Mulhouse, city of textile printing and automobiles

"Schlumpf" - this short word makes some hearts skip a beat! Automobile enthusiasts know where the

famous museum of the Schlumpf brothers can be found. For them and their families the car museum in Alsace's Mulhouse is a premier destination. Here, between the Rhine and the Vosges Mountains, some 400 luxury limousines are presented in a converted former wool spinning mill. Nearly one hundred different car manufacturers are gathered, vintage and classic cars: Panhard, Peugeot, De Dion, Ferrari, Bugatti, Benz... During the summer festival the cars are taken out for a spin. A living museum!

The French city of Mulhouse only has 113.000 inhabitants (255.270 in the metropolitan area) - but more than 6.000 enterprises and businesses. It lies in the heart of the Upper Rhine Valley and is just 25 kilometres away from the southern gateway to the Alsatian wine route. Before trying the wines there, one should visit Mulhouse, an El Dorado for discovering the history of technology, economy and industry. Here one can see how Europe's wealth came into being and how the future can be shaped in a sustainable, ecological and networked manner.

Progressiveness and self-will

The city's inhabitants, strongly influenced by Protestantism and Humanism, were innovative and independent throughout the ages. At the same time they preserved and maintained their historical

heritage. For a long period of time the city was an independent republic, a member of the Swiss confederation. Evidence of this independence can be seen in the magnificent renaissance *Former Town Hall* which dates back to the sixteenth-century and in which the councilmen of the Republic of Mulhouse held their sessions. It is located at the *Place de la Réunion*, where the neo-Gothic *Temple St. Étienne*, the tallest Protestant church in France, together with other historic buildings form an ensemble which is steeped in history.

In Mulhouse, as in the rest of the Swiss confederation, a lively manufactory sector developed. In the eighteenth century the entrepreneurs Koechlin, Dollfus and Schmalzers invented a method for the mechanical printing of cotton fabric. Imports from India, French wool and silk textiles suddenly had strong competition. Every woman in Europe wore the summer dresses from Mulhouse! Exports even reached the Ottoman Empire.

Museums for textile printing and tapestries can only be found in Mulhouse

In the permanent exhibition of the *Museum of Printed Textiles* - the only such museum in the world - old printing blocks and -machines, patterns and textiles from the region and the whole world are on display. Arts and crafts, industry, technology, fashion, local and social history are the subjects according to which the countless exhibits are presented. Several times a year unique special exhibitions take place, such as the recent presentation of fabrics of the Russian revolutionaries that had never been shown before.

Tapestries for every house - this revolutionary idea was realised by textile producing entrepreneurs. In Rixheim the *Tapestry Museum* shows fantastic decors from three centuries. The visitors are overcome with the wish to redecorate their house - in art deco style, with palm trees, sunrises, South Sea panoramas or the elegant decor of the French aristocracy. Even Le Corbusier did not manage to banish tapestries from the face of the earth. Speaking of Le Corbusier: his famous Chapelle de Ronchamp lies just a short distance away!

Workers city - exemplary city

Railway construction, chemical industry and mechanical engineering promoted the industrialisation and in turn led to an increase in population. Mulhouse soon became the *French Manchester*. The city grew, not only by villas with white colonnades as was the fashion with the Louisiana farmers that supplied the cotton. Terraced houses of the kind found in Manchester were built and the responsible mercantile middle classes had worker's housing estates developed that were filled with light, had individual gardens and community courtyards. In 1853 the *Cité Ouvrière* was built for 1200 families - nowadays a must for the urban flaneur. The same goes for *La Fonderie*, built in 1823 in the middle of

the city originally for the assembly of steam locomotives and later expanded to house mechanical looms and printing presses; today it is preserved and has been rededicated as an art exhibition hall and University building.

In 1962 Peugeot started making cars in Mulhouse. Nowadays PSA Peugeot Citroën is the largest employer in the Alsace with a total number of some 8.500 employees. In 2004 star architects such as Jean Nouvel were called upon for the work on a modern council housing part of town which was built at the Cité Ouvrière. The different cultures of origin of Mulhouse's inhabitants lead to a large weekly market - the largest in all of north-eastern France. Here goods from all over the world, especially from Southern Europe, Asia and Northern Africa are sold matter-of-factly alongside the region's specialities.

Decisively sustainable - decisively European

With its wealth of well-preserved historical building ensembles (Park Wesserling with the *Ecomusée textile*), with art collections, historical quarters (Square de la Bourse, the New District), a dedicated and welcoming population, with technical museums (*Railway museum, Museum for Textile Printing, Tapestries, Electricity*), gigantic parks with rare trees, free bicycles for hire - with all of this Mulhouse proves that is has arrived in the sustainable era with flying colours. Mulhouse knows how to use its location close to the border for cross-border co-operations. Joint city council meetings Freiburg-Mulhouse are held and the REGIO train links the cities of the Upper Rhine Valley. High-speed trains connect Mulhouse with the major European cities. And together with Basle and Freiburg Mulhouse even shares an international airport, the *Euro-Airport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg*.

The Upper Rhine Valley

The beautiful Upper Rhine Valley is located in the heart of Europe, where the Rhine connects France, Germany and Switzerland. With an area of more than 21.000 km² the region is almost as large as Tuscany, and has the same centuries-old tradition of attracting tourists who love art, culture and fine cuisine. The Upper Rhine Valley is a compact region of varied scenery and culturally of extraordinary diversity with many charming towns and villages on both sides of the Rhine. The economically prosperous region with its six million inhabitants is within easy reach and offers its visitors a lot of everything.

It never takes more than ten minutes to get from one highlight to another. Famous for its short and mild winters and pleasant summer temperatures from April to October, the region is one of the most beautiful and fertile landscapes in Europe: The markets, vineyards and sophisticated restaurants as good as gold for gourmets; the Gothic cathedrals in Freiburg, Basle and Strasbourg, medieval castles and the countless museums with art collections ranging through history make it a MUST for art connoisseurs; the unique landscape is a paradise for golfers, hikers and ramblers, swimmers, bikers and outdoor fans. Some eighteen million overnight stays each year - of which many guests are returning visitors - confirm the region's outstanding appeal to tourism.

For further detailed information:

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