

CLOS DES SENS

Table & Chambres
☆☆☆☆

PERMACULTURE GARDEN WITH AN ECO-FRIENDLY APPROACH
WHEN « HAUTE CUISINE » MAKES PERFECT SENSE



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HOTEL*** GASTRONOMIC RESTAURANT*****
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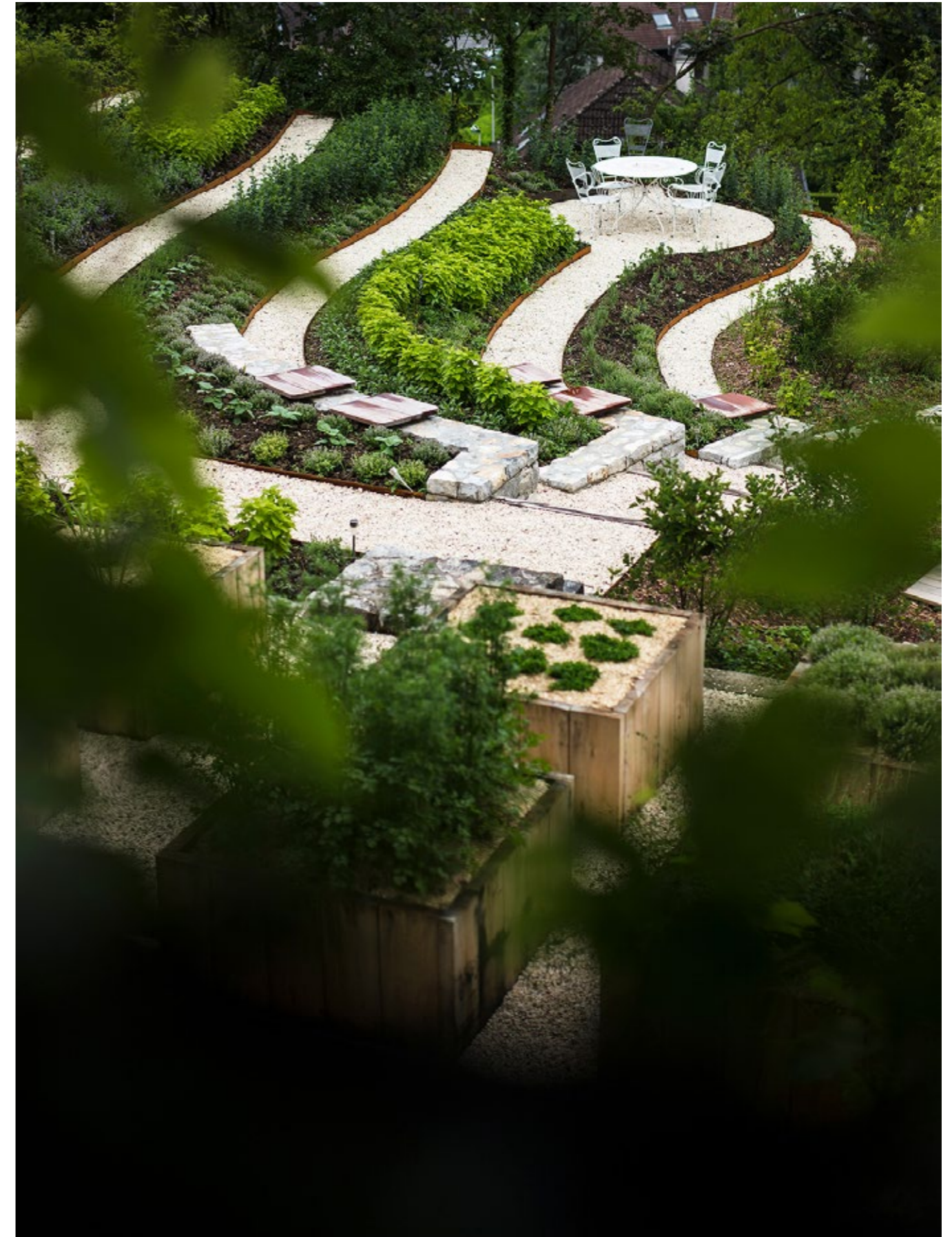
PERMACULTURE GARDEN WITH AN ECO-FRIENDLY APPROACH: WHEN « HAUTE CUISINE » MAKES PERFECT SENSE

