

Cultural walks around the Aosta valley and the Haute-Savoie  
Flaine, creation of Marcel Breuer



**flaine**

architecture of a ski resort

"Modern architecture is not a style, but an attitude."

Marcel Breuer



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## PREFACE

### The Network of Cross-border Tourist Itineraries

is one of the Alcotra Interreg III communal initiatives promoting cooperation between Italy and France, with the support of the European Union. Led and cofinanced by the Haute-Savoie General Council and the Autonomous Region of the Aosta Valley, it aims to develop and improve tourism in the neighbouring regions of the two countries. These itineraries emphasise themes from the shared culture, history and heritage of these regions, such as cinema, contemporary art, the Resistance, chateaux, churches, Alpine nature and its secrets, and the winter sports resorts so emblematic of 20th century architecture.

### The Haute-Savoie CAUE and the architecture of 20th century resorts

The Haute-Savoie Council of Architecture, Planning and the Environment (CAUE) and the communes value the architectural and urban innovation which came with the mountain health and winter sports centres typical of the 20th century: the Plateau d'Assy health resort, for example, or leisure resorts, such as Chamonix, Megève, Morzine-Avoriaz and Flaine. The cultural journey which the visitor is invited to take through the pages of this booklet can be completed with an on-site guided tour organised by the Flaine Cultural Centre, and by visiting the dedicated library there.

This free booklet is available at the Centre, at Grand Massif ski area tourist and information offices, and on request from the Haute-Savoie CAUE. It has been produced in partnership with the Flaine intercommunal association of Arâches-la-Frasse and Magland.

For more information : [www.caue74.fr](http://www.caue74.fr)

Le Flaine Hotel, cantilever and sun deck, 1969 (Y. Guillemot/CCF archive)





## FLAINE, GATEWAY TO THE DESERT BLANC

Between Arve and Giffre

### The legend of Flaine

A giant, exhausted by crossing the mountains and valleys between Léman (Lake Geneva) and the Mediterranean, rested at this mountain, nestling his head in the bowl of the valley, which old maps call "Flainoz, meaning "pillow" in Savoyard dialect. The legend ends there, lost along with the dreams of the giant... Flainoz will become Flainaz, then Flaine.

Flaine, the Montagne Genevoise chalet in 1960, site of the present Forum  
(© G.Carrard and M. Vardon/Pompidou Centre)



The first cable car at Flaine, 1969 (Y. Guillemaut/CCF archive)



### An exceptional, unspoilt site for the future ski resort

Flaine is located at the heart of the Arve-Giffre massif, which is shared by six communes, Arâches-la-Frasse, Magland, Passy, Samoëns, Morillon and Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval.

It is the geomorphology of the site which makes Flaine attractive : a valley oriented east-west, and a southern flank exposed to the north, moderately inclined, where the snow is long-lasting; a steep north side, facing south, with a succession of three plateaus separated by vertical cliffs of grey marly limestone.

Each plateau neatly accommodates a group of buildings : Flaine Front de Neige, Flaine Forum and Flaine Forêt. At 1600m, the resort is located 17km from its administrative centre, Arâches, 29km from the nearest railway station at Cluses, 77km from Annecy and 71km from Geneva airport. It is one of five resorts that make up the Grand Massif, one of the ski areas that offer the best view of the Mont Blanc range.



## A PROTOTYPE SKI RESORT

### A new lifestyle at altitude

At 1600m, at the heart of a pristine valley in the Haute-Savoie, Flaine's unique architecture reaches across the mountainside. Designed in the 60s by Marcel Breuer, one of the great American architects of the 20th century and former master at the Bauhaus, the resort stands among the 280km of pistes of the Grand Massif. It is resolutely modern and radical. The raw concrete buildings in a high-altitude mountain setting fascinate some and disturb others. Even now, in the 21st century, the architectural expression of Marcel Breuer is somewhat misunderstood by the public. In Flaine, we should focus not only on the form but on the content, which is particularly rich if one takes the time to explore it. A remarkably profound work, at once human yet unrelenting, it brings, to those who want to discover it, great satisfaction. Flaine does not set out to win approval.

From a historical standpoint, this integrated resort - like its Savoyard counterparts Avoriaz, Les Arcs or La Plagne - occupies a special place in the architecture of alpine landscapes. Created ex nihilo in the euphoric years of the Trente Glorieuses (1945-1973), pure creations of a society keen to develop its leisure pursuits, these new prototype "third generation" resorts helped popularise skiing. In the France of General de Gaulle, with a fast-growing population and economy, these resorts resulted from a political wish to avoid depopulation of mountain areas and to update tourism in France.

Some mountain landscapes would undergo a radical transformation. New urban models, architectural and cultural, made a brutal mark on unspoilt alpine pastures, making no concession to local heritage. These new mountain towns, intended for French and foreign visitors, sprang from a new ambition to support winter sports with purpose-built installations at an altitude sufficient to guarantee maximum snow.

The integrated resorts affirmed their functional character by providing many ski lifts and placing their building complexes at the hub of the ski slopes. This space, named grenouillère or forum, would promote social interchange while facilitating the movement of skiers and pedestrians. Flaine would be a "no car" zone, and its single developer would ensure a unity of concept and organisation. These new resorts were shaped by the involvement and personalities of their developers and project owners, who built cohesive complexes with an overall vision: Roger Godino at Les Arcs, Gérard Bremond at Avoriaz, or Eric Boissonnas at Flaine, for example.

The Totem Terrace at the end of the 70s (Y. Guillemaut/CCF archive -> The Forum, drawing by Peter Samton, 1963 (© G. Carrard and M. Vardon/ Pompidou Centre)





## THE UTOPIA OF FLAINE

### The protagonists

#### Building a team

Eric Boissonnas, mountain lover and keen skier, his wife Sylvie, nee Schlumberger, a passionate follower of modern art, his brother Rémi Boissonnas, and a collection of talented architects - Gérard Chervaz, Laurent Chappis, Denys Pradelle, and André Gaillard - were, with Marcel Breuer, the main actors in this Savoyard adventure in the France of the Trente Glorieuses.

#### Originator, project owner

##### Eric Boissonnas

Geophysical engineer, musician and music lover, Eric Boissonnas (1913-2005) was trained in the strict discipline of physical sciences. He would emerge as an inventive project owner open to new ideas. From a Protestant background, he worked in the south west of France near the Pyrenees. Between 1941 and 1945 he and his wife helped run an escape route to Spain for people wanted by the Germans. From 1946 he continued his professional activities at Schlumberger in the United States, where he became technical director in 1954. During this American period, Eric and Sylvie became fascinated by architecture, design and modern art. They met artists, academics and museum curators, all very active in the booming post-war art world of the United States.

In 1958, while still living in Connecticut, Eric Boissonnas decided to play a role in the burgeoning expansion of winter sports and the reconstruction of France. An author of noted articles in *Le Monde* about residential buildings put him in touch with Max Stern, a former member of the Resistance and founder of BERU (Bureau of Urban Studies and Construction). Attracted by the novelty of Eric Boissonnas' approach - to create a ski resort on an unspoiled site - the BERU did a study of the winter sports market, and in particular the relationship between the number of visitors, sunshine, snow and altitude. The results were conclusive. As a result, from 1959, Eric Boissonnas devoted himself to implementing his visionary project that would lead to the creation of Flaine.

"We came up with the idea in 1959 to create, somewhere in France, a prototype for urban planning, architecture and design, the immediate profitability of which would be less important than aesthetic choices and respect for the environment."

*Eric Boissonnas, Flaine, la création* Ed. du Linteau, 1994.

In the 1960s, Eric Boissonnas also helped develop the resort of La Foux d'Allos, in the Haute-Provence Alps, whose creation he entrusted to Laurent Chappis.

#### Arts and Culture

##### Sylvie Boissonnas \*

Sylvie Boissonnas (1912-1999) brought up her children then devoted herself to art, a passion she inherited from her mother and grandmother. In Flaine, she would play a decisive role alongside Marcel Breuer in deciding the interior decor of the hotels and in the cultural role of the resort by creating the Flaine Art Centre.

Between 1970 and 1995, she organised more than 70 exhibitions, helping skiers discover contemporary art and making a vital contribution to the resort's activities and profile. Sylvie was also influenced by the women's movement. She supported it and welcomed its ideas, which she adopted and advanced with a great freedom of spirit. In 1977, with husband Eric, she became a founding member of the Georges Pompidou Centre. In 1978, she chaired the Association of Private Art Centres. From 1981 to 1987, she led the League of Friends of the National Museum of Modern Art. Sylvie and Eric generously contributed to the development of the Museum's collection with their financial support for new acquisitions.

\*By her daughter, Catherine Boissonnas-Caste, 2009

Sylvie and Eric Boissonnas at the Flaine Art Centre, Christmas 1973 (Boissonnas Collection)



E. Boissonnas at the veterans' slalom, April 1978 (Boissonnas Collection)





## THE UTOPIA OF FLAINE

### The protagonists

#### The discoverer and initial architect

##### Gérard Chervaz

Geneva architect Gérard Chervaz, pupil of Jean Dubuisson at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris, can be regarded as the first to be interested in the development of a ski area in the Giffre massif. A keen skier and lover of this region, he had the idea in 1953 while discussing with a friend the possibility of developing tourism at Arâches les Carroz. From 1954, he developed a feasibility study for a winter sports resort at a place called Flainoz, above the village of Les Carroz at about 1600m.

With his friend, yoghurt manufacturer René Martens - also a member of the Mountain Friends Club - he met Fernand Moret in 1958, then mayor of Arâches, who agreed that they could carry out studies and find finance from a group of active backers. In 1959 they were put in touch with Rémi Boissonnas, then director of the Banque de l'Union Parisienne, and subsequently with his brother Eric, presenting them with this large-scale project in the Flainoz area.

On 20 February 1959 Gérard Chervaz, at home with his mountain friends, hosted Denys Pradelle, and Eric and Rémi Boissonnas, who confirmed their interest in a major project at Flaine. Eric Boissonnas and Gérard Chervaz went ski trekking to the site on 15 March 1959 and Rémi Boissonnas then received the Arâches municipal council in Paris.

In September 1959 the Boissonnas made their definitive decision to develop Flaine. Gérard Chervaz formed a team of architects, calling on "two excellent colleagues", Denys Pradelle and Laurent Chappis.

But the team was surprised to find that a competitor was interested in a project at Flaine - the international group, Conrad Zschokke, a major civil engineering company in Geneva. They were considering access to the valley via the Col de Cou pass, and the construction of towers on the lakeside at Flaine. It was clear that they were not familiar with the site. Meetings were held and

even a collaboration was envisaged, but there were too many differences. Finally the Swiss group withdrew, asking in return that the Geneva architect André Gaillard participate in the project.

"The spring and summer (1959) were very hectic. Eric Boissonnas crossed the Atlantic several times. He would need to decide about returning to France for good and his future pursuits. The Boissonnas brothers would give their final agreement in September 1959. (...) The philosophy of the Boissonnas group was to prove that, with private capital and state assistance, it would be possible to achieve a great work in France."

*Gérard Chervaz, Historique de l'origine de la station de Flaine, June 1995.*

#### The trusted mediator

##### Rémi Boissonnas

Rémi Boissonnas, Eric's older brother, an excellent alpine ski mountaineer and climber, was director of the Banque de l'Union Parisienne and of several companies. A talented businessman and diplomat, he knew how to win the confidence of key elected members of the communes of Arâches and Magland and established a positive rapport between the parties. He oversaw the financial management of the Flaine project from 1959 to 1973 as manager of SEAMAG, the research and development group for the Arve-Giffre Massif, then a public-private company, SAG, and research, development and finance company, SEPAD. A great music lover and musician, he would go on to initiate the Bains de Musique (an intensive summer music academy) at Flaine.

