply of coating materials) in Differdange.

1535° Creative Hub: a melting pot of creativity!

1535° is the melting point of steel. And it's the name that was chosen for the Creative Hub set up in 2011 at the initiative of the municipality of Differdange in former workshops on the ArcelorMittal plant to house entrepreneurs in the creative industries. The "Kesselbetrieb", "Zilleschapp" and "Schräinerei" represent a total area of 16,000m². Building A, the first to have been restored, is now home to around sixty companies (including graphics and special effects studios, architects, designers, artists and journalists). In building C, the SONOTRON – a vast 1,000m² space entirely dedicated to sound and music – contains nine rehearsal rooms and two recording studios. A new wing is currently being created in building B to host dancers, actors and videographers. The initiative has been a resounding success since its very early days – one might even say that it has become a creative saga of its own. More information: www.1535.lu.



CULTURAL LIFE IN SOUTHERN LUXEMBOURG

Just thirty years ago, the local cultural facilities in Esch were the only alternative to the offering in Luxembourg City – but since then the cultural scene has developed throughout the southern region. The cultural landscape in the Bassin Minier now has something for all tastes and all ages.

Diving into history

The region continues to be strongly influenced by a century of iron working. But the history of southern Luxembourg goes back much further, as seen in many sites, museums and buildings, including the Palaeontology Museum in Dudelange, the Titelberg Celtic oppidum (“Tételberg” in Luxembourgish) in Niederkorn and the ruins of the “Gehaansberg” mediaeval castle near Dudelange. The Rural Museum and Carriage Museum in Peppange transport visitors back to the pre-industrial era. The National Resistance Museum in Esch-sur-Alzette tells how the Luxembourg population resisted German occupation and Nazism during the Second World War. In Belvaux, the “Kultur- a

Geschichtshaus A Gadder” cultural centre also showcases documents and artefacts about the area’s pre-industrial past.

Art and photography galleries

Since the 1960s, Esch has run its own art gallery as part of the theatre. When the “Konschthal” opened in 2021, it provided the town with a spectacular new space for national and international contemporary art. Dudelange-Ville railway station has become a major art centre, as has H₂O, the Differdange art gallery housed in the former water tower in Oberkorn. The “Schlassgoart” gallery puts on exhibitions in the “Pavillon du Centenaire” (in the “Nonnewisen”), a gallery opened in 2006 to mark the centenary of Esch-sur-Alzette. The once private Ar-

Urban art can be found throughout the streets of Esch-sur-Alzette





The converted water tower in the former Dudelange plant

mand Gaasch gallery now houses the Dudelange Municipal Museum. And in Burange, three art enthusiasts recently opened Galerie 39.

The decentralisation policy pursued by the Luxembourg Ministry of Culture saw the National Audiovisual Centre (CNA) move to Dudelange in the 1980s. As well as a gallery for visual arts (the Waassertuerm & Pomhouse site comprising the water tower and pumping station of the former industrial plant), it offers various services for the public including a media library, tours and internships. Finally, also in Dudelange, the Nei Liicht Art Centre for visual arts places particular emphasis on artistic photography and video art.

From local brass bands to classical music and pop

The region loves music. Every town or village has its musical or choral associations. Brass and wind bands play at public festivals and never miss an opportunity to parade in their brightly coloured uniforms – for National Day, first communion processions, St Barbara's Day, the St Nicholas parade, carnival season and concerts in the bandstands in Dudelange, Esch-sur-Alzette, Differdange and elsewhere.

Since the theatre in Esch-sur-Alzette opened in the 1960s, with a stage and a gallery – based on the typical French-

style cultural centre –, the region's cultural offering has expanded to include classical concerts and plays in Luxembourgish, French and German. Today there is a wide-ranging programme all year round in local cultural centres, together with various festivals offering a more concentrated cultural experience.

Classical music is well represented by the Conservatoire in Esch-sur-Alzette and the International Organ Festival which takes place every year at the Church of Saint-Martin in Dudelange. Jazz, song and world music feature on the programmes of the cultural centres "opderschmelz" in Dudelange, "Schungfabrik" in Tétange and "Kulturfabrik" in Esch-sur-Alzette. The biggest names in rock and pop perform at the national centre for amplified music, the "Rockhal", which opened in 2005 in Esch/Belval at the foot of the blast furnaces and has capacity for 5,000 people.

But culture can also be found on the street, with concerts, festivals and plays taking over public spaces, often to the surprise of passers-by. The reputation of some of the region's festivals extends beyond Luxembourg's borders: the Celtic Celebration (March/April) in Dudelange,

The new Korschthal in Esch-sur-Alzette



the “Like a Jazz Machine” festival (May), also in Dudelange, and World Music Day (21 June) in most of the towns in the mining region; the inimitable Blues Express (June) in Fond-de-Gras and Lasauvage; the “Nuit des merveilles” (July) in Bettembourg; “Diffwinds” in Differdange (July); the “Festival Flamenco” (May) at the Kulturfabrik in Esch-sur-Alzette and the “Nuit de la Culture” (September), also in Esch, which offers an unconventional programme in the town’s streets and public squares.

