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**2025**

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of values



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Editorial

## A GROWING TASTE FOR LUXURY



Olivier Curty, State Councillor,  
Minister of Economic Affairs.

The canton of Fribourg is reaping the benefits of its farsighted decision to diversify its economy. In recent years, it has added a deluxe string to its economic bow, which already includes big-hitting sectors like the bioeconomy, advanced technologies and manufacturing, new materials for construction and Industry 4.0. To the surprise of some, perhaps, the luxury industry has slowly but surely gained a foothold in Fribourg, providing the canton with a new and powerful source of growth.

The luxury sector in Fribourg is as diverse as the cantonal economy: from world-renowned cellular cosmetics and bean-to-bar chocolate to high-precision watch movements and smart watch bands, to name but a few. The canton has also long offered consumers the literal taste of luxury thanks, among others, to its Michelin-starred fine dining experiences and local heritage products like its Gruyère double cream.

The 2025 issue of our business magazine *fribourg.swiss* explores this fascinating world which prizes and actively cultivates expertise. Such is the discretion of the sector that our showcase of Fribourg-based luxury brands may be some readers' first encounter with them!

There is another reason why this 25th edition is particularly significant. It now has a new name and logo designed to shine a brighter light on Fribourg, especially on the international stage.

The magazine visits the hotel management schools training the luxury industry leaders of the future. It shines a spotlight on passionate local creators who are reimagining textiles and traditional techniques and delves into the canton's booming watchmaking sector. Underpinning this growth is a robust and reliable network of higher education institutions and top-flight centers of scientific expertise.

You will discover that Fribourg has not simply blended into the world of prestige products and services. Instead, it is weaving its own values and practices into the luxury economic fabric and championing a unique mix of innovation, tradition and emotion.

Enjoy!

JERRY KRATTIGER

“BE PROUD BUT STAY HUMBLE”



Fribourg is not the first place that springs to mind when one thinks of luxury, prestige and exclusivity. But appearances can be deceptive. The canton is, in fact, home to a fascinating range of companies and institutions that unostentatiously pride themselves on their attention to detail, mastery of age-old techniques, and commitment to quality. In the following interview, Jerry Krattiger, Managing Director of the Fribourg Development Agency, highlights a different side to the region that has always valued excellence and discretion.

You wouldn't necessarily say Fribourg and luxury in the same breath?

That is precisely what makes the subject so intriguing. Luxury doesn't jump out at you or flaunt itself here. It's 'quiet'. But as soon as you look a little closer, you discover a host of actors whose standards are on another level.

They include companies, craftspeople and designers who transform materials with technical precision, turn every gesture into an art form, and strive for excellence without shouting about it. It's not about ostentatious luxury. Rather, the focus is on understated, practical, ageless elegance. That is a very Swiss, and very Fribourg attitude!

**"Fribourg is a land of values, like the cantonal motto says. But it is also a land of value, a tangible value accrued over time and sustained by high performance, quiet ambition and an eye for detail. This is not an image we're trying to manufacture but reality. And it is high time that we recognize it."**

Jerry Krattiger

Which sectors best exemplify this high-end ambition?

The most obvious example is the watchmaking industry. Cartier assembles its iconic watches here. The independent Mauron Musy crafts its exclusive timepieces in the Broye. There is also Mestel which specializes in cutting-edge watch components, and Rolex is building a major new plant in Bulle. But it's not all about watches! In the luxury food sector, we have firms like Ladurée, Nespresso and Villars Maître Chocolatier, as well as artisans like Maison Amarella and Notes de fèves. Cellap and Margy's specialize in premium cosmetics, while Gainerie Moderne designs luxury presentation boxes and packaging solutions. All share the same attention to detail and the same exacting standards, both in terms of their work and the end product.

You mentioned gastronomy. Is there a place for regional produce in this luxury line-up?

Yes, indeed. The canton boasts six PDO specialties, meaning they meet the label's exacting specifications, themselves a guarantee of quality. Take Gruyère double cream served with homemade meringues, for example. On the face of it, these are simple products. Yet, they constitute a form of luxury that is all about authenticity and elevating local produce. This excellence can be expressed through taste, of course, but also through touch, aesthetics and emotions.

Luxury is more than just a monetary value: it's above all an experience, a rare moment, an exquisite interlude.

Can we say that Fribourg has a luxury ecosystem?

Yes, and it's getting stronger. There is a real spirit of emulation among artisans, SMEs and major companies who work together or share the same requirements. Take companies like Bcomp or Johnson Electric: they are key partners for the likes of BMW, Porsche and Volvo. They are discreet but essential links in international value chains that demand the highest standards. If we look a little further afield, there is Scott Sports, a Fribourg company whose top-of-the-range bikes and accessories are renowned the world over. There is now a whole network of engineers, suppliers and local partners. It's a complete ecosystem that is moving upmarket and holding its own.

With innovation as its driving force?

Exactly. In a country with a strong currency, the only way the export sector can survive is through the delivery of innovative and high-value-added products. That is the economic reality. Fribourg's excellence is underpinned by a scientific ecosystem of the highest caliber. The canton is home to unique research centers such as iPrint in Marly and the Michelin site in Givisiez, both of which play a key role in technology transfer. Institutes like the Adolphe Merkle Institute (AMI),

ROSAS and ChemTech push back the frontiers of knowledge and directly support the needs of industry. This scientific expertise is a form of excellence, one that is intangible and indispensable. The ability to think, design and prototype what others cannot yet do is a rare and precious commodity. It is exactly what international companies, and many Fribourg SMEs, are looking for.

Does this excellence extend to the quality of life in Fribourg?

Of course. Mountain biking in the Pre-Alps in the morning, swimming in a crystal-clear lake in the afternoon, then dining in a fine restaurant: these are also examples of luxury. Maybe even the greatest luxury of all! This quality of life adds to our canton's appeal. There are other examples like the Attila Boutique Boatel, Three-Lakes cruises and hiking in the majestic Gastlosen mountain range. There is also the Murten Festival of Lights, a major cultural event in a stunning setting.

The last word?

Fribourg is a land of values, like the cantonal motto says. But it is also a land of value, a tangible value accrued over time and sustained by high performance, quiet ambition and an eye for detail. This is not an image we're trying to manufacture but reality. And it is high time that we recognize it. We should accept our good fortune, celebrate it and let it shine. Let's be proud but let's stay humble, too.

→ [www.promfr.ch](http://www.promfr.ch)

NEW NAME, ENHANCED EXPERIENCE

Our magazine may have a new name, but its mission remains the same: promoting the canton of Fribourg, both in Switzerland and beyond, as a great place to do business.

The shift from **Fribourg Network Freiburg** to **fribourg.swiss** reflects the Fribourg Development Agency's rebrand, underscoring our international focus and strengthening Fribourg's global presence.

For all articles in English, French and German—plus extra stories, photos and videos updated regularly—visit our multilingual platform.

→ [www.fribourg.swiss](http://www.fribourg.swiss)



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CELLAP LABORATORY, MARGY'S

EXCELLENCE RUNS MORE THAN SKIN DEEP



Thanks to Swiss scientific expertise, cellular cosmetics have been brightening even the dulliest skin for more than 50 years. Tancrède Amacker, CEO of Cellap Laboratoire, lifts the lid on the secret behind the miracle power of these products, "Tired, stressed cells are revitalized when they come into contact with fresh, young, laboratory-grown cells." In early 2025, the company, which specializes in premium cellular skincare products—sold under the Cellcosmet and Cellmen brands—chose to set up operations in the canton of Fribourg. "Proximity to the highway, a first-rate talent pool and a warm welcome from the Fribourg Development Agency: the decision was a no-brainer for us!"