Gérard Chervaz at home in Geneva (G. Chervaz Collection)



Eric and Rémi Boissonnas in 1969 (Boissonnas Collection)





## THE UTOPIA OF FLAINE

### The protagonists

#### The engineer, Ferdinand Berlottier

Civil engineer, Ferdinand Berlottier (1911-2008) directed the reconstruction and repair of war damage from 1945 to 1954 and then spent three years in the Savoie planning department. The Boissonnas chose him as technical director of SEAMAG from its inception in 1959, just after he had been appointed to the management of the Isere planning department. At SEAMAG he was in charge of administrative, technical and financial aspects of the work at Flaine, working from offices in Annecy.

"Leaving the security of his job, he and his wife chose adventure. He worked tirelessly with exceptional competence and dedication." E. Boissonnas, *Ibid.*

#### The pioneers of Courchevel, the Mountain Architecture Workshop :

##### Laurent Chappis

Born in Aix-les-Bains in 1915, Laurent Chappis studied architecture at Grenoble before joining the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. An excellent skier and tireless mountaineer, he became a prisoner of war in 1940. Despite this he completed his degree in architecture and worked from memory on a project to set up winter sports resorts in the Three Valleys, which he knew well. In captivity he met and formed a friendship with Maurice Michaud, who, after the war, would play a dominant role in developing French mountain areas, particularly in Savoie. Released in 1945, "the anarchist" \* Laurent Chappis devoted four years, along with Denys Pradelle, to the new project of the Savoie General Council. In the alpine pastures of the commune of Saint Bon they were to build the resort of Courchevel. He put Maurice Michaud, then the Savoie chief civil engineer, in charge of the operation. The two architects would invent a new resort which would be a "housing concept designed for a new mountain lifestyle."

These innovations would shape the style of Courchevel - the original Courchevel - and produce their own lessons.

With this pioneering experience, Laurent Chappis and Denys Pradelle were introduced in 1959 by Gérard Chervaz to the Boissonnas brothers, who asked them to research the development of the massif.

*\*L'Anarchitecte - Laurent Chappis rebelle de lior blanc, Philippe Révil, Ed. Guérin/Facim 2002*

##### Denys Pradelle

Pupil of Auguste Perret at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Denys Pradelle (1913-1999) had stayed in a sanatorium in the Isere. There he discovered the mountains to which he would devote his entire working life. A well-known personality and excellent teacher, this humanist architect was the founder of the Mountain Architecture Workshop. He was also the key player in the creation of the first National Park, in the Vanoise of the late 1950s, and in 1977, the first Board of Architecture, Planning and the Environment. In 1946 he joined Larent Chappis in the Savoie to design Courchevel 1850. By the time he was introduced to the Boissonnas he had already helped establish the Vanoise National Park and considered himself a developer. "Boissonnas was very faithful to Breuer, but that shortcircuited our approach at Courchevel."

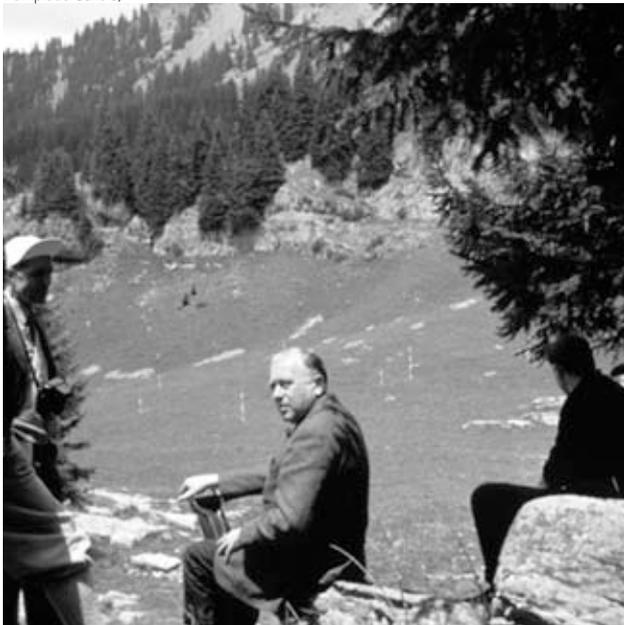
Denys Pradelle, interview with John Paul Brusson, 18 May, 1991

The assembled team was ready to start in 1959.

"It yet remains to appoint an architect whose prestige is such that his authority is beyond dispute, and whose mind is open enough to adapt to the site at Flaine, which consists of vertical cliffs that could disrupt the architectural unity. The project for this urban complex should include municipal roads, a place of worship, hotels, apartments, shops and theatres."

E. Boissonnas, *Ibid.*

E. Boissonnas and Marcel Breuer (sitting), surveying the site (© G. Carrard and M. Vardon/ Pompidou Centre)



E. Boissonnas presents the Flaine project, Brussels 1971 (Boissonnas Collection)





## THE UTOPIA OF FLAINE

### The protagonists

Over the Atlantic, Eric and Sylvie Boissonnas were attuned to the architectural trends of the American avant-garde : people like Marcel Breuer, Richard Neutra, Philip Johnson, Mies van der Rohe and Rudolf Schindler. They entrusted the construction of their home at Cap Bénat to Philip Johnson who, like Marcel Breuer, was living in their neighbourhood in New Canaan, Connecticut. From the beginning of his project, Eric Boissonnas had Marcel Breuer in mind to design the future ecumenical chapel at Flaine.

He admired "his talent, his self-questioning approach, his ability to see immediately what he can draw from a new technique, and also, very importantly, his warm human touch that would make his cooperation with French planning architects possible."

*E. Boissonnas, Ibid.*

#### The creator, the project's architect in chief Marcel Breuer (1902-1981)

Marcel Lajko Breuer was born in Pecs, Hungary. At 18 he won a scholarship to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna but soon chose to follow the less academic courses of the new Higher School of Art at the Bauhaus in Germany, headed by the architect Walter Gropius. In 1925, having completed his apprenticeship, he spent time in Paris and then returned to the Bauhaus as a "young master" and led the carpentry workshop. In addition to painting and his research on modular systems of prefabrication in architecture, he explored a new style of furniture, steel tubes with a flexible seat, and the famous Thonet edition of the Wassily armchair (in tribute to Kandinsky, who was teaching at the Bauhaus). In 1927 he founded a company in Berlin to market his furniture, which he wanted to mass produce and, leaving the Bauhaus the following year, opened his own architect's office. But Germany was in economic crisis. His projects and the competitions he entered came to nothing. He earned his living creating the interior design for apartments and continued his research on metals used in furniture. The year 1931 was spent touring southern Europe and Morocco by car. He also received his first orders for private houses. In 1933 he left Germany and established an office in Budapest with two colleagues. Two years later he emigrated to London and opened an office with the architect F. Yorke. His plywood furniture was

distributed by the Isokon company, he continued his research on cellular housing and, most importantly, built his first Y-shaped concrete structures with prefabricated materials, precursors to his future works. In 1937 Walter Gropius invited him to join him in the United States to teach at the School of Architecture at Harvard University near Boston, where he would teach for nearly 10 years. Concurrently, for four years, he headed an architectural firm with the former Bauhaus master. They built ten buildings, experimenting with simple solutions and aesthetic technology. The timber frame construction (balloon frame) of American homes was of particular interest to him and he developed it with his own approach. Load-bearing beams, large windows, cantilevers, and granite and slate played a role in his constructions. In 1946 he left Harvard for New York. His style was well received and he built many houses. In 1948 he created a show house for the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Marcel Breuer had a house in the same Connecticut village as Eric and Sylvie Boissonnas, and friendships were forged. In the late forties, he concentrated on large housing developments, a subject that had always fascinated him, as well as public and industrial buildings. His research on the prefabrication of concrete was highly accomplished : three-dimensional moulding, facades of hollows and projections, variations of light and rhythm. His reputation was international. In the years 1953-1954, at his offices in New York, MBA, he worked with Herbert Beckhard, Robert F. Gatje and Hamilton Smith. (Tician Papachristou joined them in 1965.) In 1960, the Boissonnas showed Marcel Breuer the site at Flaine, where he built his only winter sports resort. He worked there until he retired in 1977, all the while pursuing major projects in Europe and the United States.

On 30 November 1960 Marcel Breuer was chosen by the Boissonnas group. In the helicopter that took him to Flaine for the first time, he said : "What a wonderful site! How do we avoid spoiling it?"

*E. Boissonnas, Ibid.*

The protagonists in 1961, from left to right : D. Pradelle, L. Chappis, E. Boissonnas, G. Chervaz, M. Breuer, F. Berliottier (G. Chervaz Collection)



**The creation of a ski area**

A major advantage of a future resort would be a ski area attractive to all types of skier. Flaine was a remarkable example of this : an unspoiled location between 1600m and 2500m, with only one tenant, and naturally bordered on three sides by rocky outcrops dominated by the Desert de Platé and the plateau of Aujon. This north-facing amphitheatre kept its snow cover well, was protected from prevailing winds, and its slopes converged towards the centre of the resort. But such an arrangement would be complex because land had to be acquired at officially set prices and the communes of the Massif would need to be persuaded to collaborate. Arâches, Magland and Samoëns had interests either in the future ski area, the access routes or the position of buildings. The Prefecture and the General Council of the Haute-Savoie, then chaired by Arthur Lavy, were invited to arbitrate in any resulting disputes, the arrival of a "modern" city in the mountains being difficult for some elected Savoyard officials to accept. The skill and solid reputation of Rémi Boissonnas would help convince those with the greatest reservations. Freddy Couttet, then Emile Allais, would get the job of planning and creating the ski area.

"On site, I started by continuing the work of my predecessor, Freddy Couttet, who had done the survey. I stayed in contact with him about the lines of the pistes and ski lifts."

*Emile Allais in Gilles Chappaz, Allais, la légende du ski, ed. Guerin, 2007*

**Project management of the resort**

To work with the interested parties and obtain administrative authorisations, the Boissonnas group created the company SEAMAG in 1959 to research the development of the Arve-Giffre Massif. This became the Arve-Giffre development company, SAG, in June 1960.

In October of that year, SAG became SEPAD, responsible for research, development and finance, managed by Rémi Boissonnas and joined in 1966 by Eric. In 1978, when the latter retired, his son-in-law Roger Coste succeeded him, continuing until 1989, when the founders handed over to the Alain Duménil group, which in turn, in 1992, would transfer Flaine to Altus Finance group. In 1960, Eric Boissonnas returned permanently to France with his family. Agreements were signed between the Department and the developer, then between the developer and the three communes. Many meetings were held in Paris, Flaine and Geneva, during which all considered the challenges ahead and possible solutions. An initial firm approach to the construction of Flaine was the establishment of a document describing the goals and deadlines : make a plan (spring 1960), establish a route to Flaine (July 1960), organise the work (which would start in spring 1961), study the potential hydraulics of the site, how to respect and adapt to the mountain environment, study the resort's exposure to the sun (summer - autumn 1960). The opening of the resort to skiers was planned for Christmas 1963.

**The beginnings**

Marcel Breuer met the French-Swiss team for the first time on 3 March 1960. It comprised Laurent Chappis, Denys Pradelle, André Gaillard and Gérard Chervaz. It was a chance to get to know each other and voice opinions face to face about the future resort. A few weeks later, on 14 and 15 April 1960, they gathered at the Hotel du Rhone in Geneva to finalise the development plan.

Flaine, panorama, 2004 (O.T. Flaine/J. L. Rigaud)



### The ground plan

First, Laurent Chappis presented his plan, with recommendations for the organisation of the work. Then it was the turn of Marcel Breuer, who had worked from photographs and site surveys sent to New York. The two projects were similar in some respects. In addition to dwellings, spaces were reserved for meeting places and gatherings : a shopping mall, cultural centre, bars, restaurants, and sports facilities such as an ice rink and swimming pool. In both cases, the plan took into account the contours of the land. The buildings, all planned for the south-facing slopes, were naturally stepped, guaranteeing an excellent exposure to the sun.