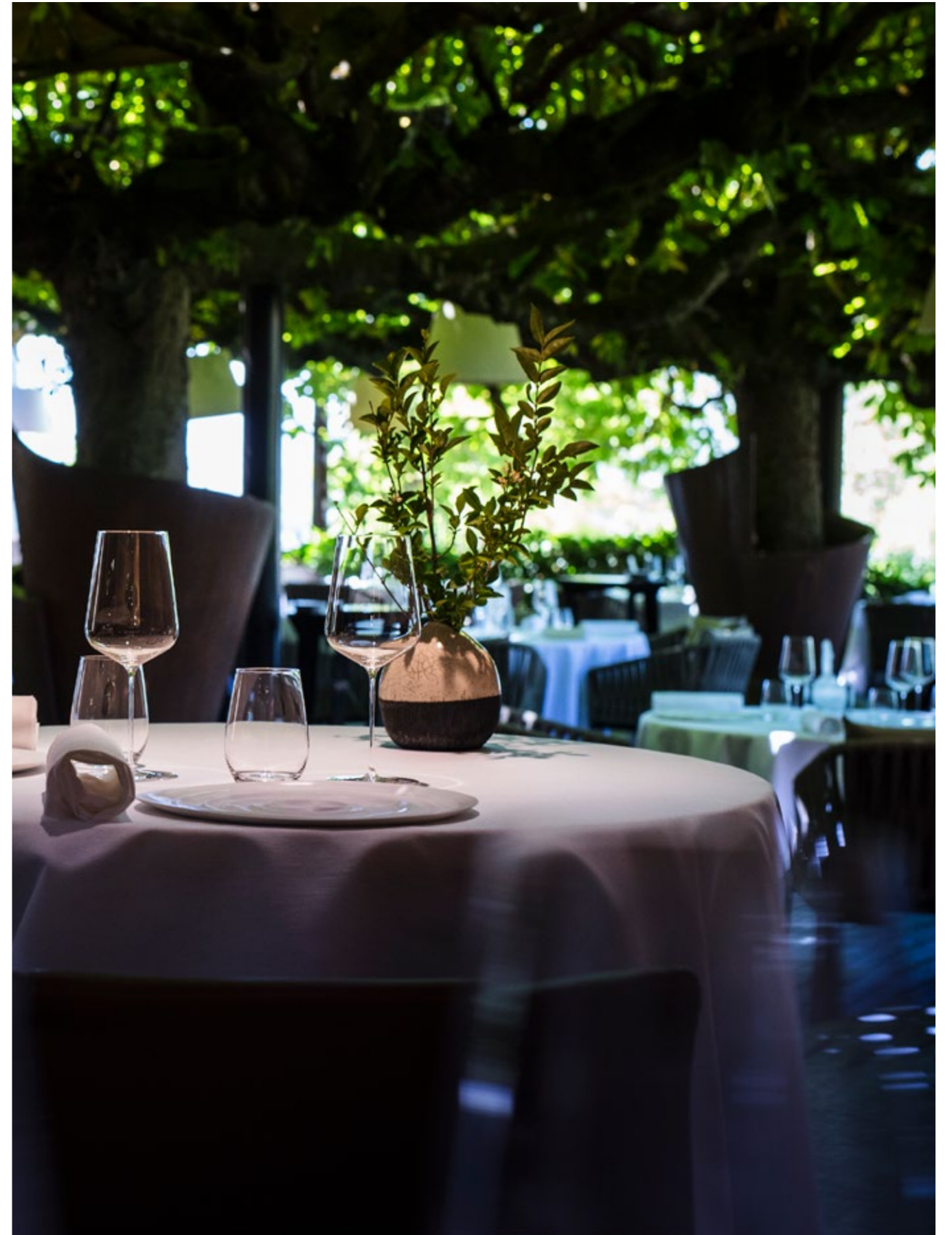
Acolytes of long walks in the Bauges mountain range, Laurent and Martine Petit have always been lovers of nature and the great outdoors. Martine will not deny her origins as a gardener's daughter, nor Laurent his childhood memories of the wild Haute Marne region of France.

Over the years, Laurent Petit has continued to have an increasingly strong relationship with these natural elements, terroirs and producers of flavours. These are the bases of his cuisine. His travels to Japan have instilled in him a veneration of the best products. Giving them a magical interpretation, an intimate knowledge of their life cycle has become, for him, more and more indispensable.

About fifteen years ago, Laurent Petit created his first herb garden. In 2015, he focused on creating an entirely lacustrine and plant orientated cuisine, and almost 100% locavore. Far from being a concept, this direction has become an evidence: to transmit his love of the place he chose in 1992, and to interpret and embody this territory full of unsuspected wealth. The producers of flavours are now within a day's walk from the Clos des Sens (from 0 to 50 km maximum).

This summer 2018, a decisive direction has been taken, creating a new page for Le Clos des Sens: the House is now in the heart of a **wonderful 1500 m² permaculture garden with 200 varieties. A single credo: to give meaning to gastronomy.**





THE PHILOSOPHY OF PERMACULTURE

Permaculture is a word derived from the contraction of the English expression «permanent agriculture», used since the beginning of the 20th century. It covers all the ways of cultivating the land while preserving its fertility.

It is an ethic, a philosophy centred on the environment, human beings and equitable sharing within the society. It is a mode of action, favouring biodiversity. It aims to create an abundant and complex natural harmony. It is inspired by ecology, tradition, and taking into account the geographical and climatic context. It aims for sustainable, resilient, energy-saving and respectful living, and reciprocal relationships. It promotes wild nature. By ensuring that each element is in its proper place, with good interactions around it, it greatly limits wastage and energy loss.