Esch 2022

From 26 February to 22 December 2022, Esch-sur-Alzette, in cooperation with ten municipalities in southern Luxembourg and eight on the French side of the border, is the European Capital of Culture. Its slogan for this period is “Remix Culture”. Through 160 projects, exhibitions, events and initiatives, the region will be showcased as a hub of creativity and inventiveness with a European outlook. Information and a detailed programme can be found at www.esch2022.lu.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Centre culturel régional opderschmelz, Dudelange

Tel.: (+352) 51 61 21-290

culture@dudelange.lu, www.opderschmelz.lu

Centre national de l’audiovisuel (CNA), Dudelange

Tel.: (+352) 52 24 24 1

info@cna.public.lu, www.cna.public.lu

Aalt Stadhaus

Tel.: +352 58 77 1 1900

info@stadhaus.lu, www.stadhaus.lu

“Kultur- a Geschichtshaus A Gadder” cultural centre, Belvaux

Tel.: (+352) 59 09 93

www.agadder.lu

“Beim Nëssert” cultural centre, Mondercange

Tel.: (+352) 55 05 74 68

krys.pleimelding@mondercange.lu, www.mondercange.lu

Kulturfabrik cultural centre, Esch/Alzette

Tel.: (+352) 55 44 93 1

mail@kulturfabrik.lu, www.kulturfabrik.lu

Rockhal, Esch/Alzette

Tel.: (+352) 24 555 1, Tickets: (+352) 24 555 555

info@rockhal.lu, www.rockhal.lu

Escher Theater

Tel.: (+352) 54 09 16, (+352) 54 03 87

www.theatre.esch.lu

Konschthal (formerly the “Espace Lavandier”)

29-33 boulevard Prince Henri, L-4280 Esch-sur-Alzette

info@konschthal.lu

Conservatoire d’Esch

Tel.: (+352) 54 97 25

contact@conservatoire-esch.lu, www.conservatoire.esch.lu

D’Escher Infofabrik

85, rue de l’Alzette, L-4011 Esch-sur-Alzette

Tel.: (+352) 54 16 37

Visit Minett

Tel.: (+352) 27 54 59 91

info@visitminett.lu, www.visitminett.lu

Esch2022

www.esch2022.lu

TO FIND OUT MORE

Eise Minett: le sud du Luxembourg – le pays des terres rouges

Paula Almeida, Guy Hoffmann, Editions Binsfeld, 2002, ISBN 2-87954-108-5

The “Mutations” series by the Fondation Bassin Minier

The issues in the series contain detailed articles about cultural and social development in southern Luxembourg. www.fondationbassinminier.lu/mutations



SPORT AND LEISURE

Leisure opportunities in the Bassin Minier

Southern Luxembourg may be in its early days as a tourist destination, but the high population density (one of the highest in the country) has long resulted in a wide choice of leisure activities. If the weather is good, hiking and cycling, climbing, karting, skateparks and pétanque courts are all popular options. In bad weather, there's always the possibility of a shopping trip, a film or a game of bowling (or the more traditional Luxembourgish ninepins).

Children's corner

For many years now, the **Parc merveilleux in Bettembourg** has been a firm favourite with younger visitors. In their enchanted cottages deep in the forest, Snow White and Little Red Riding Hood tell their story. There are large play areas with plenty of opportunities for climbing (and sliding down again!), not to forget the mini train, the pony express and the electric cars. The park has an ever growing animal population: after the mini zoo and the Amazonian tropical animal house, there's now a Madagascan zone, with aviaries, terrariums and a greenhouse open to the public. The "Gaalge-



Parc Merveilleux, Bettembourg



Red Rock Skatepark, Schiffflange

biereg" municipal park in Esch-sur-Alzette also contains huge play areas and an animal park in a woodland setting for children of all ages. This wonderful slice of nature a mere stone's throw from the town centre originally housed only wild animals, but it has developed over time to include habitats for domestic species, including some "heritage" breeds. Chickens, swans, goats and sheep live alongside deer, mouflon, marmots and raccoons in a two-hectare space. An educational farm is home to animals including spectacular Poitou donkeys. The Bamhauscafé, perched on a platform in the trees, is the perfect place to stop for some refreshments. There are also three "Bamhaiser" – tree houses – that offer overnight accommodation in a magical treetop setting. A nocturnal fairy tale awaits... (booking required).

Adrenaline rush

Several municipalities have built **skateparks**. Slip on your helmet and your knee and elbow pads and prepare to show off your moves in Dudelange (near the factory), Soleuvre (Scheuerhof) or Pétange (Place de la Libération), at Parc Belval in Belvaux or at the Red Rock Skatepark in Schiffflange.

Have you always fancied yourself as a bit of a Tarzan? Then you'll love the **Parc Le'h Adventures** in Dudelange. The park provides the safety cable but you'll need to bring an adventurous spirit, a good head for heights and a sturdy pair of shoes as you explore the tree-tops. From the relatively gentle Bambini trail (1m) and Kids course (1.5m), the challenge grows with the Découverte (4m), Aventure (8m), Sensations (13m) and Extrêmes trails (the last at a dizzying height of 17m) – and the infamous “Tarzan jump”! Not for those of a fragile disposition!