Cellap Laboratoire is the perfect example of a company that leverages Swiss scientific excellence to create high-end yet unpretentious products. "The company was born 40 years ago when Roland Pfister set up a laboratory in the basement of his apartment," Amacker notes. Today, the company boasts vast high-tech

premises, but the pillars of the business remain the same: bioscience expertise, quality, and partnerships with medical spas. "Swiss Made is embedded in each of these pillars." The Cellcosmet and Cellmen ranges are sold in around 30 countries, with international sales accounting for over 90% of the company's revenue. What can its loyal customer base expect from Cellap Laboratoire in the years ahead? "Ultra-personalized skincare solutions," the CEO promises.

Adaptive skincare

Margie Lombard applies the same scientific rigor and pursuit of excellence to Margy's, her eponymous luxury cosmetics range. Thirty years ago, she decided to capitalize on the wealth of experience she had acquired treating clients in her Monaco beauty salon to create her own skincare products that combat cellular aging. According to Alexandra Moulin, the current CEO of Margy's, "It was a natural step for her to base her company in Switzerland, the birthplace of cellular cosmetics."



The Fribourg-based brand has three product lines: *Pour la Vie*, *Luminance*, and *Prestige*. "All are biomimetic, training cells to reproduce in a way the body recognizes and adapts to the skin's specific needs."

Unlike Cellap Laboratoire, which has opted for multi-channel distribution (e-commerce, retail and beauty salons), Margy's focuses on its partnerships with luxury hotel spas, beauty salons and day spas. "We pass on our expertise through our products and on-site therapist training," the CEO explains.

While the luxury hotel chain The Peninsula remains its flagship partner, the brand's influence extends far beyond that: 250 spas around the world, primarily in Asia, offer Margy's treatments. For Alexandra Moulin, "Our story is just beginning."

→ [www.eu.cellcosmet.com](http://www.eu.cellcosmet.com)  
→ [www.margys.com](http://www.margys.com)

GAINERIE MODERNE

THE MAGICAL POWER OF PACKAGING



"The packaging is the first thing a person touches when they receive a watch, a piece of jewelry or perfume. Not only is the packaging integral to the prestige of the object, it is also elicits a sense of anticipation and excitement," Dominique Mainier explains. According to the managing director of Gainerie Moderne, "Packaging has to play its brand ambassador role to perfection."

For 65 years the watchmaking, jewelry, spirits and cosmetics industries have sought out the packaging expertise of the Fribourg-based company. Gainerie Moderne caters specifically to high-end customers, both in Switzerland and beyond, "We work with most of the big names in the luxury industry," Mainier points out. In its spacious 5,000m<sup>2</sup> premises, the company's 45-strong workforce designs and produces presentation boxes, "from the raw plank of wood to the finished box itself." Gainerie Moderne also offers point-of-sale advertising solutions that further enhance the image of its exclusive clientele's brands.

The human factor

In an ideal world, all it would take to conjure up some magic would be the simple wave of a wand. In the real world, however, the magical power of packaging to generate joy and astonishment relies on local expertise that has been patiently honed and handed down over decades. Much to the regret of Gainerie Moderne's managing director, "They've stopped teaching the art of casemaking."

Thankfully, these precious skills acquired over decades are still in use and passed down at the packaging company. "We are fortunate that we can rely on the experience of our loyal workforce, some of whom have been with us for nearly 30 years. They are now training the next generation."

A strategic priority for Gainerie Moderne is therefore spotting talented craftspeople, supporting them and developing their skills. "We identify people who are extremely good with their hands and offer them the opportunity to change careers," the managing director explains. Mainier and his team have quite a few compelling arguments to win them over: "The work is varied and stimulating because we focus exclusively on small-scale production. Most importantly, the human factor is central to our work process. We operate in a sector where machines do not replace human operators but simply free them from having to perform low value-added tasks."

Compromising on artisanal excellence is therefore anathema to Gainerie Moderne. It takes the same approach to innovation and development. These activities enable the company to meet and even anticipate its customers' needs. "We are also very committed to sustainability," Mainier adds. The magic of the luxury experience should not come at the expense of the planet.

→ [www.gainerie-moderne.ch](http://www.gainerie-moderne.ch)



GLION INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# A LESSON IN LUXURY



In Bulle, international students master the codes of luxury at Glion Institute of Higher Education.

"Luxury draws from tradition, and passing on Switzerland's hospitality excellence is in our DNA," explains Eleonora Cattaneo, Director of the MSc in Luxury Brand and Guest Experience Management at the Glion Institute of Higher Education. Thanks to this winning formula, the school has consistently appeared in the QS World University Rankings' list of the world's top 10 hotel management schools since 2018.

Every year, students from around 100 countries flock to the private Swiss higher education institution, which was founded in 1962. There are three campuses to choose from: two in Switzerland and one in England. The Fribourg town of Bulle is home to the main one. According to Philippe Vignon, the Institute's managing director, "The school's contemporary infrastructure coupled with its appealing location offers students the ideal conditions to fully immerse themselves in the Glion spirit."

It is at the campus in Bulle, a small town not far from the famous Château de Gruyères, that students can take Glion's Master's degree in Luxury Brand and Guest Experience Management. "The big names in the luxury hotel industry have been recruiting our graduates for more than 60 years. This inspired us to launch our own

specialized course", Vignon adds. The new MSc program was introduced in 2019, followed by a Bachelor's in Luxury Business in 2023. Eleonora Cattaneo points out: "Unlike conventional marketing, which seeks to sell as many goods or services as possible to as many people as possible, luxury marketing focuses on value over volume."

**A launchpad for careers outside the hotel industry**

Who better to impart the values and codes of the luxury industry than the illustrious brands themselves? High-end companies are involved in all aspects of the Master's syllabus, from finance and law to branding and hospitality," the program director explains. The Glion Institute of Higher Education has also forged academic partnerships with several hallowed names from the luxury industry, such as Ferragamo and Dior.

Rolex's plans to build a huge production facility in Bulle by 2029 could also generate great synergies. The Institute's managing director reveals that "a growing number of luxury brands outside of the hospitality industry want to recruit our students."

→ [www.glion.edu](http://www.glion.edu)



## LUXURY IN FIGURES

# FRIBOURG AT A GLANCE



### FINE WATCHMAKING

Cartier, Mauron Musy, Mestel and Rolex: over 2,500 new jobs in the canton of Fribourg



### LUXURY COSMETICS

High-tech skincare thanks to Swiss expertise (Cellcosmet and Margy's)



### CHOCOLATE

2 iconic brands (Cailler, Villars) and a new generation of craftsmanship



### EDUCATION

The Glion campus in Bulle trains tomorrow's leaders in luxury and hospitality



### GASTRONOMY

14 Gault&Millau restaurants and 6 PDO-certified regional specialties



### WOOD & DESIGN

Characterful chalets, clean lines, fine finishes



### FASHION & TEXTILES

Quality fabrics, high-end garments, and deep local roots



### TOURISM

Lakes, mountains, a unique medieval heritage, and a wealth of living traditions



Cartier, Mauron Musy, Rolex and Mestel: four unique yet complementary faces of Fribourg's luxury watchmaking sector.