This natural agriculture is a spiritual path (Tao) in its own right. It is based on «non-action», which can be related to Mu's philosophy. It has four basic principles: no ploughing, no fertilizer, no weeding and no pesticides.





THE GARDEN, AS A CULMINATION FOR LE CLOS DES SENS

The first idea is that almost all the plants making up Laurent Petit's cuisine are represented in the Clos des Sens' garden. And that the whole team (kitchen, dining room and hotel) appropriates this approach of permaculture, develops and sharpens their 5 senses, and lives to the rhythm of nature. From sowing and planting the seeds, to accompanying the life of each plant, helping and watching them grow, overlooking and feeling them. Harvesting at maturity to enjoy them with the maximum of sensory universes.

In the summer, the briefing before each meal is done in the garden, so that everyone is immersed in the progress of the natural cycle.

Just before each lunch or dinner, the cooks pick the vegetables, fruits, plants, herbs or flowers: they will not experience any violent temperature break, such as cold storage as they are immediately cooked, presented and enjoyed by the guests. And this **ultimate freshness** offers a **symphony of flavours**, a liveliness and an incomparable gustatory precision.

In the summer, Le Clos des Sens becomes « vegetable » self-sufficient. With the fish provided by Bernard Curt in Duingt, Laurent Petit is able to offer a 100% lacustrine and plant menu, with 100% coming from the territory of Lake Annecy. And he can even offer a vegetarian menu entirely made from products from his own garden.

Finally, **being a cook here takes on a new dimension as they also have to be gardeners**. This is how Laurent Petit considers the future of his profession. Being closer to the land, to the living, to the growing product, to interpret and to marry finely, respectfully and lovingly.

Perhaps because he has no children, Laurent Petit projects himself even more into his culinary creations, whose founding act is the interpretation of nature itself. Today, at the age of 55, he feels a compelling need to create a heritage, to share his approach and his vision of life. The age of wisdom, a form of serene maturity.

The momentum of nature, its energy, its strength, but also its fragility move him to the depths of his being. Since 2015, the Chef is constantly on the lookout for the truth. He paints with his sensitivity, and with full attention, the immense landscape which radiates around the Clos des Sens: a vibrating spectacle of the natural elements of the cosmos to the microcosm, of the power of the mountains and the waves, with the evanescent beauty and hidden from the Agastache. The observation of the latter gave him the idea for a new dessert dedicated to Agastache and seasoned with raspberries. A subtle and airy delicacy.

In search of a kind of conjunction of planets, the culinary intention becomes more and more obvious, apparently simple yet with a dizzy impression of fluidity.





A GARDEN FULL OF 200 WONDERS

The Clos des Sens garden flourishes over 1500 m², overlooking Lake Annecy and facing the Bauges mountain range. Even with the town not far, it is a haven of peace, with a feeling that time is suspended. The surrounding nature rustles with the sound of birds singing. Seeing the sun go down slowly, with a mysterious and nuanced light, is a pure moment of happiness. Some days, especially from May to October, this show of nature is just incredible.

Running alongside the swimming pool and the restaurant's terrace, the 500m² herb garden offers a variety of 40 herbs. And, on the lower part of the land, there are 1000m² with 160 varieties of fruit, vegetables, plants (including some rural) and flowers (often edible).