If you're looking for an exciting experience but prefer to keep your feet on solid ground, a great option is the **karting track** in Mondcrange. It has hosted international competitions since 1974, and motorsport legends including Michael Schumacher and Jarno Trulli have taken to the 867m track. If the thrill of speed is your thing, there are 29 karts waiting and raring to go (sessions can

last 10, 20, 30, 40 or 60 minutes – Honda 270 for teenagers and adults). There are special slots just for beginners (age 8 and over, with a Honda 200).

Ozone, a trampolining park in Foetz, is also a great destination for the more adventurous at heart. It has 42 interconnected trampolines, three Ninja obstacle courses that will delight both beginners and more experienced climbers, an ultra-modern climbing wall, two foam zones, a huge airbag with a jump tower, and aeroball courts. It's the perfect way to let off steam!

Pétanque party

The clichéd image of Patis-sipping elderly Frenchmen playing boules under the blazing Mediterranean sun instantly springs to mind. Pétanque will forever be associated with holidays in the south of France. No one knows who imported the game into Luxembourg, whether it was Italian workers or our French neighbours. No matter, **pétanque** is extremely

Karting, Mondcrange





Pétanque

popular here – and it's not just a game, it's a sport. There are pétanque courts in Esch-sur-Alzette (in the "Gaalgebierg", Clair-Chêne park and Belval), Schiffflange, Kayl, Lasauvage, Dudelange, Lamadelaine and Rodange. In Belvaux-Metzerlach, the national federation has a "boulodrome" with 16 courts.

Another very popular sport is **skittles**, or **ninepins**. In the past, virtually every town and village would have several traditional taverns with a skittles court in the back. In 2012, the "Centre national du jeu de quilles" (National Skittles Centre) opened in Pétange, with more than 200 clubs training there on a regular basis. The "Schere" version of skittles is played in Luxembourg, on narrow concave wooden courts that only widen out over the final few metres. If that seems too technical for you, the **bowling** alleys in Foetz and Pétange both have twenty lanes – wider this time –, with ten pins to knock over instead of the traditional nine. Endless entertainment guaranteed for young and old alike. Good luck!

Swimming pools

In recent years, traditional swimming pools have given way to spa complexes. "Escher Schwemm – Les Bains du Parc" has been enlarged and is now a huge aquatic centre, and the pool in



Escher Schwemm – Les Bains du Parc, Esch-sur-Alzette



Cinéma Starlight, Dudelange

Schiffflange has been fully renovated. Bettembourg ("An der Schwemm") and Rodange (PiKo) have built new swimming pools with slides, saunas and solariums. In summer, there's nothing more refreshing than a dip in the open-air pools in Dudelange, Differdange-Oberkorn (Aquasud) and Rodange.

Cinemas of yesteryear and today

Luxembourgers love going to the cinema. A handful of small traditional cinemas – the Kursaal in Rumelange (which opened in 1908) and Le Paris in Bettembourg – survived the wave of closures in the 1970s.

Dudelange has had its own cinema since 2007, with two screens in the "opderschmelz" cultural centre. Esch/Belval is home to the Kinopolis Belval, a seven-screen multiplex that can seat 1,520 cinema-goers (the largest screen is 22 metres wide and can seat 550 people).

On foot and by bike

The woodland in the former mining region, along the French border, is a walkers' paradise. Southern Luxembourg has an extensive national network of hiking paths, including the "Sentier des mineurs" (miners' trail) that links Pétange, Rodange and Differdange. It takes in nearly all the interesting spots and attractions in the region and crosses the nature reserves set up in the former open-pit mines. The circular rambling routes ("circuits auto-pédestres") are a popular series of walks that are easy to reach by road or public transport (see also the "Industrial nature" chapter).

Far from residential and industrial areas, a number of cycle tracks (PC 12,

PC 8 and PC 6) wind through the region. Starting from the "Brasserie op der Gare" in Clemency, you can then join PC 6 and continue to Sanem and beyond, making your way through Belval to Esch-sur-Alzette. From there, PC 8 heads towards Rumelange via the Léiffrächen recreation area. The return trip takes you through the municipal park in Kayl-Tétange towards Noertzange, Schifflange, through Esch-sur-Alzette to Ehlerange, and via the "Zolwerknapp" hills in Sanem to Pétange. From there, you can return to the starting point in Clemency. For those who prefer not to cover the whole 60km by bicycle, there is always the possibility of taking your bike with you on the bus or train for some sections of the route.



More sporty types can head for the “Op der Haard” nature reserve which leads to Dudelange. There are regular trains from Bettembourg to Esch, which then continue on to Pétange. For people looking for a more adrenaline-fuelled experience, six mountain-bike trails cross the former mining areas – but please note that these routes are designed for people with basic technical skills in mountain biking.

The joy of fishing

For fishing enthusiasts, the Clemency lakes in Käerjeng are highly recommended. The lakes are surrounded by fields and forests and house a trout farm and a variety of local fish such as

roach and carp. The fishing lakes in the commune of Pétange (in Pétange and Lamadelaine) are also an excellent option. The Lamadelaine lakes can also serve as a starting point for a walk towards the “Prënzebiërg – Giele Botter” nature reserve.