Four names, four different visions of watchmaking excellence, one thing in common: the canton of Fribourg. Cartier/Richemont has recently built a strategic hub of expertise on the site it has occupied in Villars-sur-Glâne for more than half a century. The iconic Swiss brand Rolex is investing over a billion Swiss francs in a new manufacturing facility in Bulle. Mauron Musy embodies creative independence and mechanical innovation, while Mestel designs high-end watch straps for the industry's biggest names. Thanks to these diverse yet complementary operators, the canton is emerging as a top business location for Swiss luxury watchmaking.

CARTIER – A PERPETUALLY EVOLVING PURVEYOR OF ELEGANCE

At Cartier, design has always come first. Since 1847, models like the Tank, Santos and Ballon Bleu have become some of the brand's most iconic and instantly recognizable timepieces. Their enduring appeal lies in a philosophy that celebrates heritage while championing innovation. Cartier – the watchmaker of forms – has always prized clean lines, ergonomic design and technical refinement.

These exacting standards are part of Richemont's broader understanding of luxury as an eco-system where craftsmanship, innovation, and customer experience form a cohesive whole. For Edgar Vandel, Campus Management Director at Richemont, "Each creation is the product of

exceptional craftsmanship passed down by generations of passionate professionals." He also sees the Villars-sur-Glâne site as a perfect example of Cartier's embrace of heritage and modernity.

The story in Fribourg began in 1972 with Cartier lighters. Soon after, the site turned to watchmaking and became the canton's first manufacture. Half a century later, the campus has grown into a strategic hub for Richemont. It now brings together Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels and a wide range of expertise – from manufacturing and distribution to purchasing, logistics, finance, technology and HR.

In recent years, the campus has been thoroughly redesigned. A fourth building has joined the ensemble, with a restaurant, café, coworking spaces, reception rooms, a health service and a gym. A former car park has been turned into a 5,000 m² landscaped garden – one of eight that now punctuate the 90,000 m² site. District heating, green roofs and noble materials reflect Richemont's daily commitment to sustainable excellence.

"Villars-sur-Glâne is a strategically important site for Richemont," concludes Suzanne Lévesque, Headquarters Company Secretary. "It is the head, heart and soul of the Group, constantly reinventing itself for the past fifty years."

MAURON MUSY – PRECISION AND CREATIVE FREEDOM

With its blend of cutting-edge engineering and radical design, Mauron Musy is a unique presence in Switzerland's luxury watchmaking sector. Its signature nO-Ring® technology is a patented mechanical gasket-free sealing system which takes precision assembly to the next level. This practical, clearly visible and elegant innovation is the perfect expression of the brand's motto 'Form follows function'.

The company, which was founded by two passionate engineers, enjoys a freedom that is rare in the sector. It develops its own technologies, is not beholden to fashion trends and can rely on a network of highly qualified Swiss partners. As Christophe Musy, founder and CEO, points out, "Because we are engineers first and watchmakers second, our pieces are disruptive, functional and deeply rooted in Swiss tradition."

Mauron Musy subscribes to the 100% Swiss Crafted philosophy. From design to manufacturing, all components are developed, produced, and assembled in Switzerland. This authenticity, rigor, and transparency appeal to a clientele who value meaning. For Musy, "Today, luxury is also about being able to explain what you do, how you do it, and with whom. 100% Swiss Made has become a luxury of mastery and proximity," says Christophe Musy. The bold design of Mauron Musy's timepieces reflect its open, committed and technical approach to watchmaking for connoisseurs.

MESTEL – TURNING WATCHES INTO WEARABLE ART

"All the major players work with us," Alain Berset, the managing director of Mestel, explains. At its facility in Rossens, the company combines its expertise in materials chemistry with mechanical precision and craftsmanship to create unique straps for the fine watchmaking industry. From the production of technical rubber compounds to the design of complex molds and 3D-printing of metal inserts right through to hand finishing, each wristband is as sophisticated as the timepiece it adorns.

At Mestel, excellence is achieved through minute tolerances, material resistance, and the ability to offer bespoke solutions. "Our strength lies in controlling the quality management process from A to Z. That's the beauty of vertical integration," Berset points out. Mestel designs its own molds, works with its own chemists, recycles, and deploys high-precision processes like milling, erosion, vulcanization and cryogenization.

"The opening of the Rossens site is a major milestone for the company." The custom-built plant supports agile manufacturing, boasts a wellness-centric design and enhances operational responsiveness. It also boosts Mestel's development capabilities, which is good news for its nascent expansion into the luxury fashion market.

"Further proof of Mestel's innovation prowess is NOVALINK®, a technology which enables the integration of a NFC chip into rubber products." This invisible, reliable and fully secure solution offers instant connectivity, making it possible to complete payment, access control and identification processes with a flick of the wrist. For Mestel, the technology, developed in partnership with Visa and Mastercard, could be the key that unlocks a vast global market that extends far beyond traditional watchmaking.

ROLEX – LAUNCH OF MEGAPROJECT IN BULLE

In Bulle, work is already under way on Rolex's massive 100,000 m² production facility. This strategic project, which will cost an estimated one billion Swiss francs and generate over 2,000 jobs, is a clear demonstration of the Geneva-based group's desire to strengthen its industrial expertise and presence in Switzerland. Once completed, it will be one of the largest watchmaking centers in the country. The choice of Bulle was no coincidence: the capital of La Gruyère offers quality infrastructure, proximity to the motorway and a strong industrial base. Political support was another key factor behind the decision. The facility should be operational by 2029.

Rolex wants its new plant to be a center of excellence, sustainability, and industrial autonomy. The brand, famed for iconic timepieces like the Submariner, Datejust, and Daytona, has embodied Swiss precision, elegance, and technical mastery for over a century. Its ability to innovate coupled with its long-term vision make Rolex a standard-setter in the luxury sector. This major project reflects the brand's ambition: to build one of the pillars of its future in Fribourg and to anchor itself locally in order to shine globally.

- [www.richemont.com](http://www.richemont.com)
- [www.mauronmusy.com](http://www.mauronmusy.com)
- [www.mestel.ch](http://www.mestel.ch)
- [www.rolex.com](http://www.rolex.com)

CHOCOLATE

TRADITION MEETS CREATIVITY 

Fribourg is a major league player when it comes to chocolate. Cailler, in Broc, and Villars, in the cantonal capital, embody Switzerland’s world-renowned chocolate-making heritage. True pioneers, they have left their mark on the history of Swiss chocolate. Founded in 1819, Cailler is the country’s oldest chocolate brand still in operation and the inventor of milk chocolate – an institution whose production site in Broc attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Villars, for its part, has been perpetuating the elegance and refinement of Swiss chocolate since 1901, with an identity deeply rooted in Swiss tradition and innovation. But behind these historic figures, a new generation of chocolatiers is bringing a wave of creativity and sophistication to the world of luxury chocolate.

Jorge Cardoso is part of this bold new generation. The chocolatier, who hails from Portugal but grew up in Switzerland, opened his first shop, in Fribourg, in 2021, followed two years later by another, in Lausanne. The trained chef, baker and pastry-maker quickly decided to devote his talent and energies to chocolate. Three words sum up his approach: quality, precision and authenticity. "I want to deliver a true chocolate taste which means avoiding excessive sweetness. The number of chocolate lovers is rising, so too is their discernment!"