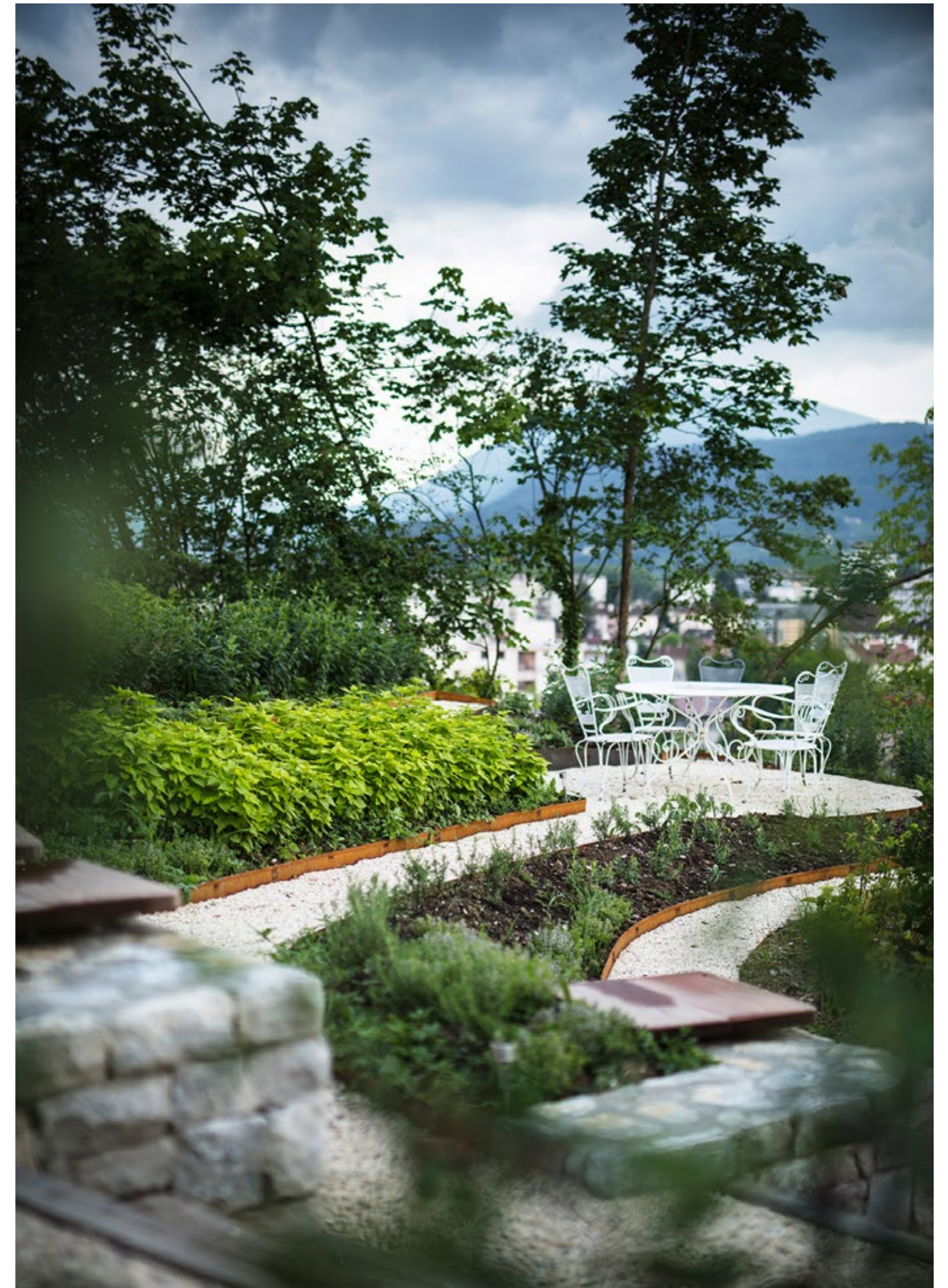
The garden is made up of 4 successive parts, which guests can browse at their leisure. Paths have been created to make this a real visit. A visit punctuated by the explanations of the names of the various plantations, but also lined with benches, seating, and even a table and chairs overlooking the garden encouraging discovery, contemplation and rest. A comfortable hammock invites you to relax and dream.

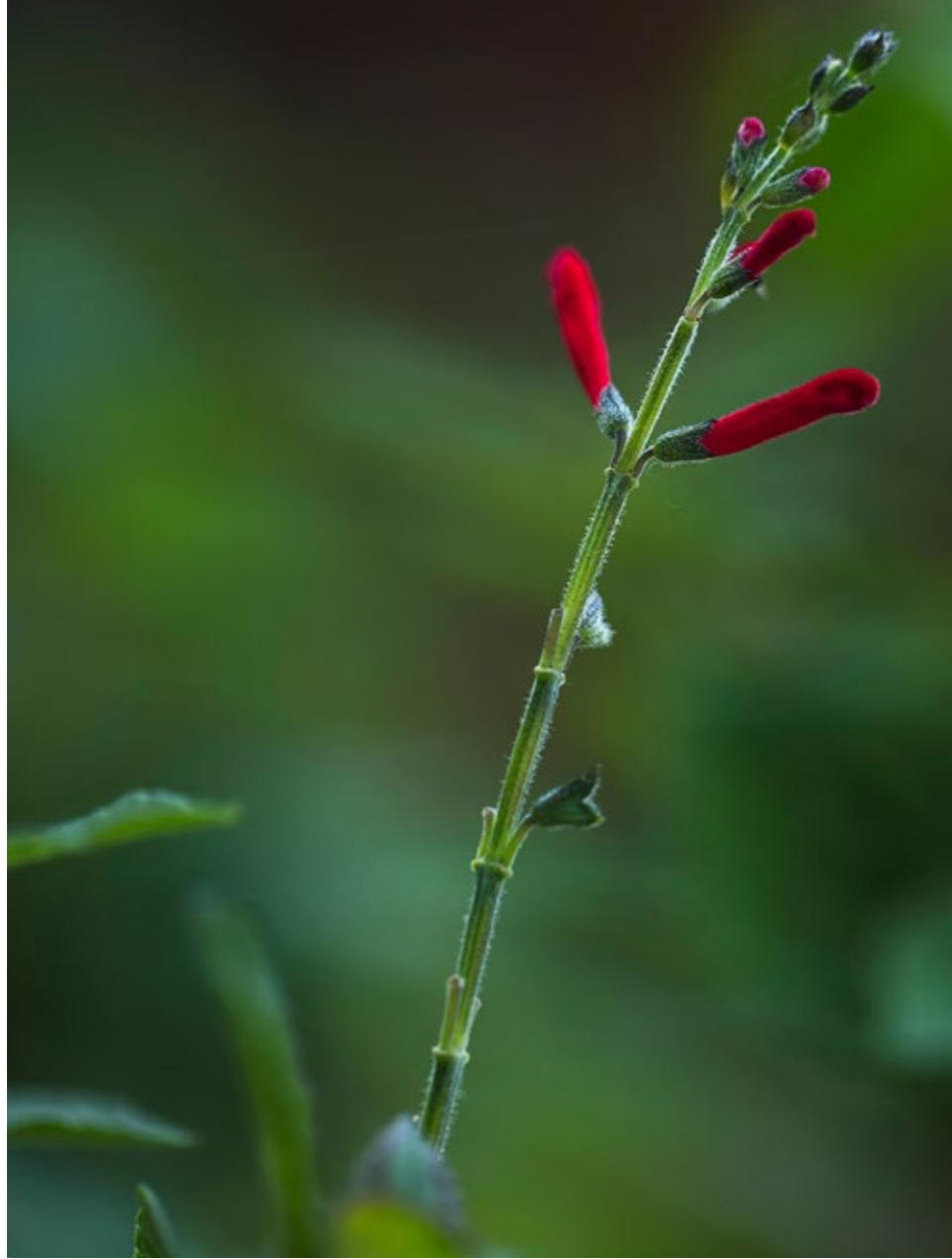
The restaurant's terrace overlooks the **Corti** (garden in local patois language) called «**Carré des Aromates**». 16 square raised beds, raised not only to facilitate harvest, but also to protect them from animals (such as voracious snails or slugs), and also to contain the excessive natural growth of certain plants (cockerel mint). Dozens of aromatic, medicinal (tansy) and condiment plants are cultivated. Such as lemon balm, Madagascar lemongrass, burnet, small leaved oregano, Chinese chives, chives with white flowers, tansy, oyster plant (bluish with an iodized taste), chocolate mint, lovage, bronze fennel, parsley, coriander, basil ...