Fishing lake in Pétange

SPORT AND LEISURE

Swimming pools

www.visitminett.lu

Bowling

Foetz and Pétange, www.bowling.lu

Cinemas

www.cinema.luxweb.com

Parc Le'h Adventures, Dudelange

203, rue du Parc, L-3542 Dudelange,

Tel.: (+352) 298 295 55

www.parclehadventures.com, www.aventure.lu

Parc Merveilleux, Bettembourg

Route de Mondorf, L-3260 Bettembourg,

Tel.: (+352) 51 10 48 1

parc@parc-merveilleux.lu, www.parc-merveilleux.lu

Karting track, Mondercange

Route de Limpach, L-3901 Mondercange,

Tel.: (+352) 37 90 01

karting@acl.lu,

www.acl.lu/fr-fr/voyages-loisirs/loisirs/karting

Centre national du jeu de quilles (National Skittles Centre)

52, rue Pierre Hamer, L-4737 Pétange,

Tel.: (+352) 40 12 12

www.flq.lu

TO FIND OUT MORE

Velos Tours dans la Région SUD

www.visitminett.lu

or PRO-SUD

6, Ellergronn, L- 4114 Esch-sur-Alzette,

Tel.: (+352) 26 17 97 1

prosud@prosud.lu, www.prosud.lu, minett-biosphere.com

Velo Tour Luxembourg

Joseph Colbach, Peter Hacker, Editions Guy Binsfeld,

ISBN 978-2-87954-204-1

Circuits auto-pédestres, 201 randonnées sélectionnées au Grand-Duché

Joseph Colbach, Peter Hacker,

ISBN 978-2-87954-185-3

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CFL

ISBN 287-9541875

Geocaching

www.geocaching.com

Maps

tourisme.geoportail.lu

Red Rock Challenge

www.rr-challenge.lu



WORKERS' TAVERNS AND STARRED RESTAURANTS

There was a time when every village had its local bar (the ubiquitous local "café"), generally near the church. This was invariably a lively meeting place with a welcoming atmosphere, where locals would gather to comment on local politics and play cards or skittles. After a Sunday walk through the fields, farmers would come to sip their "Kareli" (10cl of schnapps), or later on their beer or "Pättchen", a glass of white wine.

As the huge wave of workers arrived to work in the iron and steel industry in southern Luxembourg, these bars flourished, especially near factory entrances and along the routes that led to the mines. In 1907, the little town of Differdange alone had 107 bars! The names of these watering holes often alluded to the origins of the owner or manager: "A la Città d'Aquila", "Roma", "Café Belge", "Le Café français".

This rich seam of local culture and colour is now under threat. The closure of the factories led to the closure of many typical workers' taverns. But it is still possible to find traditional bars, where the manager knows how to serve a good draught Luxembourgish beer or a chilled glass of Moselle wine, preferably a dry Elbling. One good example is the Café Bei der Giedel, a simple wooden shack built in 1881 in the picturesque Fond-de-Gras valley. Three generations of women from the Bosseler family held the reins of the establishment, hence the name "Bei der Giedel" ("Granny's place"). The interior decoration, from the wallpaper to the bar, from the wood stove to the menu, gives the place a real 19th-century feel. The former mine workshop has been turned into a dining

space. In summer, the spacious outdoor seating area with a view over the Minett Park Fond-de-Gras is the perfect place to while away a few hours (see p. 9). The gallery entrances and the whistle and steam from the narrow-gauge "Minièresbunn" and the "Train 1900" all contribute to the impression of taking a step back in time.

Southern Luxembourg has a wide range of other culinary establishments and typical restaurants. The Fondation Bassin Minier website (www.fondation-bassinminier.lu) contains a small list; for a wider selection that suits your personal tastes see www.gastronomie.lu or www.resto.lu.

Bei der Giedel





VAL DE FENSCH: EXCEPTIONAL INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE JUST OVER THE BORDER

The unique historical situation of Val de Fensch, just a few kilometres from Luxembourg over the French border, has imbued it with unparalleled architectural and industrial heritage. The ten municipalities that form the urban community of Val de Fensch (Algrange, Fameck, Florange, Hayange, Knutange, Neufchef, Nilvange, Ranguevaux, Serémange-Erzange and Uckange) not only bear the hallmarks of powerful paternalistic ironmasters; they were also shaped by 48 years of German annexation (from 1870 to 1918), which left a rich and varied architectural legacy that never fails to take visitors by surprise. These two periods produced a wealth of architecture of immense historical and cultural interest, and the stunning forests that tower over the valley create a bucolic, nostalgic feel that further adds to the charm of this remarkable heritage.

The story of a dynasty

Jean-Martin Wendel, the first ironmaster and founder of the famous Wendel industrial dynasty, moved to Hayange in 1704. This marked the start of a great industrial saga that saw the creation of the huge steel complexes between Algrange and Uckange. From the 1850s onwards, these industrial sites rapidly replaced what was once mainly farmland, transforming the existing landscape.

The whole-scale industrialisation of Val de Fensch gave it many decades of prosperity.