What sets Cardoso apart is his artistry. His fine arts background is evident in his creations like the life-size chocolate sculptures of figures like Cristiano Ronaldo, Roger Federer and St Nicholas. He also crafts custom pieces for companies and high-profile events. His most recent commission was for the Portuguese embassy.

The multiple award winner (including the 2018 and 2022 Culinary World Cup) fully embraces his chocolate artist status, "Each piece is painted and finished by hand. There is nothing standardized about these creations. They are the product of pure craftsmanship."

**From bean to bar**  
Notes de fève is redefining the standards of artisanal chocolate-making. Founded by Claire-Andrée Nobs and brothers Bastien and Laurent Curty, it is one of a handful of 'bean to bar' chocolatiers in the canton. Everything is made in-house using carefully sourced beans.

"We operate like winemakers," Laurent Curty explains. "Every harvest is unique, so we adapt the roasting and conching process, and our recipes to bring out the best in every bean. The cocoa content is important, but the greater value lies in the aromas."

Their artisanal approach—transparent sourcing, personalized recipes and full production chain control—is attracting a growing number of fans. Since it was founded in 2022, Notes de fève has created limited-edition chocolates for institutions like the Fribourg International Film Festival. Its long-term goal is to run workshops and special events that allow the public to discover the many subtle qualities of cocoa.

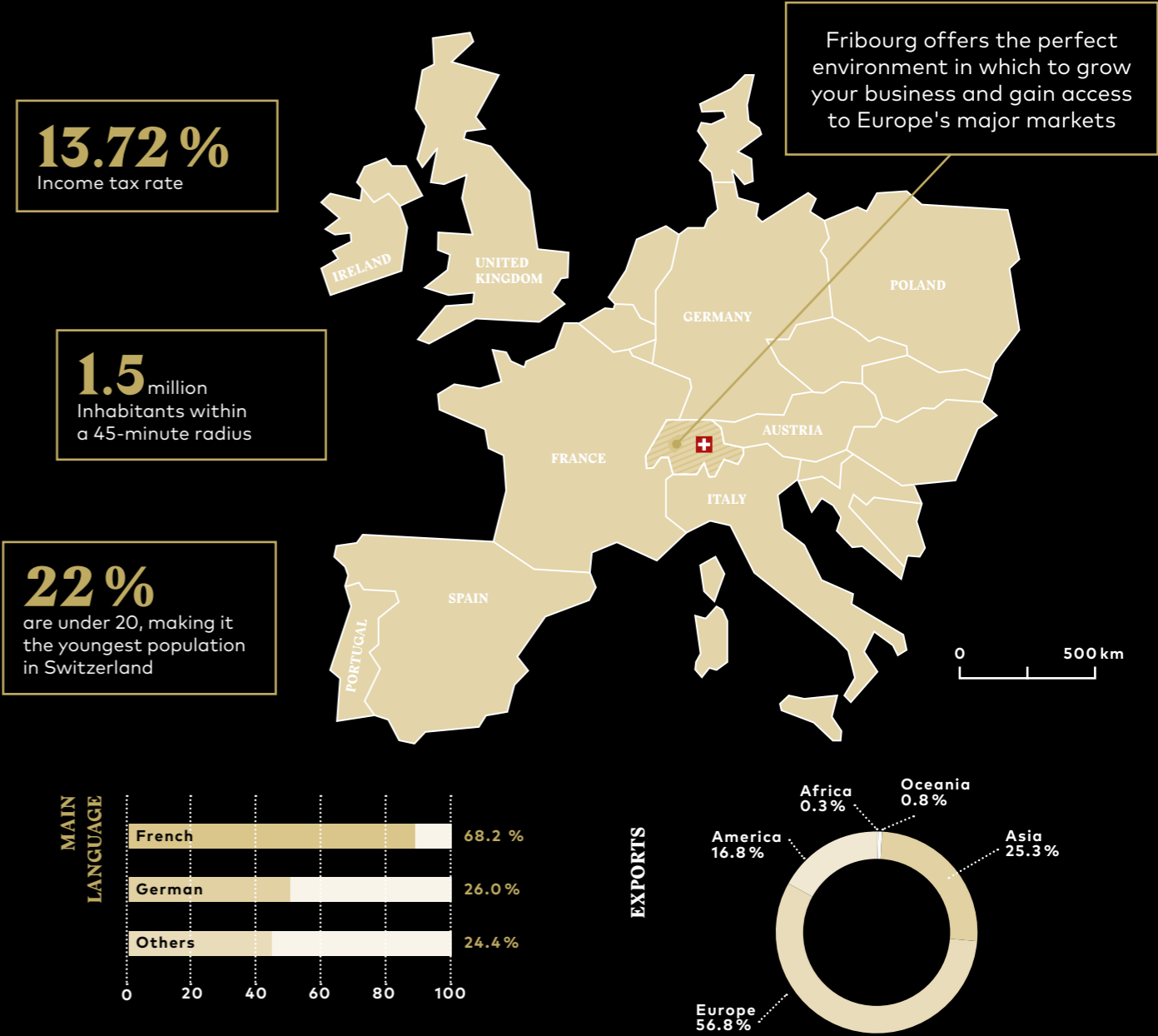
With its legacy producers and passionate artisans, Fribourg is fast becoming a hub for superlative chocolatiers.

- [www.jorge-cardoso.com](http://www.jorge-cardoso.com)
- [www.notesdefeve.ch](http://www.notesdefeve.ch)