An alley, with a Japanese path created using Savoyard blue stone, connects the Corti to the swimming pool and to the South-West facing «**Aromatic Garden**». The gravel paths form aromatic lined waves, creating an aesthetic emotion. 3 different sorts of Sichuan peppers, agastache, rosemary, thyme serpollet, pineapple sage, citrus sage, tartar tarragon, savory, oregano, nepetas are some of its treasures.

The Route des Mellifères with its 45 steps set in groups of 3, provides the transition to access the vegetable garden, located 10m below. It is lined with red and blackberries (red currants, black currants), lilacs, flowering apple trees, castor beans (a plant that repels rodents), elderberries, honey locust. Pre-existing tree hedges (maple, walnut, hazel, apple, plum, dogwood) act as bird sanctuaries and have been complemented by new plantations especially in the lower part.

The path descends to a square arranged as «**My Father's Garden**»: this is the fruit and vegetable garden dreamed up and created by Laurent and Martine Petit. South facing and set over 1000m², it has smooth, regular slopes, designed in the form of mounds.





A few foreign plants find refuge here, including 4 Sichuan peppers from America, Korea and China, Asiminas from North America.

Fruit trees include apricot, fig, apple and plum. Not forgetting strawberries, and even kiwis.

Almost all of Laurent Petit's favourite vegetables are present: fennel, turnips, green cabbage, chard ribs, celery, beetroot, zucchini, leeks, carrots, beans, potatoes, pumpkin, salsify, black, pink and white radish, sunflower, Indian and Japanese mustards, Russian gherkins, tomatoes (beef tomatoes, Cornue of the Andes), Roman lettuce, wild rocket, onions ... Only chicory is missing because it has to be blanched in the cellar.

The Chef's vocation is to cultivate the simplest, most basic vegetables and then to magnify them. Products which guests know well but which they rediscover at Clos des Sens and enjoy as never before.

This garden, as remarkable as it is, does not prevent close relationships being made with with a whole selection of **local producers**, who have forward-looking and special approaches. Examples include the Courtois family in Sauvigny with their superb Beluga lentils, and Rudy Lauberton in Montmélian with his chicory, unmatched in the region.

At the far end of the vegetable garden a **féra smokehouse** has been built to smoke the barely formed féra eggs caught in the autumn, so crisp! But also the eggs harvested for the Christmas festivities during the «exceptional» fishing period. Then those not yet hatched, which are much bigger and are ripe when the fishing season re-opens. This approach highlights the vegetative cycle of wild fish. These féra eggs produce an extraordinary condiment, a seasoning which gives a lot of depth to Laurent Petit's lacustre cuisine. And the féra fillets, also smoked, become the backbone of the green cabbage millefeuille tart, one of the great dishes created in 2018, in which the whole history of the house unfolds. A fully mature cabbage, of course, just picked from the garden.