Workers' districts and industrial architecture

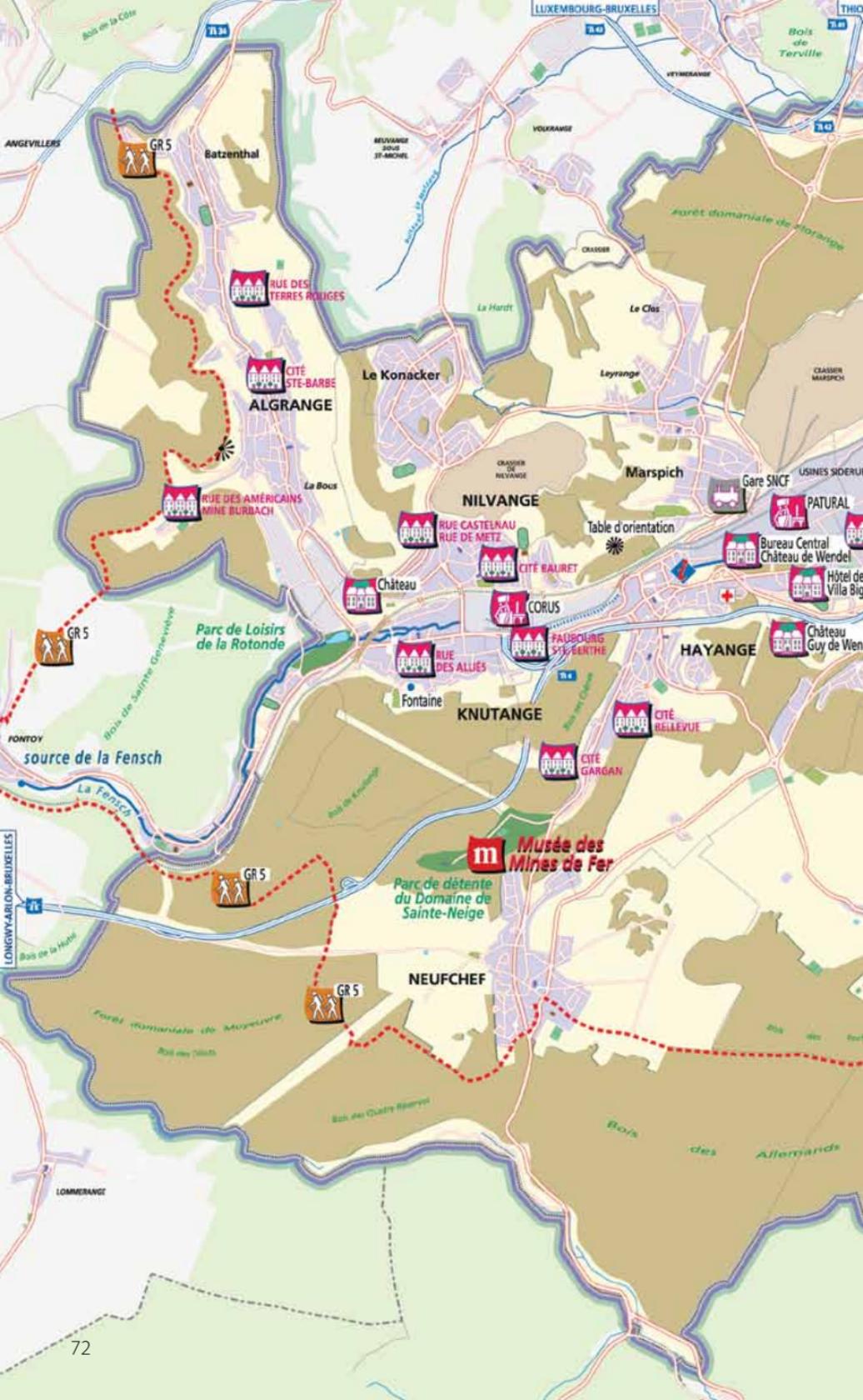
In all the towns in Val de Fensch, specific types of housing began to spring up near the industrial plants, with characteristic architecture and a distinctive urban structure. These dwellings had to house workers and managerial staff

