

The secret of French gastronomy finally revealed?

For several weeks, strange rumours have been doing the rounds in Old Lyon: for several centuries now, somewhere in the city a mysterious school is said to have been operating in a secret location. No one was even vaguely aware of its existence.

Does the Chef Factory really exist?

It is said that this prestigious school, the Chef Factory, has inspired some of France's greatest chefs and is the source of many French culinary secrets. The famous Lyonnais chefs Mère Brazier and Paul Bocuse are said to have contributed to its impressive reputation, both as pupils and later as teachers. It is believed to give outstanding classes, based on centuries of culinary tradition and unusual methods.

But is this a legend or reality? Difficult to say. French chefs are hardly forthcoming about it. They allude to a symbolic spoon (which some say is even magical) but their accounts are vague at best. Paul Bocuse himself has already referred to a secret community which "taught him everything".

Lifting the lid

The school today appears ready to reveal some of its secrets. The first pictures of the Chef Factory are now online on the www.chef-factory.com website. It is still quite difficult to work out where fact ends and fiction begins. To encourage passers-by to discover this mysterious school, the young students from the Chef Factory have decided to hand out wooden spoons during their trips to New York, Geneva, Brussels and Paris. Through these precious utensils, the public is now discovering the first signs of existence of this Lyonnais school, which is behind so many French culinary secrets.

A new promotional campaign from ONLYLYON Tourism and Conventions

To promote Lyon as a destination and the excellence of its world-renowned cuisine, ONLYLYON Tourism and Conventions has launched its first transmedia storytelling* campaign focusing on the Chef Factory concept. This brand-new campaign is based on a highly original storyline exploring the origins of French gastronomy, engaging the public in a fascinating world. It uses several media forms including a film broadcast on television internationally and on the web, a dedicated website, street marketing activities and a presence on social networks. In addition to the French and American public, in the last quarter of 2013 it will also target Belgium and Switzerland. The campaign will also be deployed in the years to come through new operations in France and abroad.

Discover the Chef Factory at the Taste of France show on September 28 and 29!

ONLYLYON Tourism and Conventions will be revealing its new promotional campaign to the American public during the Taste of France exhibition, of which it is an official partner, in Bryant Park. Over the space of two days, New Yorkers will be invited to discover Lyon on a Chef Factory-themed stand where 10,000 spoons will be distributed by the students of this mysterious school.

This is the first major public event in which ONLYLYON Tourism and Conventions has participated in the American market, a priority market in which activities targeting tour operators, travel agents and media have been underway for many years now. Lyon is a popular destination with American visitors: in 2012 the US was the main source of foreign (non-European) visitors arriving in Lyon. They are particularly numerous during the summer period. They especially appreciate Lyon's outstanding UNESCO-listed heritage sites, its traditional French "art of living" and its cooking, of course. Lyon has more than 2,000 restaurants, ranging from the famous "*Bouchons*" (typical eateries) to Michelin star-rated establishments, from the traditional "Lyonnais mothers" to innovative and highly inspired young chefs. Put simply, when it comes to French cuisine, Lyon is a pioneer in tastes and concepts.

*Transmedia storytelling is a marketing technique which involves adopting a narrative storyline and distinctive content on different media. In doing so it encourages the public to build up a rich and coherent brand environment in their minds, making it a valuable source of committed fans and viral content.