Christophe Courtois



Rudy Lauberton



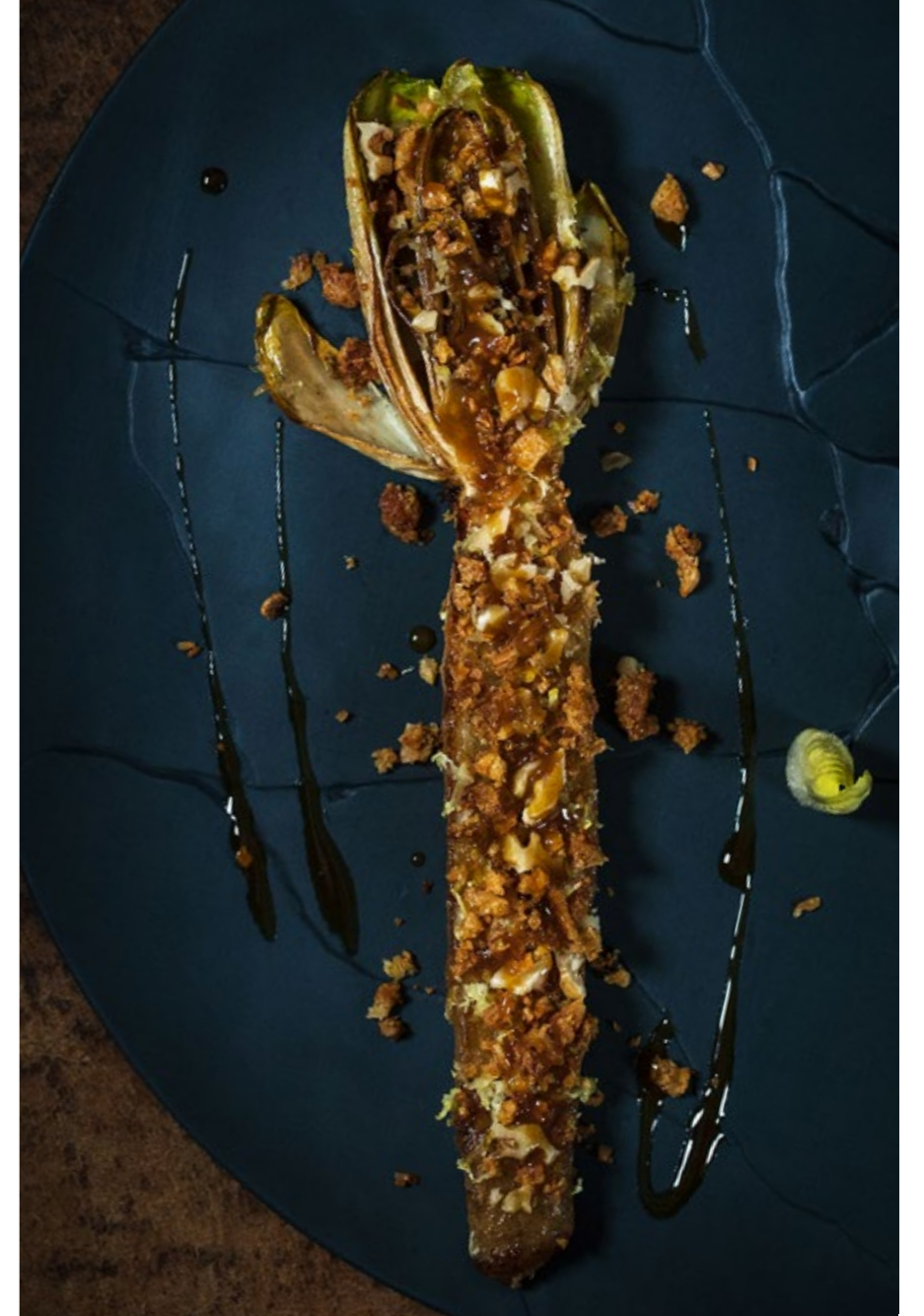
Millefeuille tart, green cabbage, smoked féra



Chicory by Rudy Lauberton



Chicory by Aurélie Abadie



Chicory by Laurent Petit



GARDEN DESIGN AND ITS DAY TO DAY LIFE

With the help of the landscape architect, Julien Joly from Annecy, Laurent Petit imagined this relaxing and quiet place as a balanced entity. Substantial spatial work was undertaken following the energy felt on the site. The garden was created and is maintained daily by the Clos des Sens staff with the landscape - gardener Lionel Perron.

As well as taking into account the energy of the site, the garden design also took into account the soil texture, geology, slope (steep in places), its exposure, climate (cold winter, hot summer), the wind, and the vegetation already in place at the start of the project, which has been preserved as much as possible. Everything was thought out to avoid unnecessary movement and work, and to encourage the natural action of nature. A real organic approach, even more demanding with the addition of permaculture, but without seeking, at the moment, any accreditation. Only species adapted to the site have been used.

All waste is recycled and turned into resources. Organic waste from the kitchen is reused, after being dehydrated. This provides remarkable mulching and soil improver.