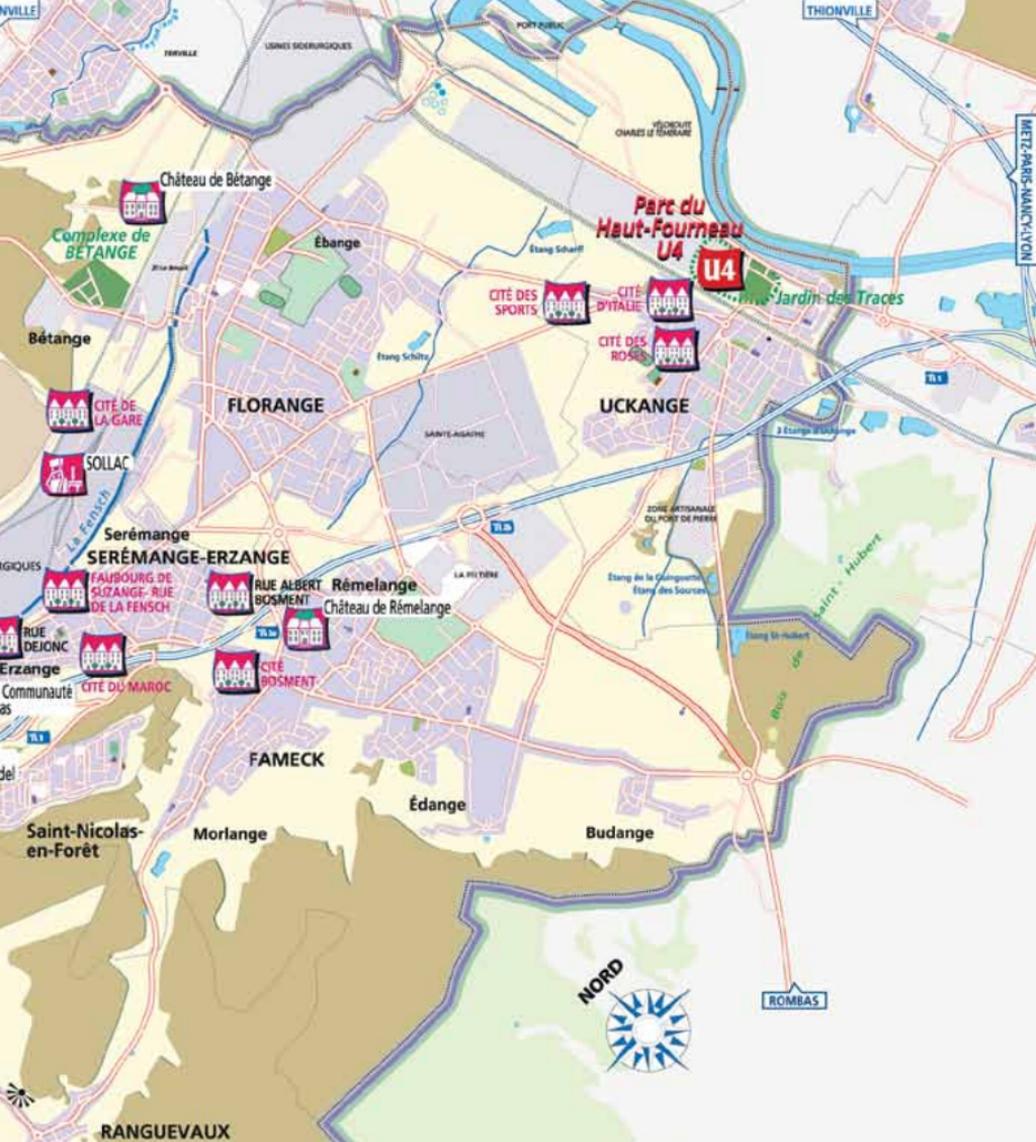


House belonging to the director of the "Hauts-fourneaux de la Paix" blast furnace, known as the "château", in Nilvange

(and their families) employed in the mines and steel industry, who arrived in huge numbers throughout the 20th century, up to the 1970s.

The diversity of residential architecture offers a fascinating glimpse of a societal structure that was dominated by the paternalism of the ironmasters. The Bosment estate, which straddles the





INDUSTRIAL MEMORY AND HERITAGE
ARCHITECTURE – HOUSING

SITE OF INTEREST

-  Industrial plant
-  Museum
-  U4 blast furnace
-  Mansion, elegant house
-  Workers' housing estate

-  Tourist information centre
-  GR 5 walking route
-  Leisure area
-  Viewpoint indicator
-  Viewpoint
-  Municipal border
-  Railway station

© michel le moigne/cartographeur
 © Serge Domini éditeur

Map taken from "Le Val de Fensch – Guide Touristique / OT Val de Fensch / Serge Domini Editeur – F57130 Vaux – 2009"



Central office dating from the late 19th century, former headquarters of the Wendel company, Hayange

municipalities of Serémange-Erzange and Fameck, is particularly representative of workers' housing estates. The same is true of the miners' housing in Hayange and Neufchef, where estates began to be constructed from 1856 onwards (the "Cité Gargan" was the first workers' district in the valley).

The German architecture dating from the 1880s to the 1910s reveals the economic prosperity afforded by the steel industry. Once accommodation had been provided for the workers, the aim was to provide the upper middle classes – managers, civil servants and

merchants – with housing and buildings that were comfortable and reflected the new lifestyles to which they were becoming accustomed. This gave rise to opulent architecture in which the Germanic Gothic and Flemish or Florentine Renaissance styles blended with German Baroque and French Classicism.

The mansions, elegant houses and administrative buildings developed on the outskirts of the workers' districts in the early 20th century are a reflection of the economic affluence enjoyed by the Fensch Valley for a century.