“THE FRIBOURG CAMPUS IS THE HEAD, HEART AND SOUL OF THE RICHEMONT GROUP”\*

\*Suzanne Lévesque, Headquarters Company Secretary, Richemont International



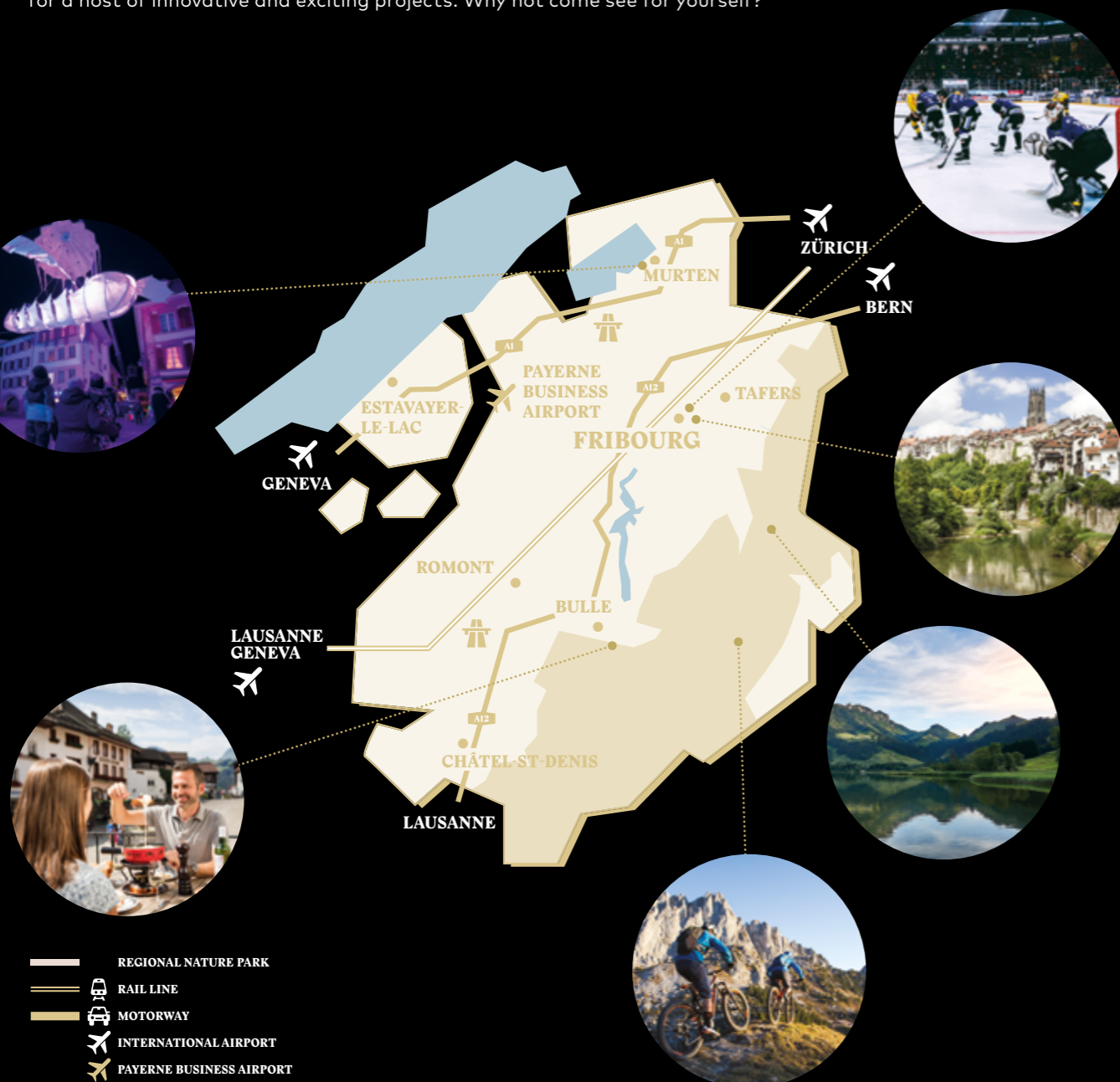
# FRIBOURG – LAND OF VALUES

Fribourg has so much to offer. First, there is its enviable central location that includes excellent transport links to the main Swiss and European road and rail networks. The country's main cities and airports – Basel, Bern, Geneva and Zurich – are only a 90-minute journey away.

The canton's unspoiled nature, diverse landscapes, vibrant sporting and cultural life, rich history, and exceptional cultural and culinary heritage are some of the reasons why Fribourg is such a great place to live, work and study. The people of Fribourg are famed for their down-to-earth, open-minded, optimistic and friendly approach to life. At the same time, their drive has transformed the canton into a dynamic region and an ideal breeding ground for a host of innovative and exciting projects. Why not come see for yourself?



© Carim Jost



# FRIBOURG – A HIVE OF INNOVATION

The Global Innovation Index has repeatedly ranked Switzerland among the most innovative countries in the world. It is fair to say that the canton of Fribourg has played its part in this designation thanks to a development strategy that is focused on promoting innovation and high value-added activities. Since 2011, five innovation hubs have sprung up across the canton. Offering first-rate infrastructures and superlative services, these technology centers are now home to many start-ups and hightech companies.



## AgriCo

- Specialization: agrifood and valorization of biomass
- Location: Saint-Aubin
- [www.agrico.swiss](http://www.agrico.swiss)



## bluefactory

- Specialization: built environment of the future, circular economy, bioeconomy, mobility and human health
- Location: Fribourg city center
- [www.bluefactory.ch](http://www.bluefactory.ch)



## La Maillarde

- Specialization: industry 4.0 and environmental technologies
- Location: Romont



## Marly Innovation Center

- Specialization: fine chemicals and digital printing
- Location: Marly
- [www.marly-innovation-center.org](http://www.marly-innovation-center.org)



## Le Vivier

- Specialization: automation and robotization
- Location: Villaz
- [www.vivier.ch](http://www.vivier.ch)



Bluefactory is a member of the Switzerland Innovation Park network.



## IFF Award (Innovation Fribourg Freiburg)

The biennial IFF Award, organized by the Fribourg Development Agency and the Fribourg Cantonal Bank (BCF), celebrates Fribourg's most pioneering and visionary companies. Since 1991 more than 50 companies have reaped the benefits of this showcase of Fribourg entrepreneurial creativity, raising the visibility of their company and their products in the process. [www.iffaward.ch](http://www.iffaward.ch)

# FRIBOURG – A TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER POWERHOUSE

The transfer of knowledge and technology is a core feature of Fribourg's economic ecosystem. It allows industry to remain innovative and competitive, fosters collaborative projects, and generates win-win outcomes. There is a wealth of resources and specialist services to help companies leverage technology transfer to grow their business.

They include sectoral clusters, competence centers, the technology platform INNOSQUARE and a dedicated technology transfer office. This TechTransfer office promotes entrepreneurship and innovation. The Adolphe Merkle Institute (AMI) also has its own structure dedicated to technology transfer.

On top of all this, the Fribourg School of Engineering and Architecture has 10 applied research institutes in three distinct fields: information and communication technologies, construction and environment, and industrial technologies. They work hand in hand with companies to find novel solutions and develop innovative products and processes.

→ [www.unifr.ch/innovation/en](http://www.unifr.ch/innovation/en)  
→ [www.heia-fr.ch](http://www.heia-fr.ch)

## TECHTRANSFER FRIBOURG



TechTransfer Fribourg is the official technology transfer office of the University of Fribourg, the Adolphe Merkle Institute, the Fribourg School of Management and the Fribourg School of Engineering and Architecture. It offers advice on intellectual property issues and acts as a link between academic research and industry.

Follow TechTransfer Fribourg on LinkedIn



## INNOSQUARE

INNOSQUARE is a technology platform that helps companies develop and realize their innovative ideas, and facilitates collaborative single- and multisector projects that bring together industry, the public sector and academia.

→ [www.innosquare.com](http://www.innosquare.com)

Research centers and institutes

**Adolphe Merkle Institute**  
Soft Nanomaterials  
→ [ami.swiss](http://ami.swiss)

**Food Research and Innovation Center**  
Sustainable use of raw materials in agriculture, Consumer, Health  
→ [unifr.ch/food](http://unifr.ch/food)

**Human-IST Institute**  
Human-Computer Interaction, Machine Learning  
→ [human-ist.unifr.ch](http://human-ist.unifr.ch)

**smart living lab**  
Buildings, Energy Efficiency, Digital Transformation  
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## SECTORAL CLUSTERS

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→ [www.clusterfoodnutrition.ch](http://www.clusterfoodnutrition.ch)

**Swiss Polymers Cluster**  
→ [www.swisspolymerscluster.com](http://www.swisspolymerscluster.com)

## CENTERS OF EXPERTISE

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→ [www.bcc.ch](http://www.bcc.ch)

**Digital Printing Competence Center (iPrint)**  
→ [www.iprint.center](http://www.iprint.center)

**Robust and Safe Systems Center (ROSAS)**  
→ [www.rosas.center](http://www.rosas.center)

**Smart Living Lab**  
→ [www.smartlivinglab.ch](http://www.smartlivinglab.ch)

# FRIBOURG – A BEACON OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Fribourg has the youngest population in Switzerland and a higher education landscape that is as diverse as it is dense. Alongside its cosmopolitan university, where over 10,000 students are enrolled in a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs, the canton has several specialist higher education institutes like the School of Engineering and Architecture, the School of Management, the School of Social Work and the School of Health Sciences. It is also home to the Adolphe Merkle Institute, Switzerland's leading research and teaching center in the field of nanosciences and material sciences. The prestigious EPFL (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology

in Lausanne), which is internationally recognized for its excellence in education and research, has also a location in Fribourg.