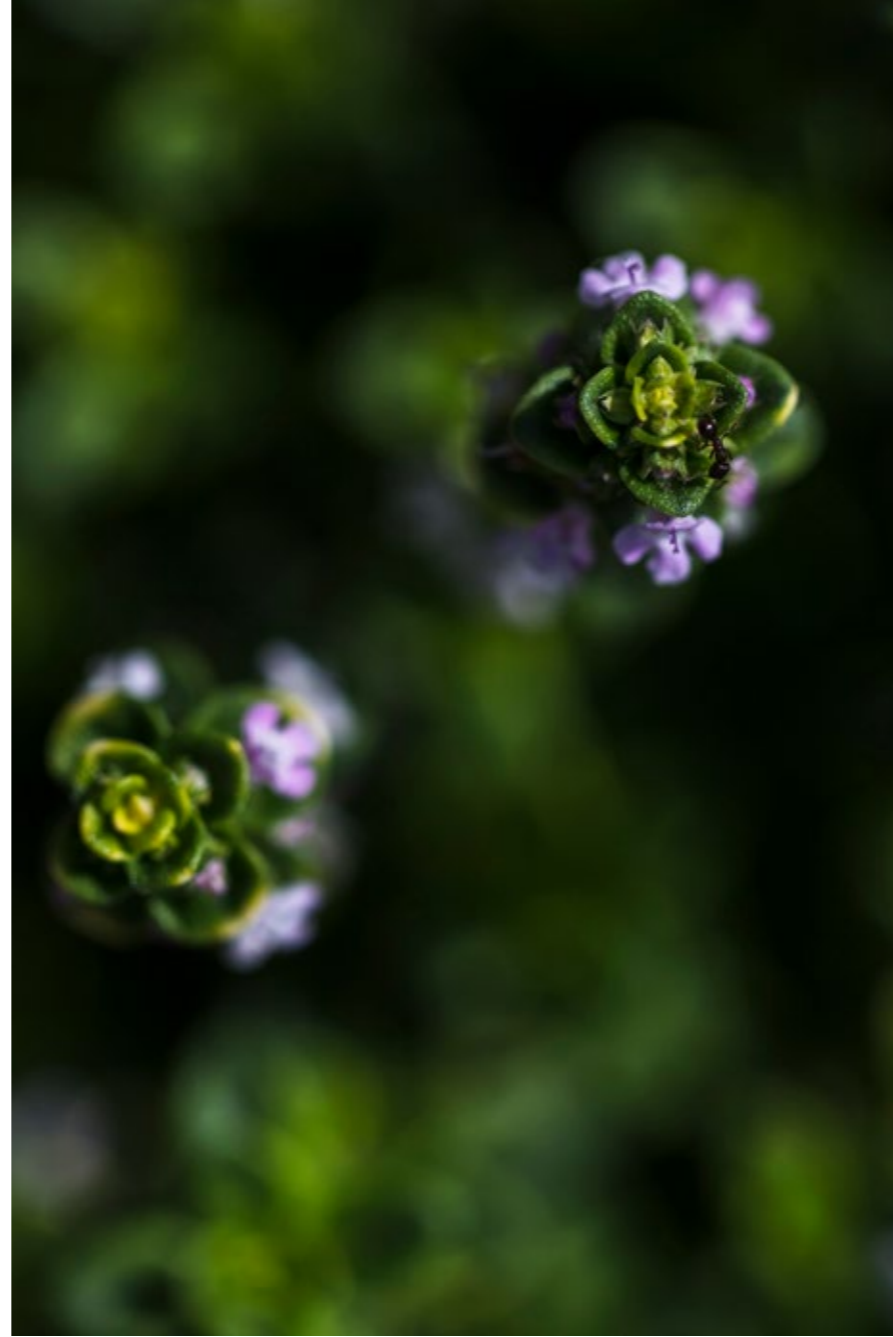
The idea behind permaculture, developed at Clos des Sens, is to create a local self-fueling cycle, which produces the maximum from its inputs and recycles its «waste» on site to reconstitute its soil:

- rainwater is collected and stored to be used for watering, which, itself is economised by protecting the land using mulching and the spatial organisation of the garden.
- the trees and grass produce this mulching. They also attract and shelter an associated fauna, essential to the proper functioning of the garden.
- weeds and cuttings are also used for mulching or composting.
- the garden is designed to associate the elements as intelligently as possible, so that they communicate with each other and protect and enrich each other (strawberries associated with leeks).
- the vegetation is designed and managed to promote pollination.
- the slope, topography and energy fields are used to make the most of the site (creation of mounds, walkways).





Mushroom salad



Herb salad

ECO-FRIENDLY APPROACH

Laurent Petit observes that his generation «has too often walked on their head», with a model of meaningless over-consumption. His credo: to be in total coherence with himself and with his adopted region.

Everything at Clos des Sens has been thought out to create an intelligent integration into the site : a respect for nature, for a strong and almost unique customer experience. The increasingly specific locavore approach and the development of the permaculture garden are considerable advances. Only short circuits and seasonal products, so little transport and minimum carbon footprint.

All the components of the products are used. And any waste is dehydrated to form a remarkable compost.

For travelling around, Le Clos des Sens owns two electric vehicles. A simple car to go to the market and buy the local products and a Tesla to welcome and accompany guests. Guest also have use of 2 electric bikes.

As for the architecture, the decorative elements, the furniture and the art of the table, they emanate from local materials, resources and know-how.