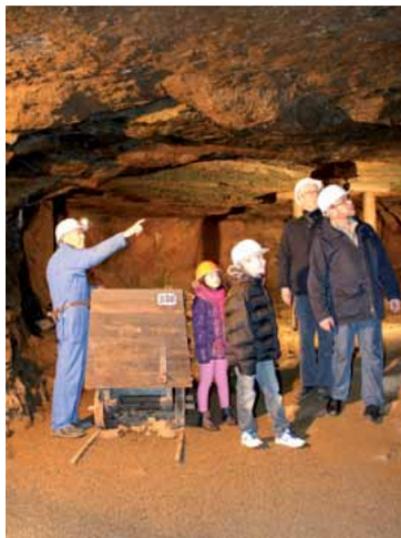
"Parc du haut-fourneau U4" in Uckange

The U4 blast furnace, a key landmark in the industrial history of the Lorraine region, was added to the additional inventory of French historical monuments in 2001, saving it from destruction. The fourth of the blast furnaces (there were as many as six in the early 20th century) is the only preserved physical legacy of the early-20th-century steel industry in France. The former steel plant covers a

"Jardin des Traces" in Uckange



Neufchef iron mine



vast 12-hectare site. It was founded in 1890 by the Stumm brothers, German industrialists, and reached its zenith between 1960 and 1980 before being closed down in 1991.

The plant made a huge contribution to the prosperity and economic growth of the Fensch Valley. Nowadays it hosts cultural events including exhibitions and concerts (for most of the year except in winter). Individual guided tours can be booked at weekends and on public holidays, and the public is free to visit the site during opening hours. The MÉCILOR association offers informative guided tours for groups of visitors. The association is composed of volunteers, mostly former steel workers, labourers and managers from the Uckange plant or one of the neighbouring sites. It was set up a few months after the last blast furnace was shut down, and it plays a major role in preserving the site.

The nearby "Jardin des Traces", a park created on the brownfield site that once housed the industrial plant, offers visi-

tors a new interpretation of the history of the steel industry in the region, with three themed spaces: the "Jardin de l'Alchimie", "Jardin des Sidérurgistes" and "Jardin des Énergies".

Neufchef iron mine

A former mining site in Neufchef has been restored by volunteers in the AMOMFERLOR association. The aim of this ecomuseum is to tell the story of the eventful industrial past that left such a deep mark on the collective memory of the valley's inhabitants. It explores the development of iron ore mining techniques by taking visitors through actual mine galleries and presents the living and working environment of the miners.

Guided tours led by former miners bring to life 150 years of history of the Lorraine minette mining region via a kilometre-long underground discovery walk.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Thionville Tourist Information Centre

31, place Anne Grommerch (place du Marché),
F-57100 Thionville,
Tel.: (+33) (0)38 25 33 31 8
tourisme@thionville.net, www.thionvilletourisme.fr

Parc du haut-fourneau U4 (U4 blast furnace site)

1, rue du jardin des Traces,
F-57270 Uckange,
Tel.: (+33) (0)38 25 73 73 7 or (+33) (0)38 28 65 59 6
parc-u4@agglo-valdefensch.fr, www.hf-u4.com/fr

Mines de fer, Neufchef (iron mine)

Domaine de Sainte-neige,
F-57700 Neufchef,
Tel.: (+33) (0)38 28 57 65 5
musee.des.mines@wanadoo.fr,
www.musee-minesdefer-lorraine.com

