



Excellence in

ALSACE

CLAUDE KEIFLIN
DOMINIQUE MERCIER

IGNACIO HAASER

COMPANIES' EXPERTISE



ÉDITIONS DU SIGNE



EST FRITURE

A WAVE OF ALSATIAN FLAVOURS

In Wintershouse, not far from Haguenau, Est-Friture is carrying on an Alsatian tradition that came from the north via the Rhine: the tradition of the herring, notably in the form of rollmops. Over 35 years, its range of fried, smoked and cooked fish and pickled herring has grown considerably. It is a craft production that emphasises freshness and flavour.

In 1979, the fish cannery where Joseph Adam worked as a delivery driver closed its doors. After being there over ten years, he found himself unemployed. He then linked up with another redundant employee to resume the activity of their former company: the production and sale of fried fish and rollmops. They invested their redundancy money to set up their business: Est-Friture was born. The frying equipment was installed in the 150-square-metre family barn in Wintershouse and a van was purchased. With the help of their wives, in the morning they produced the fried fish (whiting, cod fillets) and rollmops that they would sell during the afternoon to grocers, butchers and wholesalers of butter, eggs and cheese. Modest at first, the business grew quite rapidly. Est-Friture settled in 1982 into a new 500-square-metre

production and storage unit and launched a product that took off sharply: herring à l'ancienne (with cream and onion) according to the recipe of "Grandmother Salome". In 1986, the Adam family bought out the partner and then controlled 100% of the capital. 1995 saw a new expansion: Est-Friture moved into new 1,700-square-metre premises designed to ensure maximum freshness thanks to modern production organisation. The company already employed 21 people. Unfortunately, a fire completely destroyed the premises in 2003. Jean-Luc, the son of Joseph Adam, repatriated production in the former premises while a new building was rebuilt on the damaged site. In 2006, he became head of the company in which six members of the Adam family work today.



*"The basis of our business is a quality fish that will be worked by hand.
We don't aim to produce industrial fish."*



> Smoking the trout



> Filling the herrings à l'ancienne



> Production of rollmops

HERRING, A TRADITIONAL FISH IN ALSACE

More than 35 years after the birth of Est-Friture, the flagship product of its beginnings is still there: herring. A traditional product in the north of Alsace, from Holland via the Rhine and Moselle. The Dutch have processed herring for a long time, putting it into brine in wooden casks called "kegs". Herring preserved in this way can be especially prepared as rollmops: marinated in a vinegar-based sauce, the fillets are wrapped around a gherkin (in Alsace) or onions (in the North). Traditionally, and for conservation reasons, herring was transported and arrived on Alsatian tables in winter.

While conservation can be achieved today without problems all year round, this seasonality of the herring has persisted in Alsace where it is eaten between early autumn and Easter. Especially in the Lower Rhine where the tradition of the herring meal on "Messti" nights (an annual festival equivalent to the Upper Rhine's "Kilbe") is still alive.

Est-Friture offers the herring in many other forms than rollmops: herring in remoulade, Alsatian herring (skinless fillets marinated in a basic cream sauce, yogurt, apple, onion and pickle) and herring à l'ancienne. In the latter case, herring is a "matjes", a high-quality fish caught just before the breeding season, which is not cured but simply marinated in a sauce of cream and onion (plus a few ingredients kept secret...). The matjes fillet is also offered with oil. The fish bought by Est-Friture all come from the North-East Atlantic. They are either coastal fish purchased at Boulogne and processed the

next day in Wintershouse or fish caught further away which are pickled in Norway according to the recipes of the company to avoid transporting fresh fish which would damage its quality. In these various forms, the herring is the basis of one of the four product lines of Est-Friture.

FRIED, COOKED OR SMOKED: FISH AND SHELLFISH IN ALL THEIR STATES

The second family of products is fish that is fried, floured or breaded, which includes 15 preparations: fried whiting and cod fillet, nuggets, feshkechle, calamari or shrimp fritters ... We must also mention the semi-conserves of fried whiting or pickled herring fillet in brown vinegar sold in the iconic "golden tin" for whiting and "blue tin" for herring. The company attaches great importance to the quality of its supplies: "We strive, for example, to buy winter cod whose flesh is firmer and better in terms of taste", says Anne Adam, in charge of research and development. "The basis of our business is a quality fish that will be worked by hand. We don't aim to produce industrial fish." On a fish market that finds itself with great shortages, Est-Friture manages to ensure its supplies thanks to suppliers that are long-term partners and who reward loyalty. The company supports the European quota policy since it considers it absolutely necessary to protect a threatened resource.