### Disagreements

Differences of opinion appeared however, marking the start of disagreements which were difficult to resolve. Marcel Breuer already had his ground plan in place, showing the final shape of the resort, even though there was still some uncertainty about access. This way of stating his ideas without prior consultation created tensions within the team. In response to these criticisms Marcel Breuer made changes but relations between the different participants did not improve. Nevertheless the final plan was signed in New York in February 1961 by the Franco-Swiss team and Marcel Breuer.

"We had a team formed by Breuer, Chappis, Chervaz, Gaillard and Pradelle. They had great difficulty agreeing on the ground plan but all finally agreed to sign it. But when it came to the design and construction of the buildings, Chappis and Pradelle left the team within three weeks of each other and for the same reasons."

E. Boissonnas, *Ibid.*

In November 1961 Laurent Chappis wrote to Boissonnas about his disagreement with "Mr. Breuer's artistic wishes", followed three weeks later by Denys Pradelle : "... we cannot bring ourselves to follow Mr. Breuer's architectural conclusions about Flaine. We distance ourselves from his conclusions."

Even so, in 1962, Laurent Chappis presented Marcel Breuer's plan to the Superior Council of Architecture : "I regret to this day such a compromise which, intellectually, is a breach of ethics."

Laurent Chappis, *Ma montagne... du rêve à la réalité*, volume 1, ed. Facim 2003

André Gaillard left the project at the same time as his French colleagues. As for Gérard Chervaz, he chose to stay "because Flaine was my idea and I had succeeded, with Martens, in setting it up!"

G. Chervaz, *Historique de la station de Flaine*, 1995.

Laurent Chappis' plan became the master plan of the Planning Group (Breuer, Chappis, Chervaz, Pradelle and Gaillard). It was accepted by the Departmental Office of Infrastructure after a favourable opinion from the Ministry of Construction, 27 June 1962. The communes concerned, Arâches, Magland and Samoëns, signed it on 31 August 1963, 5 September 1963 and 10 September 1963, respectively.

Model of the resort in the Flaine valley, approved by the Superior Council of Architecture, 11 December 1961( CAUE 74 archive)



### Organising the site

Flaine was 15km from the nearest village and it was impossible to run shuttle buses from the valley, so workers needed to be housed on site. In 1961 the project's first accommodation was therefore a set of modular buildings near the chalets at Balachat, where there was a spring. There were 50 beds, a refectory in a marquee and a mobile canteen which moved with great difficulty along a route that was still only a track. For safety reasons, a telephone line to Les Carroz was installed.

Then permanent new homes were built at Les Gérats alongside the future route up to the site at Flaine, under the supervision of Denys Pradelle. Of the eight prefabricated metal buildings, seven provided a total capacity of 350 beds while the eighth housed the Club, whose shared facilities included a kitchen, an office, restaurant, bar and lounge. This complex lasted ten years and it was here that the first skiers were accommodated with the launch of the Platières cable car at Christmas 1967. Now demolished, it was replaced by the Hameau de Flaine.

### Transporting construction materials

Another aspect of site organisation was the delivery of materials. Nothing was going to be simple. Not only was the road not finished on time, but the Departmental Office of Infrastructure banned heavy trucks on the RD6 departmental road linking Arâches with the main RN205 road because of its many hairpin bends and steep gradients. A solution would be needed to speed up the work and make it more efficient, since it would have to stop during the winter. As a result, Marcel Breuer's idea of "prefabrication in the valley" was adopted from the end of 1960. It meant that completion of the work on schedule (Christmas 1963) and on budget could be envisaged.

A second service cable, three kilometres long, was set up for the construction of the upper Grandes Platières cable car station. The system was sometimes used by somewhat "illegal" passengers; among them, Mgr Sauvage, Bishop of Annecy, who came to Flaine to consider the establishment of the ecumenical chapel. He said later he had placed his soul in God's hands as he made the journey.

In 1967, for the inauguration of the new Grandes Platières cable car, Eric Boissonnas wrote to Mgr Sauvage: "May I hope that you come to see the progress, exchanging the crude container which you used on your first trip for the spacious cabin that you can take this time?"

E. Boissonnas, *Ibid.*

Jacques Boccard, surveyor. The route of the Magland cable car (J. Boccard)



The site huts at les Gérats, 1967/68 (CCF archive)



**The road, a delicate point**

However, the access road did not take the expected line. Land owners would not agree to sell to Arâches local authority at the officially set prices. A delay of five years, including three to acquire the land, caused a financial disaster. France in 1964 was struggling with inflation and Eric Boissonnas, although supported by the Prefect and the General Council, was forced to find financial support in the USA in order to continue the project. With patience and determination he managed to overcome all financial, legal, land, and administrative problems. Work finally resumed in 1967 and the station "half opened" for winter 1967/68.

**Flaine pre-premiere**

The first leaflet advertising the station announced : "The originality of Flaine in 1967, and what will make it a unique experience, is that the opening of the residential resort will not take place until 1968. You will not stay in a hotel or apartment, but in the Gérats ski refuge reserved for pre-premiere skiers."

Even so, the resort opened officially for Christmas 1968 with two hotels, Les Gradins Gris and Le Flaine, an apartment building, Bételgeuse, part of the shopping mall, the boilerhouse and a lift network. Although work on Avoriaz had started later it was gradually overtaking Flaine with the opening of the Dromonts hotel and the Séquoia building, designed by Jacques Labro.

**The opening of Flaine**

Albin Chalendon, Infrastructure Minister, opened the resort on 17 January 1969 : "There is now an international skiing battle in which France has major advantages. Currently we're a little behind, with not enough foreign tourists... I am convinced that Flaine will be a world class resort and so respond to our country's need to develop tourism rapidly."

E. Boissonnas, Memorandum (Paris 1981) in *L'architecture et le design de Marcel Breuer* M. Moncéré, 2001

**Eric Boissonnas achieves the goal he set in 1961**

"The entire development of the Arve-Giffre Massif must be exemplary... In the exemplary nature of the project, not least of the elements is the response to aesthetic considerations".

"Almost all construction in France is principally utilitarian and its quality suffers from tight budgetary restrictions. Very few building complexes have benefited from an exceptional site. Rarer still are those which, enjoying such a site, have not been affected by an outdated or misguided architectural context which leads architects in the wrong direction. In Flaine, none of these handicaps is present. To realise the project for which this site cries out, the developers accept they are not pursuing immediate profits, which are incompatible with aspirations for a balanced architectural order."

D. Chiquet, E. Boissonnas in M. Moncéré. *Ibid* p 23.

E. Boissonnas at the departure of the first sleeper train to Flaine. Christmas 1967 (Boissonnas Collection)



Flaine publicity leaflet, 1968. Left, the Forum; right, the sun deck of Le Flaine hotel (© G. Carrard and M. Vardon/Centre Pompidou)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

1960-1976 The architecture and design of Marcel Breuer

"The Flaine of Marcel Breuer was built from 1960 to 1976 by Marcel Breuer & Associates as the project he had conceived in constant dialogue with us. The first aim was to build a good example of architecture and planning in France. Flaine was born of this cultural imperative."

Eric and Sylvie Boissonnas in 1970, *La Culture Pour Vivre*, exhibition catalogue.

### The architectural expression

For the Boissonnas the strength of the architecture of Marcel Breuer, heir to the architectural and aesthetic concepts of the Bauhaus - a certain toughness, the basic physical aspect of materials - seemed to be in harmony with the mountains.

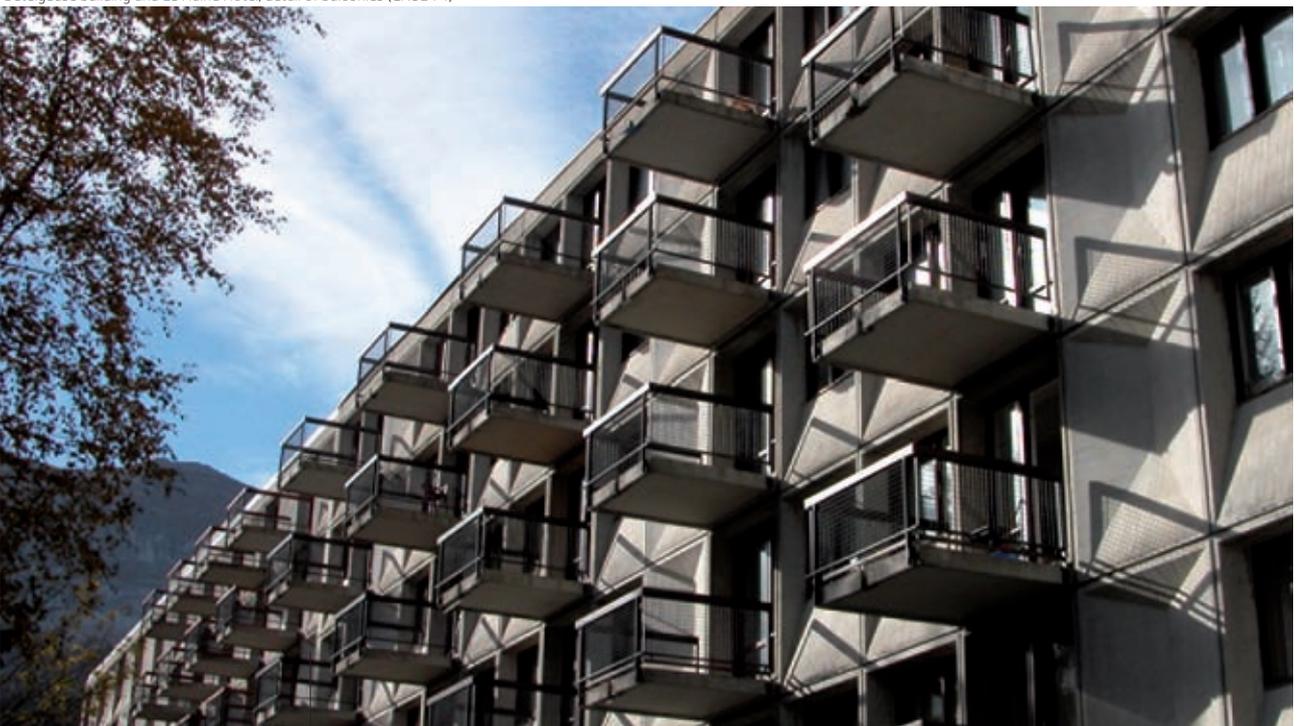
### The Bauhaus (1919-1933)

In less than 20 years Germany's Bauhaus permanently overturned international design and architecture. The Bauhaus (building or house) was founded by architect Walter Gropius after a meeting between two Weimar art schools. Concurrently, painting, sculpture and applied arts were being taught as integral elements of architecture, a collaboration between craftsmen and artists. Their research and works created a new lifestyle in the 20th century, adapted to the needs and influences of the modern industrial world and breaking with tradition. But the avant-garde spirit of the Bauhaus was not well received and the school was driven from Weimar to Dessau in 1925 and from Dessau to Berlin in 1932, finally closing the following year. Synonymous with research and modernism, the Bauhaus teachers were among the most influential creative minds of the 20th century: Paul Klee, Johannes Itten, Wassily Kandinsky, Mies van der Rohe, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Josef Albers. Marcel Breuer, student then teacher himself, defended the principles of functionalism, "form must follow function".

The Bauhaus at Dessau, detail of balconies (Astrid Epp/Frollein 2007)



Bételgeuse building and Le Flaine Hotel, detail of balconies (CAUE 74)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

1960-1976 The architecture and design of Marcel Breuer

### Prefabrication, an appropriate solution

"Large prefabricated panels can be designed to meet a variety of requirements : they may or may not be load-bearing; they can provide ribs and cavities for pipes, ducts and air conditioning equipment; they can form projections for protection against the sun; they may or may not have large openings. They can combine all these characteristics. What about the aesthetics? A new depth to the facade appears, a three-dimensionality resulting in an architecturally-enriched vocabulary, sun and shade."