Added to these is a plethora of colleges specializing in fields such as business administration, agriculture, music, art, multimedia and hospitality. Of course, there is a broad host of primary, junior and senior high schools, as well as vocational training schools and colleges. Throughout the education system, classes are taught in French and German, while English is the language of choice for many postgraduate programs.



**University of Fribourg**  
→ [www.unifr.ch](http://www.unifr.ch)



**Adolphe Merkle Institute**  
→ [www.ami.swiss](http://www.ami.swiss)



**School of Management & Innovation Lab**  
→ [www.heg-fr.ch](http://www.heg-fr.ch)



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→ [www.heia-fr.ch](http://www.heia-fr.ch)



**EPFL Fribourg**  
→ [fribourg.epfl.ch](http://fribourg.epfl.ch)

# FRIBOURG – A STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF BUSINESS

Since 1971, the Fribourg Development Agency has been helping local businesses get off the ground, outside companies to relocate to the region, and established companies to expand their operations. We are on hand to advise and guide you through the many support mechanisms and opportunities offered by the canton of Fribourg. A dedicated project manager will be appointed to assist and coordinate your project, and will take the lead and put you in touch with the right people for: financial assistance and tax incentives, finding the ideal site or premises for your business, staff recruitment, applying for and obtaining work and residence permits, apartment/house hunting, the social integration of your family and your personnel, contacting institutions of higher education, and any other topic that might arise. Get in touch. We're here to help!

→ [www.promfr.ch](http://www.promfr.ch)

## THE BEST PLACE FOR THE BEST COMPANIES

These companies, among many others, have chosen to locate in Fribourg: Alcon (Switzerland/USA), Bio-Rad (USA), Cartier (France), Cailler/Nestlé (Switzerland), Comet (Switzerland), Johnson Electric (China), Liebherr (Germany), Mapei (Italy), Medion Grifols Diagnostics/Grifols (Spain), Parker Meggitt (USA), Michelin (France), Nespresso (Switzerland), Pall International (USA), Richemont International (Switzerland), Rolex (Switzerland), Savencia (France), Scott Sports (Switzerland/South Korea), Sika (Switzerland), Sonova (Switzerland), Starrag (Switzerland), UCB Farchim (Belgium), Venturi (Monaco), VeriSign (USA) and Wago Contact (Germany)

→ [www.promfr.ch/en/establish/references](http://www.promfr.ch/en/establish/references)





Neue Regionalpolitik **npr**  
Nouvelle politique régionale **npr**  
Nuova politica regionale **npr**

The **New Regional Policy** is a stimulus program launched by the federal government with assistance from the cantons. Its mission is to foster innovation both in industry and tourism by providing financial support in the form of loans, non-repayable grants and subsidies.

**Innosuisse** is Switzerland's national innovation promotion agency. It provides consultancy, networking services and financial resources to help turn scientific research into economic results



### FRI UP

Fri Up is the canton of Fribourg's official business start-up support agency. It offers free support for new entrepreneurs and fosters innovation.

→ [www.friup.ch](http://www.friup.ch)



### PLATINN

Based in Fribourg, Platinn is the Western Switzerland Innovation Platform. Its mission is to foster the innovation capabilities and competitiveness of competitiveness of SMEs through its coaching services.

→ [www.platinn.ch](http://www.platinn.ch)

# IFF AWARD 2024–2025 FRIBOURG – THE PLACE TO INNOVATE

The canton's entrepreneurial excellence was on full display at the 2024–2025 Innovation Fribourg Freiburg Award ceremony. Spanning the worlds of Industry 4.0, medical technology, and biotechnology, Contrinex, Xemperia, and ROMAG aquacare were crowned the winners in the 'Enterprise', 'Start-up', and 'Sustainability' categories. All three stood out for the boldness of their projects, their visionary approach and their inspiring ideas.

## IFF ENTERPRISE AWARD: CONTRINEX

Based in Corminboeuf, Contrinex develops specialist detection solutions and industrial sensors. Its Smart 3D camera is a remarkable innovation in industrial vision. The device enables real-time image analysis and is configurable via a mobile app, making it a powerful yet accessible tool that meets multiple industrial needs, including defect detection, packaging inspection, and monitoring of sensitive areas. The jury hailed this Industry 4.0 solution as both innovative and practical. The new product is already opening up new technological development and internal expansion opportunities for the Fribourg-based company.

Finalists: Asyril, Liebherr Machines Bulle

## IFF START-UP AWARD: XEMPERIA

Xemperia has set itself the mission of developing a breast cancer screening solution that is less invasive than mammography-based detection. Founded in 2023, the University of Fribourg spin-off has devised a blood test that draws inspiration from the body's natural immune response. The test, which uses PCR technology, offers a more accurate, affordable, and non-invasive alternative for women under 50, who are often excluded from conventional mammography-based screening. The project, which was voted for by the jury and the public, took home the IFF Start-up Award and a cash prize of CHF 30,000. This is a resounding endorsement of a promising and innovative product at the interface of medical science, biotechnology, and prevention.

Finalists: Sepriify, Yllyl

## IFF SUSTAINABILITY AWARD: ROMAG AQUACARE

Drinking water is a precious commodity and monitoring its quality, especially in remote areas, presents a serious logistical challenge. ROMAG aquacare, based in Düdingen, has developed a device that combines autonomous electricity production with continuous water quality monitoring. With its integrated turbine, PowerFlow generates the energy needed to power sensors that measure parameters like turbidity, pH levels, conductivity, and water flow. The data is then transmitted remotely. This new solution therefore ensures reliable monitoring even in hard-to-reach areas, without the need for a power infrastructure. This project, which is positioned at the intersection between the bioeconomy and Industry 4.0, perfectly illustrates the role that sustainable technologies can play in resource management.

Finalists: E2PME, SWISS-B



WOOD

A LIVING MATERIAL AND SIGN OF EXCELLENCE



Wood becomes a signature of excellence in the hands of Fribourg's craftsmen, such as Chalet Schuway (left) and Bruno Yerly (right).

In a world that is rediscovering the value of durability, wood does not simply outlive trends; it transcends them. In the canton of Fribourg, this ancient material brings exclusive design ideas to life thanks to a combination of craftsmanship, cutting-edge technology and creativity. Although the sector is relatively niche, its reputation extends far and wide.

For Bruno Yerly, a passionate interior architect and designer based in La Tour-de-Trême, wood is a living, flexible and infinitely versatile material. "You can go from very rustic like the old wood found in alpine chalets to incredibly luxurious finishes like walnut and mahogany. It all depends on how you work it." The interior design maestro, who is a joiner and cabinetmaker by training, uses a mix of local woods and high-end materials to craft bespoke pieces for his discerning clientele. He is also a gifted artist, sketching his designs on the spot, often in front of clients that include several world-famous personalities.

