



"Pasteur would have liked that...."

coordinated by Pascale Cossart

## The Summer house of Louis Pasteur in Arbois (Jura): a large project of restoration and extension

### Summary

Louis Pasteur while working in Paris in the Ecole Normale Supérieure and then in the Pasteur Institute was spending every Summer in Jura in the house where he had grown up until he was 18. In this house, which now belongs to the French Académie des Sciences, one finds the Pasteur's only remaining laboratory. In 2022, an important project of restoration and extension started with the creation of a new space dedicated to modern microbiology and will be achieved at the end of 2024. The "Maison de Louis Pasteur" is open to the public.

### The house

Louis Pasteur's house in Arbois (Jura) is one of France's rare examples of 19th century bourgeois architecture. This house on the banks of the Cuisance river was originally a tannery that Louis Pasteur's parents - his father was a tanner - bought in 1830, when Louis Pasteur was eight years old. Louis Pasteur was born in 1822 in Dole but then spent his entire childhood in this house in Arbois where he studied until the age of 17, when he left for Besançon to prepare his baccalauréat. It was also in Arbois that, from the age of 13, he showed himself to be an artist, drawing remarkable pastels of people around him, starting with his mother. Some of his paintings are on display in this house.



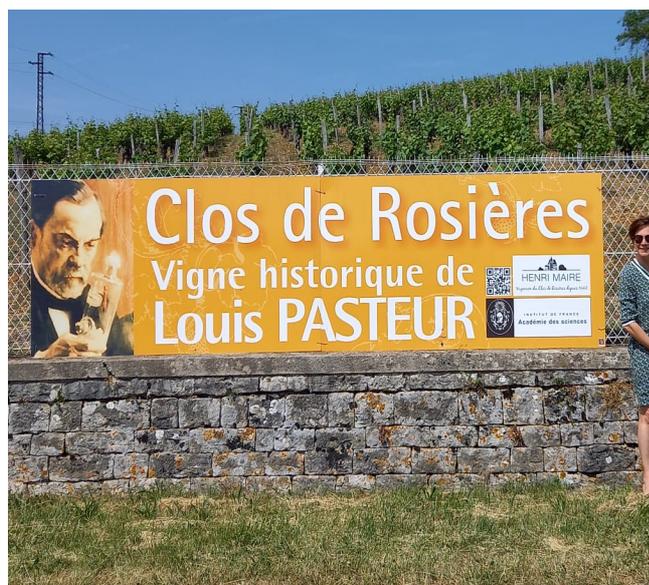
(Photo, Maison de Louis Pasteur, Arbois)

Later, while working in Paris, first at the Ecole Normale and then at the Pasteur Institute, he returned regularly to Arbois to rest and be with his family. After the death of his parents, his mother in 1848 and his father in 1865, he made the house his second home, coming here every summer. In 1879, he bought the next door house which enabled him to enlarge his house and, above all, to build a laboratory on the first floor and a bathroom on the ground floor, in which he installed a bathtub.

Louis Pasteur's house was constantly visited by his family, close friends and colleagues. Pasteur and his family used to stay in Arbois until late September or mid-October, to avoid missing the grape harvest and hunting season.

Louis Pasteur was coming to Arbois to rest and enjoy himself, but above all to work in peace. It was there that he carried out some of the work that led him to disprove the existence of spontaneous generation. He also demonstrated that the fermentation of grape juice to produce wine is due to yeasts that settle on the grapes, work that he carried out in a small forty-acre vineyard that he acquired a few kilometres from Arbois, in Montigny-les-Arsures.

It was also in Arbois that, with the help of the region's winegrowers, Louis Pasteur tackled the problem of wine diseases and invented the process now known as "Pasteurization". During the summer of 1885, it was in this house that every day he received a letter from the young Joseph Meister, whom he had vaccinated against rabies at the beginning of July. Pasteur also enjoyed spending long periods in the garden, which was planted and tended with great care by his wife, Marie Pasteur.



(Photo, Maison de Louis Pasteur, Arbois)

In 1935, Louis Pasteur Vallery-Radot, Louis Pasteur's grandson, left the house, garden and vineyard to the Société des Amis de Pasteur in Dole, which in 1991 bequeathed them to the Académie des Sciences. The house, - listed as a historic monument in 1937 - was then fully restored and opened to visitors. It was named Maison des Illustres by the French Ministry of Culture in 2012.



(Photo, Maison de Louis Pasteur, Arbois)

To mark the bicentenary of the great scientist's birth in 2022, a restoration and extension project under the direction of Gilles Fraisse, architecte du patrimoine DSA-DPLG at EPUR'Archi, Chalons sur Saône was launched in 2020. It will be completed by the end of 2024 (see below).

### **The house's objects and collections, the laboratory**

The "Maison de Louis Pasteur " in Arbois is a bourgeois house that has remained almost intact. It is decorated as it was in Pasteur's day: the same wallpaper, the same curtains, the same bedspreads, the same furniture, the same "lino" under the dining room table. It still houses the billiard table, crockery, beds and some of Pasteur's pastels. Unusual items include a dumbwaiter, Alsatian ceramic stoves and a bathtub, unfortunately hidden behind a partition in the ground-floor room that has become the "ticket office".

The laboratory on the first floor is unique in that it is Pasteur's only surviving laboratory. It still contains many swan-neck flasks and several series of tubes and flasks labelled in Pasteur's handwriting. It also houses a room, which Pasteur maintained at the right temperature thanks to a system of pipes connected to a water heating system located on the ground floor next to the bath.



(Photo, Maison de Louis Pasteur, Arbois)

The house also has a small library where Pasteur carried out his bibliography and wrote manuscripts. The display cabinets contain scientific articles including some that had been translated for Pasteur and annotated.

### **The restoration and extension project**

The aim of the project was to restore completely the house, which had not been taken care of since 1993, to open the second floor containing the library to visitors, and make the entire house accessible to people with reduced mobility thanks to an elevator placed in the next door house that the Académie des Sciences has been able to acquire.



(Photo,Gil Fraysse)

The garden has also been completely restructured and replanted as it was when Pasteur was walking there. The acquisition of the house located next door to the house of Louis Pasteur will allow to create a new museal space in which visitors will be introduced to the Microbiology of the 21st century and in particular to the role of microbes in human and animal health and for the environment.



(Photo,Pascale Cossart)

The opening ceremony for the fully renovated “**Maison de Louis Pasteur et des microbes** » will take place in May 2025

## Visits

The “Maison de Louis Pasteur” in Arbois is open to the public during the restoration.

<https://www.terredelouispasteur.fr/la-maison-de-louis-pasteur-a-arbois/>

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