T. Papachristou in M. Moncéré. *Ibid* p 52

### A new construction technique

To facilitate construction in the harsh climate at 1600m, the team decided on prefabrication in the valley. This heavy manufacturing process, invented and developed by engineer Jean Baret, enabled the moulding of concrete panels in high relief up to 50cm thick. Steel moulds were electrically heated at night, each series of elements being cast in the afternoon and taken out of the moulds the next morning, producing an excellent quality of concrete which would resist the climatic conditions of Flaine. The architect required a perfect finish, discarding parts with the slightest fault.

### The prefabrication factory

The prefabrication factory was built below the planned resort on land bought by Eric Boissonnas at Magland in the Arve valley. All concrete parts (facing panels, walls, coffered floors), as well as gravel and sand used for foundations, were stored. The flow of materials from the Magland factory at 600m to the site at 1600m required the construction of a fast cable car, which began operating in summer 1963. From the factory the cable car climbed to the Arbaron, at 2000m, above the Col de Pierre Carrée. From here trucks carried the prefabricated parts down the road from the col to the construction site.

From the start, the plan was that when construction work ended this cable car would be converted to carry skiers from Magland to Flaine. Unfortunately, this project was not to be.

The prefabrication factory at Magland, seen from the cable car  
(© G. Carrard et M. Vardon/Pompidou Centre)



Prefabrication plant, ceilings and beams (© G. Carrard et M. Vardon/Pompidou Centre)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

1960-1976 The architecture and design of Marcel Breuer

### Functionality and artistic expression

#### Marcel Breuer's credo

"Buildings should not be subject to fads, but reflect a general and lasting quality. Architecture must be based on utility. Irrespective of symmetry, its intentions should be more direct, as well as its moral and social responsibility. It should be more closely associated with technique while being more independent. The builder should feel free to reject tradition, free to be scientific, human, nontraditional."

M. Breuer in 1968, in *Projets et réalisations récentes*, Ed. Vincent, Fréal & Co, 1970

#### The materials

Marcel Breuer used very simple materials like concrete, local stone and three types of wood to compose a sculptural architectural work. If "art must be born of the material" (Jean Dubuffet), the principle is demonstrated at Flaine with strength and splendour. At the base of the buildings, we find random stone walling made of limestone quarried from Sixt in the Haut Giffre valley. The colour, darker than concrete, is in harmony with the limestone cliffs. Light auburn wood was used for the window frames. Meranti, dark treated wood, would be used subsequently. Pine was used for guardrails and some cladding.

The combination of precast concrete panels, local stone and different wood types testifies to an artistic quality and remarkable execution.

Hotel Aujon, room, 1974 (Y. Guillemot/ CCF archive)



The Balance Building, walkway and cladding in painted wood (R. Bianchi/ CAUE 74)



Totem Hotel, prefabricated wall panels with "diamond" stone facing (CAUE 74)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

1960-1976 The architecture and design of Marcel Breuer

### Rhythm

Rhythm plays an important role in the visual expression of the architecture of Marcel Breuer. On the milky grey concrete facades, bold and subdued, windows align in pairs or in fours in the middle of panels in long parallel strips. The balconies follow a rigorous and balanced design (Le Flaine, Bételgeuse).

The special treatment of each facade is intended to avoid the monotony of repetitive architecture. Original research by the architect, in the manner of a contemporary abstract painter like Mondrian, resulted in accentuating his work with relationships of orthogonal lines.

### Boldness

The audacious cantilever of the Flaine hotel, the hallmark of the resort, is a concrete cube in perfect balance over the cliff. It reflects Marcel Breuer's triumph over the void and bears witness to the designer's meticulous attention to detail.

Bruno Zévi, in his book *Learning to See Architecture*, cites the cantilever as the emblematic feature of the modern movement.



Le Flaine Hotel, cantilever scaffolding, 1967 (© Carrard G. and Mr. Vardon/ Pompidou Centre)

1, 2 & 3 : Les Lindars Hotel, detail of box windows and diamond pattern panels (G. Coquard/CCF)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

### 1960-1976 Design and architecture

#### Design applied to architecture

True to the Bauhaus ethic, Marcel Breuer's creativity was not purely architectural. In collaboration with Sylvie Boissonnas he used his design talents for the interiors of the resort's hotels and apartments. This involvement of the greatest contemporary designers demonstrated the developers' avant-garde approach.

#### Fittings and interior design

##### Fireplaces

The fireplaces of Le Flaine, Les Gradins Gris, and Les Lindars hotels were designed by Marcel Breuer; those of the Aujon and Totem hotels by Marcel Breuer and Associates. These concrete sculptures, with their abstract cuboid or conical shapes, are

works of art in themselves. The materials - concrete, either bush-hammered (textured) or left unfinished after shuttering removal - leave visible the black and whites of aggregates or marks of the molds. "In Flaine these fireplaces show with some relevance how art can enhance the quality of a space."

J.P. Brusson, *Architecture et qualité des lieux en montagne, Cordon, Megève, Flaine*, paper, Revue de Géographie Alpine, 1996

##### Ceilings

The precast concrete coffered ceilings are devoid of any superficial decoration. The simplicity and rigour of their lines respond perfectly to the aesthetic requirements of the architect and developer.

The covered street, 1973, and steel-reinforced beams of Davos Hanich (1970-1971) (© G. Carrard and M. Vardon/Pompidou Centre)



Les Lindars Hotel, fireplace by M. Breuer (© G. Carrard et M. Vardon/Pompidou Centre)



Aujon Hotel, fireplace by M. Breuer (Y. Guillemot/CCF archive)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

1960-1976 Design and architecture

"Above all, furniture must be practical and comfortable. If there is poetry... so much the better... but it's a plus."  
Pierre Paulin, L'ceil n°522, in M. Mancéré, *Ibid.*

### Furniture

#### Le Flaine Hotel

##### lounge :

Tulip table and chairs, Eero Saarinen, 1956, Knoll  
sofa in tweed by Tito Agnolli, Cassina  
bench seat in white simulated leather by Vico Magistretti, Cinova Design  
fireplace by Marcel Breuer

##### bedroom :

dressing table by Marcel Breuer  
Tulip chair, stool and pedestal, Eero Saarinen, 1956, Knoll  
chair by Pierre Paulin, Artifort



(Y. Guillemaut/CCF archive)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

1960-1976 Design and architecture

Today, after changes of ownership, all hotel interiors have been rebuilt, leaving hardly a trace of the original decor.

**Le Totem Hotel, lounge** : fireplace, Marcel Breuer; recliner chair, Marcel Breuer, Thonet (Y. Guillemaut/CCF archive)



**Apartment, Front de Neige** : Wassily B3 chair, Marcel Breuer, 1925-1927, Knoll, Butterfly stool, Sori Yanagi, 1956 (Y. Guillemaut/CCF archive)



**Apartment, Cassiopé** : Womb Chair and footrest, 1948, Eero Saarinen (Knoll). Stainless steel floor lamp, marble base, 1962, Achille Castiglioni and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni (Arco). Suspension light, Achille Castiglioni (Flos Viscontea Cocoon collection). (Y. Guillemaut / archive CCF).





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

1960-1976 Design and architecture

### Exterior design

The exterior building design gave the whole resort a clean and modern look.

### Streetlights

Marcel Breuer's understated glass globe is mounted on an understated vertical metal pillar or on a metal rod, perpendicular to the facade. At night this lighting reveals and animates the diamond faces of the precast concrete.

### The names and signs

The different parts of the resort are named Front de Neige, Forum, and Forêt in the original part of Flaine, with the extensions called Le Hameau de Flaine and Flaine Montsoleil.

The buildings are named after constellations (Cassiopee, Bételgeuse), or nearby mountains (Aujon, Les Lindars). For all street signs, the founders decided on the Cassandra typeface. In the same spirit, the original idea was that all shops would have a common visual identity with no unsightly and intrusive advertising, reinforcing the architectural unity of style typical of the Bauhaus.

Vertical lamp post, M. Breuer. Background, Cassandra typeface (G. Coquard/ CCF)



Capricorne, Cassandra typeface (CAUE 74)



Horizontal lamp, M. Breuer, Bételgeuse building (CAUE 74)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

1960-1976 Design and architecture

### Infrastructure

#### Flaine, a technical laboratory \*

"With an impressive number of innovations, this resort was the leader in France. In planning terms, it is the careful separation of pedestrians, skiers and motorists. In terms of urban infrastructure, it is the way in which they can move about in permanently accessible underground galleries. For movement between the two main natural levels it has two inclined lifts. By grouping facilities around one central place, sport, business and culture are all easily accessible. Ski lifts are arranged at piste level. In terms of information about the resort it is the internal TV service set up in 1972, at the same time as the first artificial snow in France. Finally and more recently there is the enhancement of the central part of the resort with urban decor created by great masters of modern art: Picasso, Dubuffet, Vasarely..."

\*Extracts from the book by Denys Pradelle, *Urbanisme et architecture contemporaine en pays de neige*, ed. Libris, 2002

Pylon No. 1 of the Flaine cable car (G. Coquard/CCF)



#### Ski lift pylons

Painted white, the pylons blend into the landscape in winter. The first pylon of the cable car is an unusual structure, almost sculptural in its design.

#### Artificial snow

Emile Allais was a leading expert in everything related to the quality of pistes. Eric Boissonnas asked him to take over from Freddy Couttet, who did the first studies, in designing the piste and ski lift layout. Originally from Megève and triple world skiing champion, Emile Allais had been involved in the development of Squaw Valley in California in the 50s and had also helped establish the Savoyard resorts of Courchevel and La Plagne.

"Flaine was a bit like an American resort and that is what attracted me. I liked the idea of this huge plateau where you could design easy runs." P. Révil, *Ibid.*

A few years later, Emile Allais suggested a solution for the lack of snow to Eric Boissonnas. "In 1972 there was no snow until mid-January. Boissonnas came to see me, very anxious. As he was leaving for the United States I advised him to take a look at the Laurentides in the Quebec region where I had seen artificial snow being made in 1946. The following year, 1973, we had snow cannon. Flaine was the first French resort to have them. Megève and Courchevel followed." P. Révil, *Ibid.*

First snow cannon, 1973 (Y. Guillemaut/archive CCF)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

1960-1976 Design and architecture

### Inclined lift No.1\* :

The orange cabin designed by Marcel Breuer's New York agency brings a lively and colourful sense of movement to the starker overall architectural complex. "Linking the resort's two main natural levels, separated by rocky cliffs or very steep slopes, was a structural essential of the ground plan. After lengthy discussions, an inclined lift whose rail closely follows the natural slope of the land was the solution finally adopted. Despite the difficulties, the technical solution was developed in 1976 by engineer Denis Creissels (who had already rebuilt the Grandes Platières cable car). The installation between the two stations is metal on reinforced concrete bases."

### Lower cable car station\*

The perspective view of Gérard Chervaz's initial lower station (now changed) reflected the exceptional quality of his architecture. "This quality is the result of the owner's wish to make sure that all installations, including ski lifts which are so often foreign to the constructed landscape, form part of the unity of the whole resort". Moreover, "the initial concern was to give skiers access to the cable car at piste level - something which was seen as a whole new concept in 1967".

\* D. Pradelle, *Ibid*

Lower cable car station in the 70s, G. Chervaz, architect (CCF archive)



Inclined lift No.1 (CAUE 74)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

1960-1976 Design and architecture

### A car-free resort

While at the heart of Flaine, The Forum, vehicles are separated completely from pedestrians, traffic is limited across the whole resort with the use of large car parks at the perimeter. Movement within the resort is on foot, skis, or via the two inclined lifts. Flaine responds to the modern concept of ski in ski out while allowing some vehicular access to buildings for greater convenience.

### The Boilerhouse, environmental issues

Originally, the Boilerhouse used gas, a fuel then regarded as non-polluting, to supply buildings with 110-degree hot water along service tunnels. It was the most powerful installation of its type in France. Designed by Laurent Chappis in 1968, the Boilerhouse was built at a distance from Flaine Forum. Marcel Breuer did not hide this service building. On the contrary, not only is it the first building seen by those arriving at Flaine Forum by road, its main facade was deliberately conceived as a window through which it is easy to see the three huge boilers needed for the comfort of the inhabitants of Flaine. It is a nod to the role of industrial beauty in Breuer's functionalist principles.