The third family of Est-Friture products consists of cooked fish and seafood: salmon, cod, perch, catfish, scallops, mussels... Added to these are catering products, often traditional recipes revisited with a sea flavour:

*“With us, work is still largely manual.
We still are craftsmen despite our production volumes.”*

paella, lasagna, cannelloni and even sauerkraut and couscous ... “Our cooks produce in small series, in small quantities, à l’ancienne. In short, just like it is at home, and this is one reason for the success”, says CEO Jean-Luc Adam. One of the key products is the “blue shrimp”, a shrimp whose farming was set up by IFREMER (French Research Institute for Sea Development) in New Caledonia, so in accordance with demanding French environmental and social standards: “Definitely the best-farmed product in the world”, which is cooked in Wintershouse.

Smoked fish form the fourth line of the company's products. It embarked on this new specialty ten years ago while only producers across the Rhine were responding to local demand. The range now includes the premium Scottish salmon, herring, haddock and mackerel, smoked over a wood fire (the total process can last a week depending on the recipe), hot or cold. In 2012, Jean-Luc Adam also bought Frangil Gourmet, an Alsatian company whose business has been fully repatriated to Wintershouse. A specialist in trout bred in France, Frangil Gourmet also smoke bass farmed in France, “féra” (a rare and sought after fish from Lake Léman) and eel. Note that in addition to all these production activities, Est-Friture also distributes the products of the Luc Odel brand: ready-made pie crusts and tartes flambées.

STILL VERY MUCH A MANUAL JOB

Est-Friture of course has modern production equipment and in particular has just invested in the replacement of

one of its two fryers (with two conveyor belts ensuring that both sides of the fish are fried optimally) and the acquisition of a second smokehouse. “With us, work is still largely manual. We still are craftsmen despite our production volumes”, says Jean-Luc Adam. “Our expertise is based on employees who have been around a long time – 30 years for some – and who are able to pass on their skills to younger ones. Our succession is assured.” For example, each fish treated by Est-Friture is visually inspected to eliminate those with defects.

In addition to the quality of supplies, freshness is another essential requirement. The products are mostly made to order: customer orders are taken until 10am, put into production in the day and delivered the next morning. The company itself ensures delivery with its fleet of vehicles and has developed a complementary transport business in order to avoid travelling around with empty vans and to preserve the environment as well. Its products are marketed through supermarkets and independent grocers and butchers in the Grand-Est, in the Paris area and even – it’s a matter of pride for the company - in the north of France, the regional expert in matters of fish. Est-Friture also has its own store, open Monday to Saturday, on its Wintershouse site. “This store is very important to us”, says the CEO of Est-Friture. “Thanks to it, we have a special relationship with our clients. For them, we develop original recipes every week and offer the fried fish of the day. It’s in this store that we test our new recipes with consumers. So they act as a sort of taste laboratory.” In this nearby store, customers have access to all Est-Friture products and enjoy maximum freshness.



> Herrings à l’ancienne

Est-Friture is starting to get a little cramped in its premises that cover a 2,000-square-metre surface. To support its development, so in 2016 the company will proceed with an extension to increase its capacity and to optimise its packaging and shipping process.

*It’s in this store that we test our new recipes with consumers.
So they act as a sort of taste laboratory.”*



> Pricking the trout

> Coquilles St Jacques (scallops)

> Fillets of fried cod



> The Wintershouse shop



Family business specialising in the production of fried, smoked and cooked fish, and pickled herring
More than 200,000 matjes herring per year prepared with the “à l’ancienne” recipe
Staff: 30 people (Est-Friture and Frangil Gourmet)
Turnover: 4 million euros (with Frangil Gourmet)



> Transport



2, RUE DES AULNES - 67590 WINTERSHOUSE - Tél : 03 88 73 80 33