"The technical plans behind interior design require incredible precision. In the high-end sector, the technical elements are as important as the aesthetics. You have to think of everything—the handle on a door or window, the lampshade—to strike the right balance of materials." The essence of interior design excellence lies in the ability to harmonize these elements through first-rate craftsmanship and a holistic vision.

A canton brimming with talent

For many years, Yerly has passed on this attention to detail to trainee cabinetmakers and joiners in his drafting

classes. "Many of the business owners and professionals I come across today are former students of mine." He also points out the wealth of local talent, particularly in the south of the canton, which boasts around 15 firms that regularly work on prestige projects, both in major Swiss resorts and beyond.

A good example is Chalet Schuway, a family business from Jaun, in the Gruyère region, which prizes short supply chains and integrated production. "We source our wood from local forests and process it at our own sawmill," co-director Xaver Schuway explains. "An exceptional chalet combines functionality and beauty and creates a deep connection with nature." What sets this firm apart is that all services are provided in-house, from planning through to joinery. As a result, customers enjoy personalized assistance and support at every turn. "Excellence means guaranteeing quality throughout and always listening to your client."

Wood offers warmth and versatility. It reminds us of our roots but also helps design the future. In the words of Bruno Yerly, "Fads and trends may come and go but wood is forever." Time has not withered the power of this noble and enduring material whose unique qualities and beauty have been enhanced by generations of Fribourg craftsmanship.

→ [www.brunoyerly.ch](http://www.brunoyerly.ch)

→ [www.chalet-schuway.ch](http://www.chalet-schuway.ch)

LOUIS ORIGINE, REVARIO

TWO VISIONS, ONE COMMON THREAD



Scottish singer Argye wearing Louis Origine, a homegrown brand with an international outlook.

Mission accomplished. Revario does not keep finished goods in stock: its shorts, jackets and caps are made to order in a local workshop. It also sources its supplies from the Alpine region, "within a 600-kilometer radius".

Today, Revario's order book is full and international interest in the company is growing. "We are looking to take our first steps into the export market, but not at the expense of our quality and sustainability principles." As the company scales up, it has plans to expand its workshop team by re-skilling and employing career changers.

Immaterial value

Louis Origine, another Fribourg clothing brand, is also fast weaving itself into the region's economic fabric. "It is really important to us that our company has a strong local base," notes Laure Gallay, director of the fashion house. "For me and my husband (and co-founder) Steve, this also means being rooted in the region's customs and traditions, which are themselves part of the broader concept of cultural heritage."

The heritage dimension even extends to the company name: Louis for the couple's eldest son; Origine for the return to an object's essence. "Our philosophy is to create clothes that become much-loved pieces that have a positive effect on the wearer and support them in bringing their plans to life." These are pieces with high material and immaterial added value thanks to the use of 100% natural fabrics and the fashion house's distinctive sartorial fit.

"For us, the notion of luxury is predicated on this immaterial value," Gallay adds. "In Switzerland, luxury is discreet, understated, and focused on authenticity, which suits us perfectly."

It is a vision that attracted the attention of Mode Suisse, Switzerland's flagship platform for the fashion industry. In 2024, Louis Origine was named a permanent contributor to the event.

→ [www.louisorigine.com](http://www.louisorigine.com)

→ [www.revario.ch](http://www.revario.ch)

"At Revario, high-end translates as the wow effect on our customers when they realize, from the first try-on, that our fabrics are nothing like what they're used to," explains Michael Ingram, the founder of the Fribourg-based technical mountain and trail clothing brand. "Once you've experienced quality like this, it's hard to settle for less!"

The numbers speak for themselves: Revario boasts a repeat purchase rate of almost 70%, "compared to roughly 20% for most online retailers".

In 2020 the young entrepreneur challenged himself to buck the ultra-fast fashion trend by offering sustainable and locally made products. "I wanted to prove that, even in the outdoor sector, you can aim for the high end of the market without compromising on quality and sustainability, all while remaining competitive on price."

MIKELE LANDRY

“LUXURY DOESN’T ALWAYS RESPOND TO DEMAND – IT ALSO CREATES DESIRE”



Mikèle Landry brings academic rigor and practical experience to her role as Head of Luxury Brand Strategy Specialization, which is part of the Bachelor's program in International Hospitality Business at the Glion Institute of Higher Education (GIHE). The hospitality professional and future PhD in marketing had previously taught at the University of Fribourg and the EHL Hospitality Business School in Lausanne before taking up her current post in 2025. Her approach to luxury is grounded, analytical, and open-minded. In this interview, she shares her thoughts on the codes of luxury, storytelling, brand responsibility, and the lessons that SMEs can learn from the luxury industry.

How do you define luxury in your teaching work and interactions with students?

There is no single definition of luxury. What I try to convey to my students is the plurality of perspectives that exist, whether in literature, among industry professionals or consumers, as well as the importance of being able to recognize criteria that come up time and again. One of the most fundamental elements is the notion of experience: it is an over-simplification to say luxury is about rarity and high monetary value. Rather, luxury is an all-encompassing lived experience that begins well before, and extends beyond, the act of consumption. It engages our senses, emotions, and imagination. Its value is not based solely on the product or service, but on the often highly personalized relationship between the brand and the customer. Luxury also taps into psychological drivers (status, differentiation) and symbolic elements (heritage, expertise, brand universe).

How do you address the concept of luxury with a generation that has grown up surrounded by digital technology?

Our students are very comfortable with digital technology. They master the tools and are very familiar with the brands, including their respective universes and campaigns. However, this familiarity does not always allow them to exercise a critical distance. Our role is to help them go beyond simply consuming information in order to understand the strategies that are deployed and how identity, segmentation, and distribution channels intersect. Personal interaction remains fundamental to the luxury business. Digital technology should not replace humans but enrich the luxury experience without erasing the relational dimension. Students learn to combine digital and personal interactions, an essential skill today, especially for hospitality and communication professionals.

Storytelling is an integral part of the customer experience and now seems equally and even more important than the product itself. How do you explain this shift in the luxury sector?

It is a response to a growing desire for authenticity and consistency. Consumers are no longer satisfied with a beautiful object. They want to understand what the brand stands for and see a real link between its stated values and its actions. In this context, storytelling functions as an emotional thread and a vector of identity.

When it is well constructed, storytelling connects all customer points of contact, reinforces perceived value, and creates a sense of belonging, even if the product is not objectively unique. Some brands such as Cartier, Rolex, Patek Philippe, and major hotel chains are masters at it. Their communication is based on coherent narratives that transport us to another world. But if the narrative is to work, it must be rooted in the brand's culture. Generic storytelling is not enough.

How do you teach students storytelling in a world as codified as the luxury industry?

We start with observation: which brands tell their story well, why, and how? Then, students create their own narratives. They learn to avoid clichés, find unique propositions, and link the message to the brand's DNA. This work develops their creativity, rigor, and strategic thinking. Storytelling becomes a tool for thinking about the brand as a whole: its vision, strategy, differentiation, and the value it creates.

Can less well-resourced SMEs in Fribourg and Switzerland take inspiration from the codes of luxury?