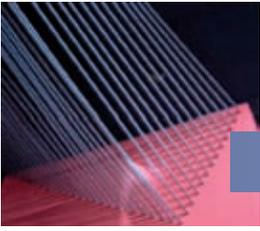
Today, the Boilerhouse uses a gas/oil mix and is equipped to cogenerate electricity and hot water.

The Boilerhouse and its glass facade. Architect, L. Chappis (CCF archive)



Inside the Boilerhouse, the three turbines (CCF archive)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

### Arts and culture

"The Art Centre is, for us, both the heart and the crowning achievement of Flaine. The resort was born of a cultural idea that my wife and I conceived together."

*E. Boissonnas, Ibid*

#### Flaine Art Centre

One of the unique aspects of Flaine is the strong presence of art. Its Art Centre opened in 1970. Exhibitions featured the works of contemporary artists. These exhibitions displayed very different aspects of creativity. Whether Art Brut or New Realists, sculptors, painters, cartoonists and photographers, all would make an appearance at Flaine. Works acquired during these exhibitions were displayed in rotation in the reading room of the lending library. Artists were chosen for their avant-garde creativity with great care taken to interest a public not necessarily artistically knowledgeable. Artists were invited to stay in Flaine during their exhibitions and at meetings at the Art Centre people could put questions to them if they wished. "Sylvie Boissonnas did not hesitate to commission artistic works : from Topor, the Alice in Snowland fresco in the cinema foyer, or from Arman, the Inclusion for the dining room at Le Flaine hotel. It was she who wanted to put Dubuffet's "Boqueteau" in the centre of the Forum and, at the foot of the pistes, Picasso's "totem, Head of a Woman". In 25 years, from January 1970 to September 1995, she organised more than 70 exhibitions with an expressly eclectic ambition. Depending on her taste, friendships and curiosity, she went from "cartoonists" to the "ritual paintings of the Mithila", from Max Ernst to Jean Dewasne, from Supports-Surfaces to Di Rosa, from Monique Frydman to Sophie Calle, or from Zuka to Buraglio."

*Bénédicte Pesle In La Culture pour Vivre, Ibid*

Eric and Sylvie Boissonnas also played an active part in supporting contemporary art in France.

"The Scaler Foundation, whose name is formed from the initials of the words Science, Culture, Art, Literature, Education and Religion, was created by Eric and Sylvie Boissonnas in the 50s in the United States. This foundation helped enrich the National Museum of Modern Art, where Sylvie was the president of the Society of Friends from 1980 to 1987."

*Catherine Boissonnas-Coste In La Culture pour Vivre, Ibid.*

"The collection formed by donations from the Scaler and Clarence-Westbury foundations is impressive, both in number and quality. Generations of artists are represented, masterpieces abound."

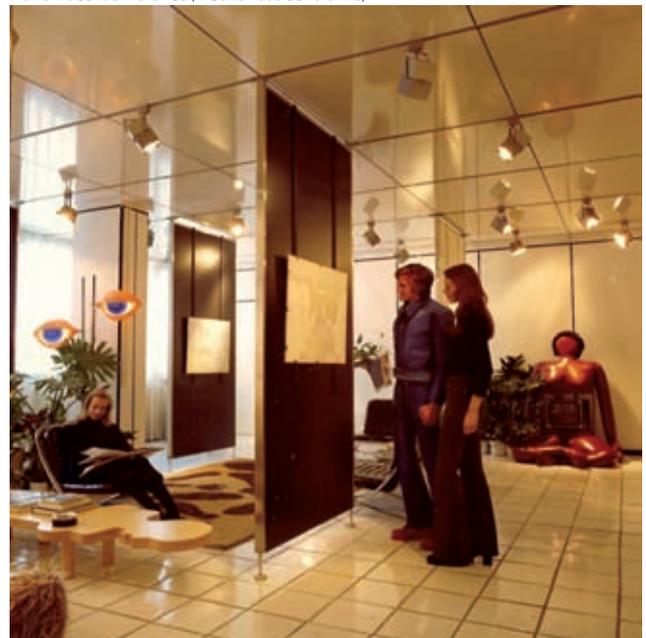
*Alfred Pacquement, In La Culture pour Vivre, Ibid.*

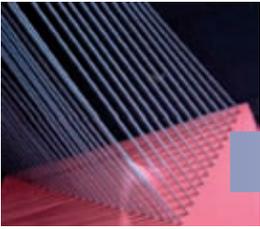
Flaine's Art Centre is now the Flaine Cultural Centre, with its exhibition area and lending library. It continues the dissemination of contemporary art, hosting exhibitions and organising workshops with art schools including the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts (ENSA) in Paris-Cergy and the Art School of Annecy. Flaine Cultural Centre is a member of the Haute-Savoie departmental exchange network for contemporary art (REDAC).

*Les Hommes d'armes, Anna Principaud, exhibition Plurisensorien 6, Flaine Cultural Centre, winter 2008*



Flaine Art Centre in the 70s (Y. Gullemaut/CCF archive)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

Arts and culture

*Fontaine de glace*, Carl Nesjar, 1974  
stainless steel, height 4m80 (CCF archive)

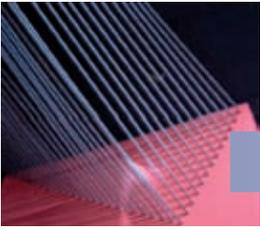


Ecumenical chapel interior, furniture, ceiling light, candle holders, M. Breuer, 1973. Simon Hantai, *Tabula*, acrylic on canvas, folding technique, 1980 (G. Coquard/CCF)



Victor Vasarely, *Trois Hexagones*, 1973, polychrome enamel steel construction, height 5m30. Study of colour stability and calculations, Jean Prouvé. In the background, the bell tower of the chapel (G. Coquard/CCF)



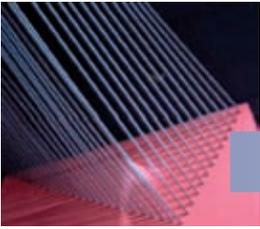


## THE STORY OF FLAINE

Arts and culture

Pablo Picasso, *Head of a Woman*, 1991, at Flaine Forum. Composite panels on metal framework. Work first produced in 1957 in small scale (80cm high). Donated by the Scaler Foundation, deposited with the National Museum of Modern Art (G. Coquard / CCF) © Estate of Picasso 2010





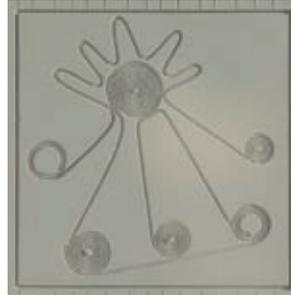
## THE STORY OF FLAINE

Arts and culture

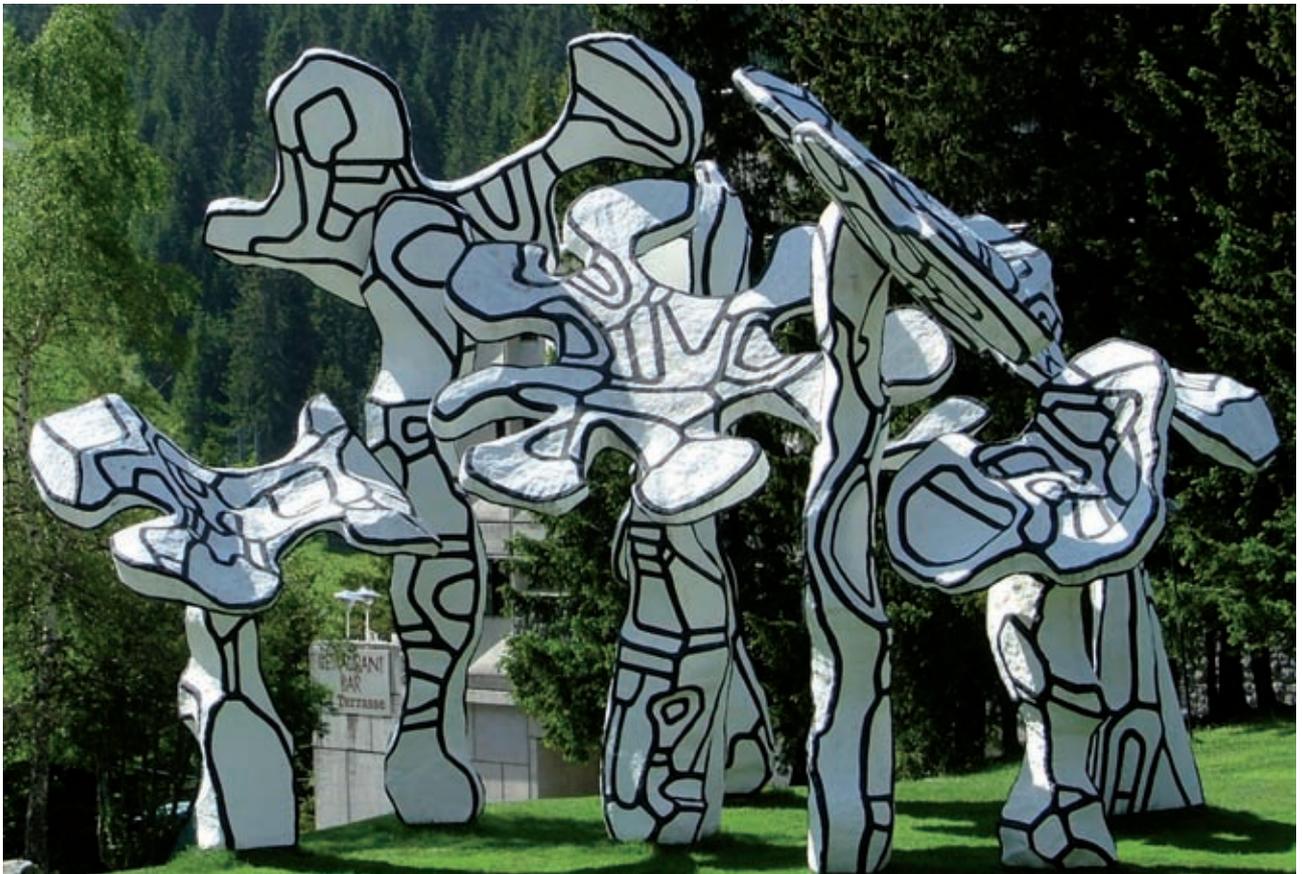


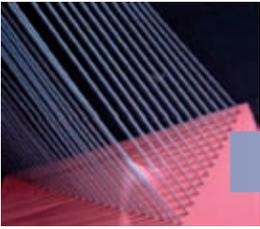
*Fontaine*, Pol Bury, 1986, hall of the Auditorium (at Flaine Forêt), 25 stainless steel balls in a tray. In the background, *Secret Yellow III*, Monique Frydman, 1989, diptych pastel and pigment on canvas. (G. Coquard/CCF). Donations of the "Culture for Life" association to the Flaine Syndicat Intercommunal, September 2008

*Empreintes de cordes*, Vera Cardot, 1976. Balance Building at Flaine Forêt (CAUE 74)



*Le Boqueteau des 7 arbres*, Jean Dubuffet, 1988, epoxy resin on iron frame, model, 1969. Scaler Foundation donation, deposited with the National Museum of Modern Art, © Centre Georges Pompidou (G. Coquard/CCF)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

### Arts and Culture

#### Portraits at altitude

Sylvie Boissonnas was anxious to anchor the Art Centre in the locality by creating a link with the people of nearby villages :

"In 1968, shortly after the inauguration of the resort, the Flaine Art Centre opened its doors. I wanted a more direct approach to the everyday lives of the local people so I suggested to Aline Luque that we produce ethnographic exhibitions about everything touching the lives of the Haute Savoie people."

"Then in 1978 we envisaged a larger project putting together a record of a region, its activities, its disappearing or changing ways of life, a record of life as it was still being lived in the Flaine area."