Tourist attractions in the Bassin Minier



Culture

- Cultural centres, theatres, concert venues
- Historical sites

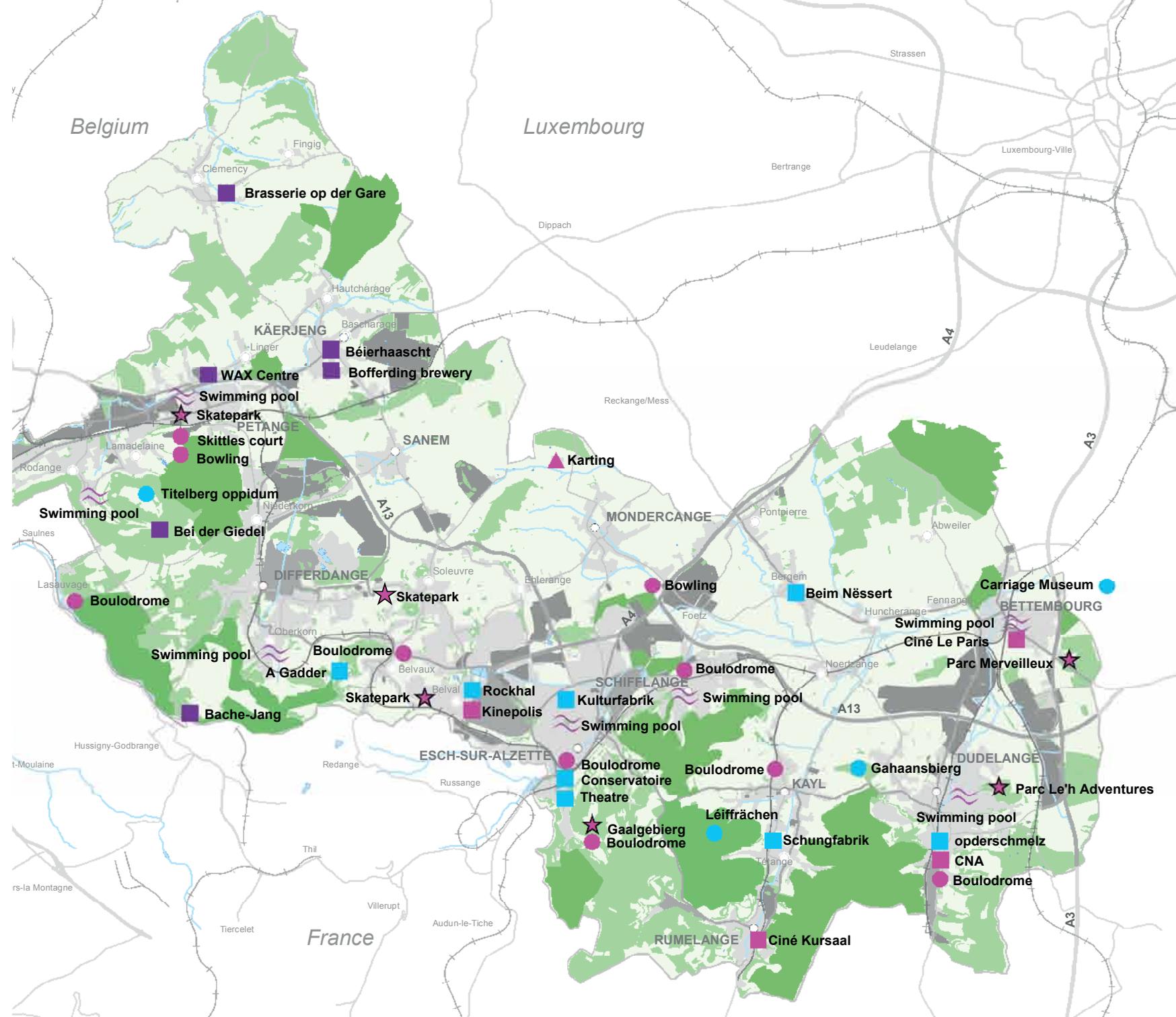
Sport and leisure

- ~ Sport and leisure
- Swimming pools
- Cinemas
- ▲ Bowling alleys and "boulodromes"
- ★ Karting
- ★ Recreational parks/skateparks

Historical bars and brasseries

- Historical bars and brasseries

- Nature reserves
- Municipalities



Production: PRO-SUD – I.Renoir / April 2021
 Background map: Luxembourg Land Registry and Topography Administration
 Source: Fondation Bassin Minier
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 Autorisation de publication du 3.07.2009.

Impressum

Publisher

Fondation Bassin Minier (2022)

with the support of PRO-SUD (www.prosud.lu)

Photos

Atelier d'architecture et de Design Jim Cledes (40/1), Centre de documentation sur les Migrations Humaines (Dudelange) (17), CNA (Romain Girtgen) (65/3), Commune de Kayl (15), Commune de Pétange (37), Commune de Saulnes (6), Fonds Belval (18, 20), Patrick Galbats (28, 34, 35, 36, 41/1, 42/2, 51/1, 62, 65/1, 68), Emile Hengen (12/1, 44, 58, 59, 60/2), HSA-Heisbourg + Strotz Architectes (52/2), Jardin des Traces Uckange (74/2), Gilles Kayser (8, 19, 22/2), 24, 29/1, 30/1, 39, 40/2, 41/2, 46, 49, 54, 56/1, 67), Mine de fer de Neufchef (74/3), Paulo Martins (71), Minett Park Fond-de-Gras (Christophe Weber) (9), Parc Merveilleux Bettembourg (63/1), Jean-Marie Reding (70, 74/1), Cédric Reitz (29/2, 31), Jean Reitz (10, 11/2, 16, 27, 30/2, 32, 33, 34/2, 34/3, 36/2, 39, 51, 52, 64, 69), Jeff Rosseljong (11/1, 12/1, 13/2), T.C. Schintgen (65/2), Jürgen Stoldt (50), Timothy Schulz (63/2), Teisen-Giesler Architectes (52/3), Ville de Differdange (Service culturel) (14, 42/1), Ville de Dudelange (Service Communication) (43, 53), Visit Minett (22/1, 60/1)

Texts

Fondation Bassin Minier. Many thanks to the associations and institutions that were helpful in updating this guide.

Layout

Andrea Beck

Printing

Imprimerie Heintz, L-4702 Pétange

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Industrial tourism in southern Luxembourg

This guide will help anyone interested in industrial culture, as well as younger generations who did not live through the industrial era, to explore the legacy left by industrialisation and iron ore processing in southern Luxembourg.

It describes the most striking signs of the “Minett” region’s industrial history, from industrial museums to workers’ districts and buildings that epitomise the ambition to repurpose industrial architecture. One chapter focuses particularly on Esch/Belval, now home to the University of Luxembourg and a hub for research and innovation, and the blast furnaces that have been preserved there. Special attention is also given to the spectacular way in which nature has reclaimed its rights over the industrial brownfields and open-pit mines. Finally, our voyage of discovery takes us to today’s Luxembourg and the many innovative companies now based in the region. The guide concludes with some practical tips on the cultural and leisure possibilities in the southern region and takes a short hop over to neighbouring France.

With a series of maps and a section containing practical information at the end of each chapter, it is an excellent introduction to industrial culture in southern Luxembourg.