Absolutely. It's a question of clarity, not budget. An SME that knows what it stands for, has clearly defined values and consistently applies them can certainly build a strong emotional relationship with its customers. But this requires them to think about customer experience. What does the customer actually feel? What else is involved besides the

functional act? How can you create a special relationship with the customer to ensure that their experience is positive, unique and memorable?

How can you apply this idea beyond demand response?

Luxury is not always a response to an immediate need. It creates desire. Taking a stance like this requires real strategic clarity, vision, and assertive choices, even if they go against the grain. A SME can think like a luxury brand if it embraces who it is, down to the smallest detail. The key is being sincere, consistent and attentive during all your interactions.

How do you view luxury brands' approach to responsibility? Do you think they can, or should, integrate values like sustainability and ethics in their business model?

They must. We are living in a time when profound changes are needed, both environmentally and socially. As a high-profile and influential sector, the luxury industry must do more than communicate and offset their impact. It needs to mainstream sustainability across its operations, from design and production to partnerships and governance. Some brands are already leading the way by demanding tangible commitments from their suppliers. But this has yet to become an industry norm. They also have a role to play in changing mindsets by educating their customers and building on the relationship of trust they have with them.

What role can younger generations, and Glion students in particular, play in this transition?

A central role. They are often the ones driving this transition as they are clear-eyed about the issues at stake. At Glion, these topics are addressed in a course specifically on corporate responsibility and across the entire curriculum. When our students leave us, they have the tools they need to take action and become changemakers. They are the committed professionals of tomorrow and the future architects of a more ethical and sustainable luxury industry.

→ [www.glion.edu](http://www.glion.edu)

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## TOURISM

# WHERE HERITAGE AND TRADITIONS COME ALIVE

Do not be fooled by the canton of Fribourg's understated appearance. If you look a little closer, you will discover a fantastic visitor destination. Take the Old Town of Fribourg, for example. With over 200 perfectly preserved Gothic facades, this historic center—nestled in a cliff-lined meander of the Sarine River—boasts the largest ensemble of medieval architecture in Switzerland and one of the finest in Europe. A stroll through its cobbled streets, dotted with centuries-old bridges, fountains and buildings steeped in history, is like a journey back in time. St Nicholas Cathedral, with its remarkable stained-glass windows and iconic bell tower, has been the symbol of the medieval city since the 15th century and continues to dominate the city's skyline.

Less than 20 kilometers away is another picturesque medieval town. Murten is noted for its mild climate, lakeside location and vineyards, as well as its historic architecture. As you head south along its ramparts or the lakeshore, the Fribourg Pre-Alps rise majestically in the distance. With their smooth peaks, flower-filled pastures and signposted paths, they are a paradise for hikers and cyclists. Two lakes—the Lac de La Gruyère and its mysterious Île d'Ogoz and the legendary Schwarzsee—bring an extra touch of magic to this Alpine landscape.

#### The Fribourg way of life

To truly experience the Fribourg way of life, head to La Gruyère. Discover the secrets behind the world-acclaimed cheese at the Maison du Gruyère. Dive into the world of chocolate at the Maison Cailler, in Broc, which is now the most popular visitor attraction in French-

speaking Switzerland. A trip to the region would not be complete without a tour of the Château de Gruyères, perched proudly on its rocky outcrop.

The canton is also famed for its living traditions, many of which are permanent fixtures on the region's events calendar. In spring, the Poya is the eye-catching ascent of livestock to their summer mountain pastures. This lively ritual featuring cows with floral crowns, clanging bells and *armaillis* (herdsmen) in traditional costume is foundational to Fribourg's identity. In early fall, *Bénichon* celebrates the harvest with a true culinary feast: cabbage soup, smoked ham, leg of lamb, Botzi pears, meringues and double cream—served with plenty of fun and entertainment. In winter, St Nicholas' Day draws crowds on to the streets of Fribourg to honor the city's patron saint, while carnival brings a riot of color, creativity and merrymaking to villages and towns across the region.

In 2025, Fribourg celebrates the centenary of the birth of Jean Tinguely, a major contemporary artist and a native of the city. In 2026 it will host the World Ice Hockey Championships.

Fribourg exudes quiet charm. Authentic and welcoming, it offers the perfect balance of heritage, nature and living traditions—a dream destination that will leave you longing to stay.

→ [www.fribourg.ch](http://www.fribourg.ch)



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# fribourg swiss

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## LES TROIS TOURS RESTAURANT THE SERIOUS BUSINESS OF COOKING



Romain Paillereau, head chef at Les Trois Tours, embodies the boldness and refinement of Fribourg haute cuisine.

When it comes to culinary expertise, the canton of Fribourg is right up there with the best. It boasts 25 Gault&Millau-rated restaurants, five of which also have a Michelin star. Moreover, Fribourg holds the Swiss AOP (Protected Designation of Origin) record: as many as six regional products have been granted the prestigious label. It is therefore no coincidence that the cantonal capital was recently added to UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (for gastronomy).

While top restaurants are dotted across the canton, the city of Fribourg is home to the most celebrated of them all: Les Trois Tours. With its 18 Gault&Millau points, one Michelin star and stunning location in a 19th-century mansion, the fine-dining establishment features on the list of the 1,000 best restaurants in the world. Since 2021, Frenchman Romain Paillereau has been at the helm and oversaw the restaurant's recent re-design. When he arrived in Fribourg a decade or so ago, the chef discovered a region that shares the deep gastronomic roots and love of food of his native Périgord.

Paillereau is an intrepid explorer, always venturing outside his comfort zone and conjuring up dishes that showcase seasonal, local and even exotic produce. The wild herb and citrus fruit enthusiast, who is famed for his unique and "dairing pairings", learned his craft under the watchful

eye of illustrious French chefs like Anne-Sophie Pic, Eric Frechon, and the great Michel Troisgros, whose human qualities and business acumen have left a lasting impression on him. Paillereau has also traveled further afield, working and honing his skills in professional kitchens in the United States, the UK and Austria.

### Leading the way

His recipe for success is perseverance mixed with a keen eye for detail, a real sense of hospitality, high standards and unrelenting commitment. "Cooking is not a game. It's my life. My restaurant is my home. I want people to feel good here," the Michelin-starred chef passionately proclaims. "I follow my inner voice. I'm not easily influenced. When an idea comes to me, I see it through to the end." And ideas are not in short supply where Paillereau is concerned.

With a philosophy like this, it is not surprising that the decorated chef considers a second Michelin star a "life goal". Given his passion and dedication to excellence, he may not have to wait too long before his dream comes true. His loyal team is also happy to join him on his quest for perfection. Unlike the negative stereotype of the hot-headed chef, Paillereau, like all good bosses, prefers to set a positive example.

→ [www.trois-tours.ch](http://www.trois-tours.ch)

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**FRIBOURG.SWISS,**  
c/o Fribourg Development Agency,  
Bd de Pérolles 25, P.O. Box  
CH-1701 Fribourg

### EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

**Jerry Krattiger,**  
President, Fribourg  
Development Agency

**Christoph Aebischer,**  
Fribourg Development Agency

**CHIEF EDITOR**  
Frank-Olivier Baechler,  
CH-1723 Marly

**AUTHORS**  
Frank-Olivier Baechler  
Alexandre Brodard,  
[episetu]. communication  
Patricia Michaud

**TRANSLATIONS**  
Transit TXT SA

**CONCEPT & DESIGN**  
INVENTAIRE Communication Visuelle Sàrl,  
CH-1630 Bulle

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