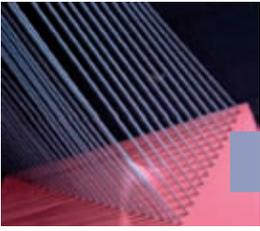
"From 1978 to 1986 interviews were recorded and photographs taken. More than 100 hours of interviews and nearly 30,000 photographs formed a unique collection. Choices (still, black and white, simplicity of the spoken word alone) were dictated by the desire to minimise any technical barrier between us. And so a climate of confidence was established. We decided to limit the research to a few people in four communes. This was the beginning of many years of fascinating encounters that have gone well beyond anthropology and history."

"From this raw material came some high quality results : a series of new documentaries which have since been very successful, exhibitions of photographs, and a book that sets the scene for the national debate about how France is changing. It is a work in progress showing how the evolution of a way of life shapes the future identity of a small region."

S. Boissonnas, *Portraits en altitude. Un regard d'Aline Luque*, by Aline Luque, Ed Créaphis, 1994

Sylvie Boissonnas with people living near Flaine, for the project *Portraits en altitude*. (Jean Gaurny, between 1976 and 1986)





## THE STORY OF FLAINE

### Arts and culture

#### Classical music

##### Les Bains de Musique (Immersion in Music)

"In 1969 Rémi had the idea of bringing musicians to Flaine, be they young or established. In exchange for a week's skiing they would give a concert. And so Michèle Boegner, Augustin Dumay, Eric Heidsieck, Frédéric Lodéon, Pascal Rogé and many others played in the cinema, whose acoustics had been designed for music. Then Eric and Rémi - by now president of the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris - proposed that Serge Petitgirard, who taught there, organise music courses in Flaine. Concerts followed the day's work and Rémi named this the "Bains de Musique" - the immersion of students in their discipline. The conditions were particularly favourable to the combined progress of all : many working studios equipped with pianos, an orchestra of students, and the leisure activities available in a mountain resort. There were soon 300 students and 30 teachers."

Jacques Boissonnas in *La culture pour vivre*, *Ibid.*

##### The Auditorium

In response to the development of the Bains de Musique, Eric Boissonnas asked architects Mario Jossa and Daniel Chiquet at Marcel Breuer and Associates to design a concert hall and a conservatoire of music with classrooms, lodgings for musicians and offices. They proposed two buildings on either side of the road at Flaine Forêt, connected by a walkway. The end result of this project was the Auditorium, a 500 seat concert hall designed to have excellent acoustics. Its glass facade resembles a grand piano opening on to a large lobby. A gym with a climbing wall was built under the seating tier of the concert hall.

"The hall was inaugurated on 2 August 1986 with a recital by pianist Eugen Indjic . In 1987, Laurent Petitgirard succeeded his father and assumed the directorship of the Academy and Flaine Festival. In 1988 he founded the French Symphony Orchestra.

"The year 1997 marked the end of the Festival, the Bains de Musique and the French Symphony Orchestra." J. Boissonnas, *Ibid.*

##### Flaine music today

"In Flaine the tradition continues with two summer academies, including one supported by the Scaler Foundation, devoted to chamber music. Each course is accompanied by concerts in the auditorium that now bears the name of Eric and Sylvie Boissonnas." J. Boissonnas, *Ibid.*

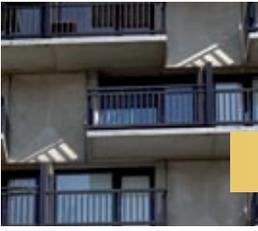
The first academy is aimed specifically at students following a career or preparing for national and international competitions. A nursery of tomorrow's young soloists, it is also open to experienced amateurs and motivated young beginners interested in meeting the artists. The second is more focused on chamber music. Teaching is provided by members of the Isaye Quartet. There are many free summer concerts in the Eric and Sylvie Boissonnas Auditorium. Jacques Boissonnas is president of the "Music at Flaine" Academy.

Eric and Sylvie Boissonnas Auditorium, tiered seating and stage (G. Coquard/ CCF)



Musique au Golf concert, summer 2005 (G. Coquard CCF)





## DISCOVERING FLAINE

40 years of architecture

"The architect has arranged pleasing discoveries for walkers: here the transparency of a building on pillars, there a stretch of forest between buildings, elsewhere the bravura of the overhanging terrace of Le Flaine Hotel, somewhere else a glimpse of the woods or the foot of a ski slope. And from the centre of the square, we feel this gradual progression from the human scale to that of the mountain, via buildings at first low, then bigger, high enough to challenge it." J. P. Brusson, *Ibid.*

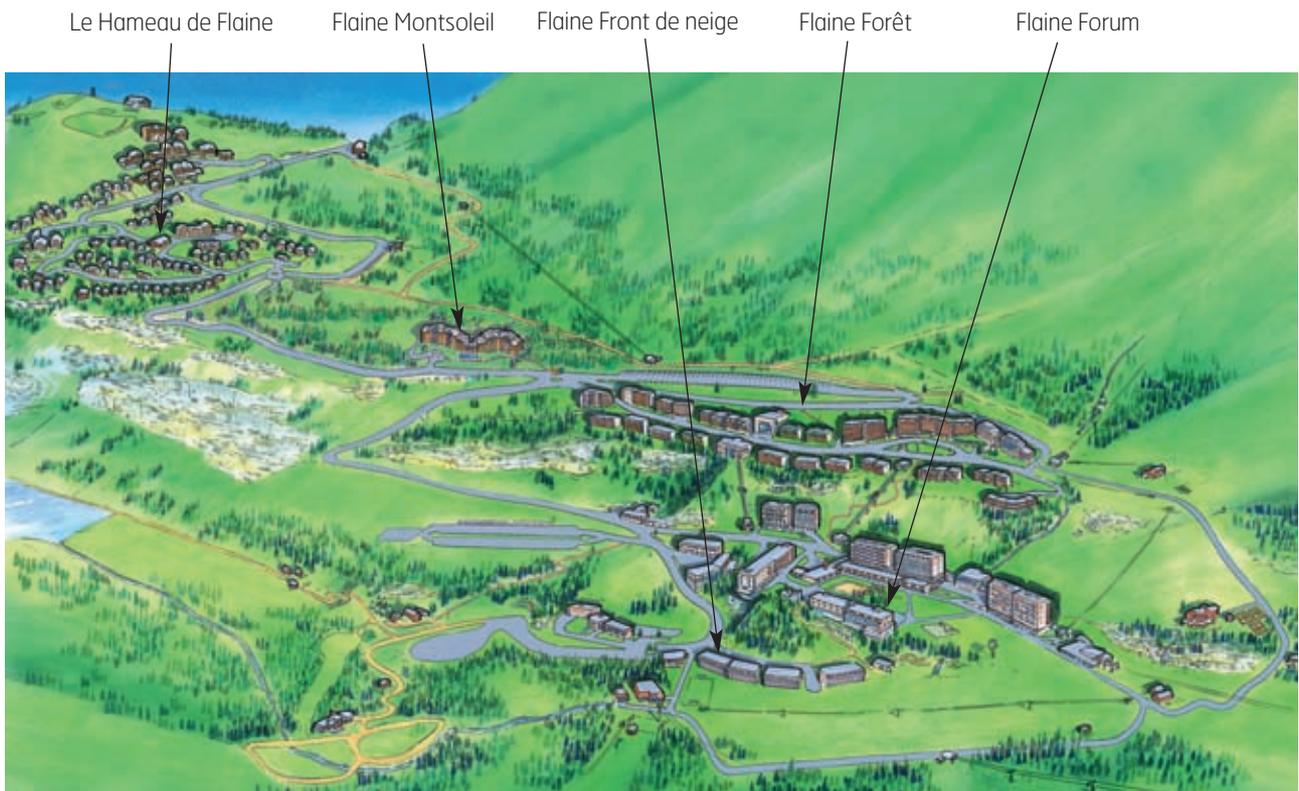
### The story of Flaine, Marcel Breuer's signature

Work began on the central part of Flaine in 1963 with earthworks and roads, before being finished nearly ten years later, with the construction of the Vega Building. So it is there where one finds the most authentic buildings, which best reflect the work of Marcel Breuer.

#### Flaine Forum (1968-1976) 1620m

Flaine Forum is a group of buildings set around a large public square, hence its name, with a wide opening to the east towards the ski area. It is a meeting place where skiers naturally converge. It is from the centre of the Forum that one sees, in stages, a progression that leads our eyes from here to the buildings, then from the buildings to the mountains. The resort emphasises the peaks, the tall silhouettes of which immerse us in the natural environment. The location of residential buildings is not strictly rectilinear. Aesthetically they all contribute to the same stylistic unity and belong to the type of modern architecture that does not try to conceal size or construction techniques.

It is at Flaine Forum that one can best observe the architectural qualities employed in this natural bowl. Each building has been constructed from prefabricated and moulded concrete elements which allowed the architect to model the facades on the sun and shadow principle characteristic of his style at the time.



(O. T. Flaine/Agence Thuria)



## DISCOVERING FLAINE

### Flaine Forum

#### Entry to Flaine Forum

Chronologically the construction of the resort began here. The final building of Flaine Forum, Aujon, was completed after seven years of intense activity.

#### Le Flaine Hotel (1968)

Le Flaine was the resort's first building and the synthesis of the thoroughly modern style also seen in its other buildings. The facades are rigorously designed and make the most of the sunshine here. Each component, whether a base of local dressed stone, balconies, openings, wooden frames or diamond motifs, was integrated thoughtfully and with a strong sense of rhythm, based on alternating recesses and protrusions, vertical spans and horizontal bands. Concrete, precast in the valley, nobly asserts itself and deliberately turns its back on the mountain tradition. Cast in metal moulds making unusual sizes possible, it is free of the usual grain marks left by wooden shuttering.

The result is aesthetically pleasing, being highly sensitive to changes in light and smooth to the touch.

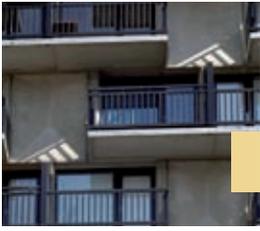
The other distinctive feature of this hotel is its sun deck, defying the cliff which it overhangs. This perfectly mastered technical achievement allows the building to extend beyond the base formed by the rocky cliff on which it rests. This way of dealing with a sudden change in terrain was an opportunity for Marcel Breuer push the bounds of the possible. Logic would have dictated that its construction followed the curve of land along the ridge. He chose, however, go against nature by presenting the opposite side of the hotel to the ski area. The effect is striking and unique.

#### Bételgeuse Building (1968)

Closely associated with the Hotel Le Flaine, it differs, however, with the absence of a masonry base and an abundance of projecting balconies reminiscent of Bauhaus architecture. Facades and roofs of both buildings were listed as historic monuments on 29 April 1991. Their location was dictated by the desire to close the Forum, which thus becomes a square. The columns, today filled in, allowed visual continuity.

Flaine Forum general view (CAUE 74)





## DISCOVERING FLAINE

### Flaine forum

#### **Véga and Aujon (1972–1973)**

These two buildings, a hotel and residential complex, are less interrelated than their neighbours. Clearly separated by an empty space, they are linked only by a discreet portico at the base which protects pedestrians from the weather. The links between their respective southern facades are also less subtle. That of the Hotel Aujon is flat. Its originality comes from the checkerboard arrangement of its openings. The Véga apartments, on the other hand, are all preceded by balconies irregularly interrupted according to floor level, which create multiple shadows that darken the facade. The completion of this building marked the end of construction at Flaine Forum and the closure of the cableway which brought prefabricated components from the valley to the site.

#### **Flaine Forum north**

The number and size of buildings which close the Forum to the north make this the resort's most dense complex. This is made possible by the 70m height and steepness of the cliffs behind. Marcel Breuer took advantage of this geographical feature and used his talent to infuse an upward movement in the architecture of the resort. The greater the altitude, the more impressive the size of the buildings. The more the mountains dominate, the more the buildings grow so as not to be crushed by the rocky mass. This building therefore has all the space necessary for a wide variety of functions. In addition to accommodation, it provides skiers with shops and restaurants, cultural amenities (cultural centre and cinema), sports (swimming, skating, ski school), activity rooms and a tourist office.