In this way Laurent Petit intends to contribute to building a responsible world, respectful not only of the environment but also of human beings, highlighting their richness and often hidden beauty. Sharing the quintessence of the territory to reveal its essence.





PRACTICAL INFORMATION AND TARIFFS

SITUATION

On the heights of Annecy-le-Vieux (20 160 inhabitants), 3 km from the lake and old town of Annecy. 30 minutes from the Aravis mountain resorts (La Clusaz, le Grand Bornand). 30 minutes from Geneva international airport.

***** Relais & Châteaux **HOTEL**

11 bedrooms including 4 suites : spacious(28 to 70 m²), all equipped with balnéo baths at the foot of the bed and a balcony or terrace. 9 bedrooms have a graphic or wood burning fireplace. 2 bedrooms can sleep up to 4 people. 1 bedroom is suitable for guests with reduced mobility.

Night from 230 € for 2 people, special offers during the week.

« Alternative » breakfast served in the dining room, 25 € or with room service, 30 €.

GASTRONOMIC RESTAURANT *** (3 Michelin stars)

Member of the « Great Tables in the world ».

A dining room with a capacity of 30 covers, a further room that can be used as a private dining room. A shady terrace of the same size with views of Annecy and the lake.

«Discovery» menu in the evening with 5, 8 or 10 flavours and priced respectively 128, 168 and 198 € per person (excluding drinks).

«PETIT» lunch menu at lunchtime during the week at a price of 78 € (excluding drinks).

CELLAR

1500 references, of which 500 are ageing and 200 are from the Alps. Wines by the glass. Menus are offered with food-drink formulae.

CUISINE

Focussed on regional products, Laurent Petit's lakeside cuisine offers a theme «Lakeside & Vegetable»: fish from the 3 large Savoyard lakes (Geneva, Annecy, Bourget) and vegetables from the Albanais fruit and vegetable farmers, sublimated by the 40 herbs from his garden.

TEAM

32 people of whom 6 are hotel staff and 26 restaurant staff (15 in the kitchen, 11 in the dining room).

CLIENTELE

50% French, 50% from abroad of which 90% are Swiss.

OPENING DATES

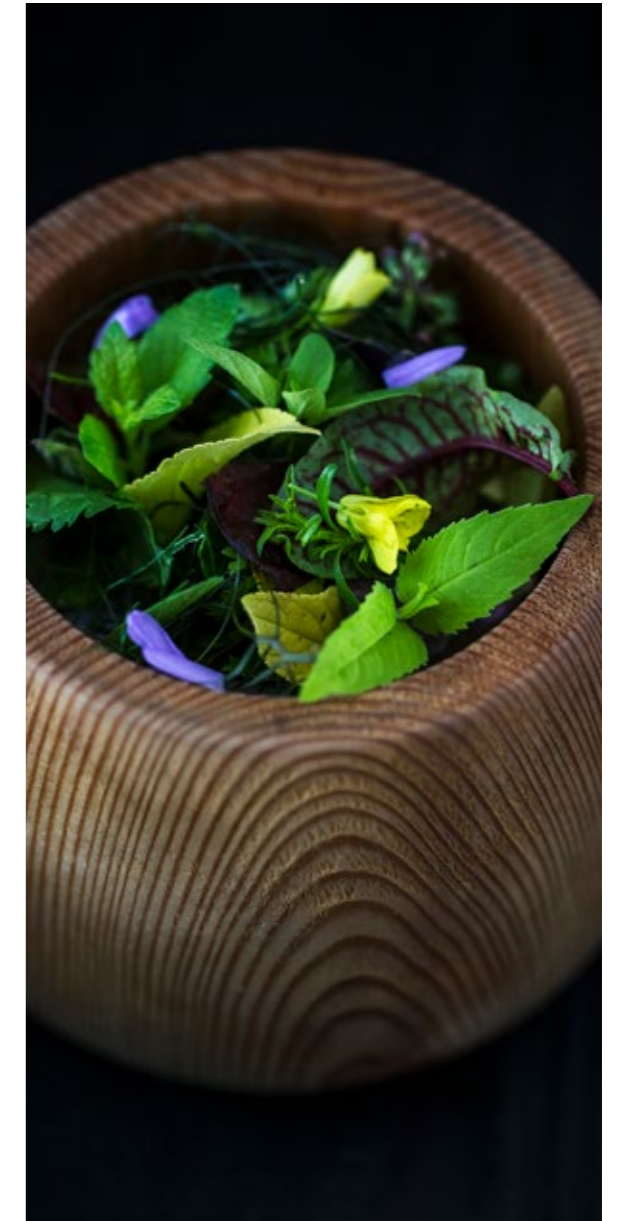
From 8/01 to 27/04/19.

From 8/05 to 31/08/19.

From 17/09 to 21/12/19.

The restaurant is open from Tuesday evening to Saturday evening and Sunday evenings during July and August.

The hotel is open from Tuesday to Saturday, and every day in July and August. Open, exceptionally, on Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday.





LAURENT PETIT

Cuisine Lacustre et Végétale