All are grouped in a long low building which also forms the terrace of two buildings which it precedes, an approach the architect had already used in some of his buildings in the USA, notably in Connecticut. There are also two floors of covered galleries, open or not to the outside, for the exclusive use of pedestrians.

#### **Cassiopée and Les Lindars (1969–1970)**

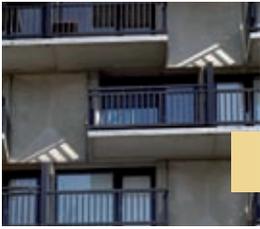
The hotel Les Lindars, named after a nearby summit, is joined to the Cassiopée building by an open tread outside staircase. In both cases, each south facing room has large picture windows with a wide view of the landscape, but the external arrangement varies according to the building. While the whole follows a chequered pattern, details are revealed in turn as the sunlight is reflected according to the relief of the concrete panels.

#### **Aldébaran (1971)**

The first building encountered by skiers returning from the slopes, Aldébaran is named after the brightest star in the Taurus constellation. Above all, it has the peculiarity of appearing to be two buildings while in fact being only one. Long and narrow, it is the resort's biggest block, a fact easily overlooked because of an offset near the middle of the facade. There are no concrete panels in high relief here, except on the short sides, and balconies in a staggered layout give a stepped rhythm to the whole. The first two floors have a framed form with wide, regular openings on to a row of apartments on the first floor and shops protected by a colonnade on the ground floor.

Flaine Forum, Aldébaran building with shops on the ground floor (CAUE 74)





## DISCOVERING FLAINE

### Flaine forum

#### The headquarters of the Flaine intercommunal organisation

A plan dated 1963 included the construction of a town hall where the clinic is now, suggesting that the creation of a new town was under consideration. In fact the resort is managed by an intercommunal organisation of Arâches and Magland, whose headquarters is located west of Flaine Forum. Built in concrete in the style of the resort, it forms a large courtyard around which are the resort's administrative offices and the school for the children who live permanently at Flaine.

#### Le Totem and Les Gradins Gris hotels (1968-1971)

These two hotels are difficult to observe because of the high trees nearby. Their north and south faces are interesting while being dissimilar. To enjoy maximum sunshine and views of the bowl of Flaine, the two buildings have their backs to the Forum. Consequently, they are much more imposing seen from Flaine Front de Neige. The architect has effectively benefited from the slope to give this side additional floors, where large picture windows look out over the countryside. The north facades to the rear of the buildings have been treated with care and are reminiscent of Le Flaine Hotel. The concrete work and overall composition are similar. Pillars are absent here but we find the diamond patterns aligned in columns and windows, grouped in fours this time, with wooden frames. The base is also identical : a grey stone masonry wall above which is a row of windows, themselves surmounted by a reinforced concrete lintel.

#### The ecumenical chapel

Opened in 1973, three years after the cinema, the chapel has an unusual form that reverses the orientation of the roof slopes and slightly tilts the exterior walls, with the main axis a pyramidal bell tower above the central hall. Flaine's only non-concrete building, it is timber, covered with Angevin slate. The upper part is enhanced by rainwater channels whose internal drainage avoids the need for unsightly gutters and is protected from frost. The interior furniture was designed by Marcel Breuer: an altar, benches, the light fitting, and four bronze candle holders. The tower houses a bell that chimes on the hour and for ceremonies. There is no cross, the chapel having been funded by a U.S. foundation which wanted it to be accessible to members of the Jewish and Muslim faiths as well as Christians, and because it is also used for concerts and debates.

"The conciliatory ideas of Vatican II were floating gently in the air and we thought that Flaine would take the lead in providing religions with an ecumenical chapel." E. Boissonnas, *Ibid.*

The ecumenical chapel, Flaine (G. Coquard/CCF)



General view of the Forum. At centre, the Cassiopée building, Les Lindars hotel and the shopping parade. In the foreground, gable end of the Aldébaran building (CAUE 74)





## DISCOVERING FLAINE

### Flaine Front de Neige and Flaine Forêt

#### Flaine Front de Neige (1973-1976) 1580m

The lowest part of the resort, Flaine Front de Neige is the second phase of construction. The concrete buildings are of traditional construction except for the facade panels, precast on site. This first row of six buildings\* is in the form of a low block giving directly on to a flat area of snow nearer the pistes. Their position follows the natural contour of the land, giving them a crescent shape whose convex part faces the sun. Their overall composition reflects a geometric aesthetic based on light, unadorned walls whose rhythm is set by alternating bands of wood, glass, and concrete. The ground floor opens on to a space created and sheltered by the upper floors, protected from snow in winter and in summer providing an ideal rest area. The first floor has a continuous balcony with walls separating each apartment without interrupting the line of the railing, while the second and final floors use the same device but each unit is well marked. The partition walls are bevelled here, which, together with the lack of an upper floor, promotes maximum exposure to natural light. End walls are unashamedly concrete, with right angled and oblique assembly lines left apparent and patterning the whole.

\* Antarés, Bellatrix, Capella and Deneb and the UCPA centre, Altaïs, designed by architect Daniel Chiquet. The buildings are arranged alphabetically.

#### Flaine Forêt (1976-1988) 1750m

This group of buildings is the third phase of the resort. It is built of conventional reinforced concrete, with the exception of some precast facade panels. Well above the buildings, the northern slope overlooking Flaine has avalanche defences associated with plantations of Swiss stone pine. Flaine Forêt is characterised by the small complex to the south, whose facades unashamedly combine concrete and wood, and larger complexes to the north which form the resort's final set of buildings. True to the natural contours, the ground plan positioned them on a curved line along the access road.

The Balance, Bélier, and Capricorne complex was built in 1976. The originality of these buildings is the presence of a walkway that compensates for the different levels, placing the entrance on the upper floor and not on the customary ground floor.

Flaine Front de Neige, general view of the facades (CAUE 74)



#### The residence of La Forêt

The last building by Marcel Breuer in Flaine, this residence responded to a new requirement, a forerunner of current tourist accommodation. Comprised of rental apartments, it offers many services: reception staff, bar, restaurant, room service, luggage room. From an architectural standpoint, the relatively large mass of the building is minimised by dividing it in three. The facade makes extensive use of wood, painted in a shade close to black, as at the Aldébaran building at the Forum.

In the foreground, Balance and Belier buildings, Andromède building in the background (R. Bianchi/CAUE 74)



Flaine Forêt, transition from M. Breuer to his associates (O T Flaine / J L Rigaud)





## DISCOVERING FLAINE

### Flaine after Marcel Breuer

#### Marcel Breuer retires, 1977

His associates, Robert Gatje in New York, and Daniel Chiquet and Mario Jossa in Paris, continued the construction of Flaine according to the Master's plan and in a similar architectural style. The idea of walkways and identical treatment of facades can be seen in the complex that includes Andromède, Gémeaux, Castor, Pollux, Sagittaire and La Grande Ours. The architects completed the plan with the construction of the Auditorium in 1986 and the stations at each end of inclined lift No. 2 in 1988.

#### Grands Vans (1978-1979)

At the eastern end of Flaine Forêt, this concrete building is the work of Gérard Chervaz. Comprising 20 apartments, it follows a pentagonal layout on three levels with a break in the slope. The lower ground floor studios are beneath a cantilevered upper ground floor. The first floor is slightly recessed, giving a specific architecture to this building which fits the site remarkably well. Other structures echo Marcel Breuer's architectural approach to small buildings, such as the walkway to the north giving access to the upper floor, notably Sirius, Verseau and Iris, built by the developer Catherine Mamet. As for the l'Arche building, by the developer MGM, it might be more in keeping with la Grande Motte (to which its architecture perhaps refers) than with Flaine. The Doris building and the Residence du Grand Massif complete the Flaine Forêt complex, along with the Residence Les Pléiades, built in 2007.

#### Flaine Forêt renovations

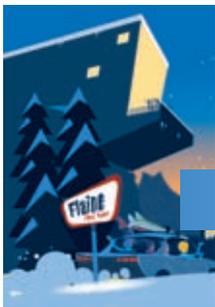
The facades of Flaine Forêt have been renovated. Since these buildings are within the historical monuments protection area (radius 500m) around Le Flaine Hotel and Bételgeuse, the work was supervised by the French state's Architect of Buildings, who required an identical colour for all external elements. Flaine Forêt therefore retains a unity, but the "raw concrete" appearance which formed the identity of the resort unfortunately no longer exists.

Renovated facades in Flaine Forêt (R. Bianchi/CAUE 74)



The Grands Vans building, G. Chervaz, architect (R. Bianchi/CAUE 74)





## DISCOVERING FLAINE

### Flaine after Marcel Breuer

#### Le Hameau de Flaine

Underway since the 90s at the location of the old site huts at Les Gérats, this project by developer Moelven was inspired by Scandinavian design, with wood painted in coloured tones. It comprises 70 chalets and several apartment buildings. We perceive in this new village an architectural style completely exogenous, related neither to Flaine nor to the neo-Savoyard style. Its distance from the resort avoids direct confrontation with the architecture of Marcel Breuer. Because of this distance, a lift, unfortunately not built, was planned to give residents direct access to the ski area. Shuttle buses are now used. Le Refuge du Golf is an extension in progress of Le Hameau de Flaine. This complex, with a "classic" architectural style of unpainted cladding, comprises 4-star tourist residences and 40 apartments, with restaurant, shops, pool and relaxation area, as well as 14 cottages.



Le Hameau de Flaine, its coloured chalets and chapel. (O T Flaine/J L Rigaud)





## DISCOVERING FLAINE

### Flaine after Marcel Breuer

#### Flaine Montsoleil

Opened in 2008, this is the latest resort project by Canadian developer Intrawest after Les Arcs 1950. The original programme was to provide a total of 2,400 tourist beds in several 4-star tourist residences, with shops, restaurants and leisure areas. Its architectural style follows a "product-led" approach consistent with the developer's other projects. Les Terrasses d'Eos is the name of the first residence completed, with 160 furnished apartments. It is directly connected to the Flaine ski area by a new chairlift and dedicated pistes. But sales have not gone as planned and the complex has been sold to the Pierre & Vacances group.

#### Les Terrasses de Véret

Property development continues in Flaine with a new four-star residence at Flaine Forêt from builder Alpine Home.

Les Terrasses d'Eos, first phase of Flaine Montsoleil between the Hameau de Flaine and Flaine Forêt. (G. Coquard/CFF)



Les Terrasses de Véret (Flaine Immobilier)





## THE FLAINE OF TOMORROW

### Flaine Forum

#### Le Centaure

Located at the heart of the Forum, the tourist residence Le Centaure, designed by architects Hauvette & Associates and commissioned by the developer MGM Constructeur, adjoins the mountain at the site of the public pool, remodeled and integrated into the new complex. The proposal takes advantage of the topography to connect the resort directly to the slopes. Sandwiched "between two Breuer pieces" bordering the Forum, the residence forms part of the new building morphology in response to the Terminal Neige Palace on the other side the Forum, at the foot of the slopes. Its architecture and landscaping extends and updates the composition of the entire resort, in the spirit of its original modern identity.

Set over a swimming pool, the building is a curved block of 87 south-facing apartments around a two-storey pedestrian area. A predominantly glazed wood surround panel optimises both view and sunshine. The arrangement of these panels echoes the surrounding buildings by Marcel Breuer while having more generous openings.

The pool area forms a retaining presence on the edge of the Forum, integrated into the mountain. The roof of this polygon provides ski in ski out facilities for residents and a summer sun deck for swimmers. The openings are in the form of three square window modules arranged alternately to enliven the facade and ensure many different viewpoints while maximising sunlight. This contemporary architectural style is at the heart of the story of Flaine.

Le Centaure, interior view of the pool with coffered roof windows. (Hauvette & Associates, architects)



Position of the building (Hauvette & Associates, architects)





## THE FLAINE OF TOMORROW

### Flaine Forum

#### Le Terminal Neige Palace

The project for this new hotel complex was devised by architects Hauvette & Associates. Located in the prow of the Forum at the heart of the resort, Le Terminal Neige Palace is adapted to the topography of the site. The project promises preserved views, an extension of the Forum to the Front de Neige and integration at the heart of an architectural ensemble with a strong identity.

It consists of a four-star hotel and a tourist residence connected by a service platform adjusted to the different levels of the natural terrain. Its accessible roof extends from the Forum to the Front de Neige, allowing pedestrians and skiers to traverse the complex.

Interior of a loft (project) (Hauvette & Associates)



The building of the future residence is a curved block, organised and defined from the basic module – duplex or loft accommodation accessed by sheltered walkways. The rooms are to the north, with double height living rooms to the south, facing the view. A filter consisting of six panels of metal mesh, distributed over a regular framework and arranged over the unfinished exterior of the balcony, offers the required sun protection without detracting from the clean lines of the openings. The differential arrangement of these panels creates a lively composition, on the facade as well as from inside the lofts. By its sheer size, meanwhile, the hotel forms an impressive new object on the edge of the Forum to the right of the break in the slope. The base is raised at the angles by large oblique beams which allow ample light into its public areas. Perforation of the metal cladding of the facades is regulated by a square window module. In a staggered pattern, these modules enliven the facade and multiply the framing of views from within the rooms.

Hotel, north facade and position (project) (Hauvette & Associates)



Southern facade (project) (Hauvette & Associates, architects)





## LOVING FLAINE !

### Conclusion

Writing about Flaine and Marcel Breuer is intimidating. The career of the architect was exceptional and his life so closely linked to the upheavals of the 20th century that it reinforced the universal aspect of his work. His time at the Bauhaus was obviously crucial, making him an icon of modernity, a legend whose work had a strength and power to enthrall every lover of architecture who spoke of him. Equally, his designer's approach in the British or American sense, separated him from French professional practices. The commission from Eric and Sylvie Boissonnas for a ski resort would bring him together with another school, another definition of architecture. From this confrontation there would be no compromise. Marcel Breuer would be the "the winner".

He produced a work that was much disputed, challenged or misunderstood but which today, with the passage of time, can perhaps be addressed.

When reflecting on Flaine, Chervaz very logically recalled the meeting between the Mountain Architecture Workshop team which brought together Pradelle, Chappis and Boissonnas. Humbled by the mountains, the architects tended to want to observe traditional construction solutions. Their thoughts responded to the elements of the site, their choices justified by the context. The environment imposes itself on man and dictates the form of his habitat but technical advances allow a response in terms of function and comfort. Breuer was equally involved in this issue of the relationship between man and his environment.

His response in the sixties was highly sophisticated, the result of a long development. He put all his energy into overcoming architectural and engineering "contingencies", prefabrication being the answer to flaws in implementation and lack of precision. The industrialisation of building is the engine of progress. True to the modern movement's principles he rejected the traditional town and reference to the vernacular habitat. The ambition was to free 20th century man and society, and therefore architecture, of any obligation to seek a harmonious relationship with the environment. He focused his work on light and sculpted its facades as bas-reliefs. Allowing the materials to capture the subtle play of light and shadow is a fundamental principle of the history of architecture. Architecture and art were as one in the service of this continuing project.

He described his vision as follows :

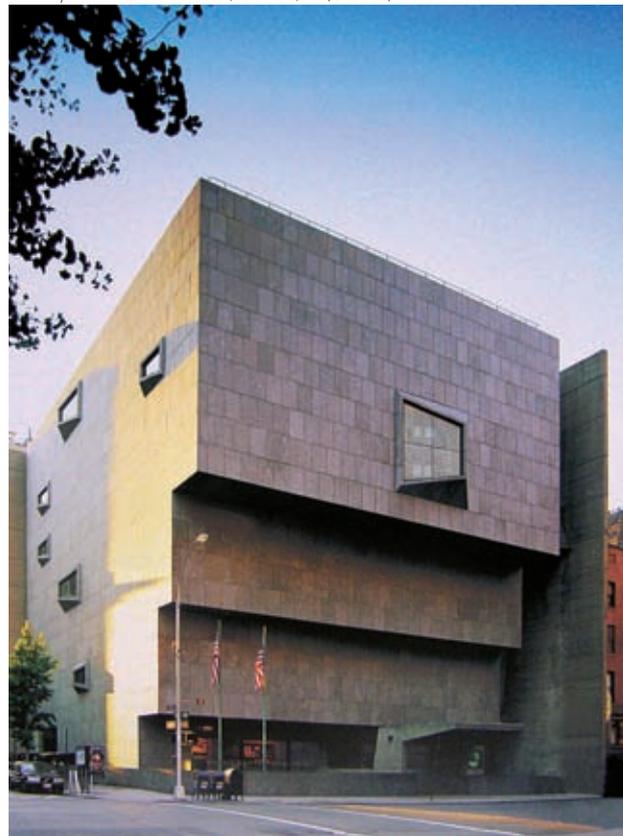
"The architecture of Flaine is an example of the application of the principle of light and shade that I adopted. The facades of the buildings are carved like facets of a diamond. The rays of sun hit their faces from different angles, contrasts in lighting resulting from their reflections. The horizontal linear quality of building levels, a human creation, contrasts with the chaotic terrain of the mountain which testifies to the the overwhelming power of nature. Each building maximised the use of modern construction techniques. The entire composition is integrated into the magnificent and wild landscape of Flaine, which it partners and humanises."

It is interesting to examine his works contemporaneous with those in Flaine to recognise the clear guiding force behind his artistic expression. His building at Amherst on the campus of the University of Massachusetts (1965-1969) thus incorporates the technical and architectural principles of Flaine. Through its still open base and pillars this lone building proclaims more clearly its uniqueness (those in the Bételgeuse building now being occupied).

The Whitney Museum in New York (1966), exalts the figure of the pyramid, masters issues of scale at the site and declares the cantilever as an urban statement. The signature appears in the form of a single window (diamond point), a veritable manifesto on the wall overlooking Madison Avenue. Understanding Breuer is to accept the need to resolve the questions about the site and the project. But resolving these questions is not sufficient to make sense of the architecture. He brought his personal research and contemplation on materials to the link between form and function. To appreciate Flaine requires acceptance of the metaphor of light which informs the critical intellectual position and the new ideas that characterised the Bauhaus: passage from night to day, from the obscurantism of the town of the past to the rational city, and the hope for a renewed society. Working with light is a process, a method, an intellectual attitude, rather than a complete architectural doctrine. This may seem paradoxical when one composes a work in concrete expected to have a lasting dialogue with the mountains.

Quoted by E. et S. Boissonnas in *La culture pour vivre, Ibid*

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (CAUE 74)





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### Key events

Houses are not mentioned. Dates correspond to the start of the projects and not the completion of buildings.

- |           |  |      |   |
|-----------|--|------|---|
| 1902      | Marcel Lajko Breuer born in Pècs in Hungary  | 1966 | Administrative Building of the Torrington Company, Conn   |
| 1920-1924 | studies at the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau, carpentry workshop  | 1967 | Roxbury High School Campus, Boston, Mass. Technology Building, University Heights, New York, NY / Cleveland Art Museum, Ohio Headquarters of the Armstrong Rubber Company, West Haven, Conn. / Convent of the Sisters of Divine Providence, Baldegg, Switzerland. / Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington DC Campus and garage of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass. / Engineering Building, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. |
| 1925      | heads the carpentry workshop of the Bauhaus in Dessau  | 1968 | first enlargement of the IBM research centre in La Gaude / Nice, France. Administrative, research and production complex of IBM, Boca Raton, FL Grand Coulee Dam third power plant, Grand Coulee, Wash.   |
| 1928      | sets up his office in Berlin   | 1969 | Cleveland Trust Company, Ohio Grand store De Bijenkorf, car park, Rotterdam, Netherlands  |
| 1933      | moves his office to Budapest Buildings, Doldertal, Zurich, Switzerland   | 1971 | Technical Centre of the Torrington Company, Conn. Bryn Mawr Primary School, Baltimore, MD Conference Centre, American Press Institute, Reston, VA / Public Library, Central Atlanta, Atlanta, Ge.   |
| 1935      | moves his office to London   | 1972 | exhibits at MoMA in New York. Headquarters and production unit of Mundipharma, Limburg, Germany Grand Coulee Dam, Visitor Centre, Grand Coulee, Wash.   |
| 1936      | London Theatre Studio, London  | 1973 | Southern New England Telephone Company, traffic service building, Torrington, Conn. / Australian Embassy, Paris, France. / Public Library Harrison, Clarksburg, WO  |
| 1937      | joins Walter Gropius in the USA, teaches architecture at Harvard. They complete ten buildings.   | 1974 | Convent of the Sisters of Divine Providence, infirmary, Baldegg, Switzerland. / Tician Papachristou rejoins the MBA team in Paris   |
| 1946      | sets up his office in Manhattan, and stops teaching at Harvard   | 1975 | University of the State of New York, buildings of the Faculty of Engineering and Science, Buffalo, NY Torin Corporation, Penrith, Australia   |
| 1949      | Airport terminal buildings, Fairbanks and Anchorage, Alaska  | 1976 | stops work and moves with his wife to Manhattan   |
| 1950      | Foyer of Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY  | 1981 | Marcel Breuer dies in New York  |
| 1951      | Art Centre S. Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY Public library, Grosse Pointe, Mich. Department store Abraham & Strauss, exterior, Hempstead, NY  |      |   |
| 1952      | Torrington Company, Oakville, Ontario, Canada UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France   |      |   |
| 1953      | St John's Abbey and University, Collegeville, Minn. Department store De Bijenkorf, Rotterdam, Netherlands  |      |   |
| 1954      | High School Litchfield, Litchfield, Conn. Bantam Primary School, Bantam, Conn. Monastery of the Annunciation of the Sisters of St. Benedict, DN Connecticut Junior Republic, Litchfield, Conn.   |      |   |
| 1955      | Torrington Company, Van Nuys, Calif. Housing for the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ   |      |   |
| 1956      | United States Embassy, The Hague, Netherlands Buildings of the University of New York, NY  |      |   |
| 1957      | Office buildings Van Leer Vatenfabrieken, Amstelveen, Netherlands. Westchester Synagogue, Scarsdale, NY / Hunter College Library, New York, NY Torrington Company, Rochester, Ind.   |      |   |
| 1959      | IBM Research Centre in La Gaude / Nice, France Church of St. Francis de Sales, Muskegon, Mich. Flaine ski resort, Haute-Savoie, France   |      |   |
| 1960      | flaies ski resort, Haute-Savoie, France  |      |   |
| 1963      | founds Marcel Breuer Associates, MBA, in Paris with Herbert Beckhard, Robert F. Gatje and Hamilton Smith, where they will be joined by, notably, M. Jossa and D. Chiquet Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington DC / Satellite City, Bayonne, France |      |   |
| 1965      | Torrington Company in Swindon, England Sarget-Ambrine, Mèrignac, France  |      |   |

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Christine Sorin, Kandinsky Library, Centre Pompidou MNAM  
Gilbert Coquard, Director, Flaine Cultural Centre

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DVD Chamonix, dir. C. Dupuis, prod. CAUE 74, June 2007  
Chamonix Mont-Blanc, Inventaire des typologies  
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#### Traditional architecture

Morzine, Co-éd. CAUE 74/commune de Morzine-Avoriaz, September 2009



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"When we approach a building from a point located at a certain distance, our attention gradually shifts from the whole to the detail. The closer we get, the more important the detail. We are still imbued with the essence of the design, we still remember the architecture, the shape of the silhouette, modulation of the structure, we are still guided by the general orientation of the building, but little by little we see, we touch, we take account of the details."

Marcel Breuer, *Architectural Record*, December 1963, in M. Moncéré *Ibid*



# flaine

architecture of a ski resort

