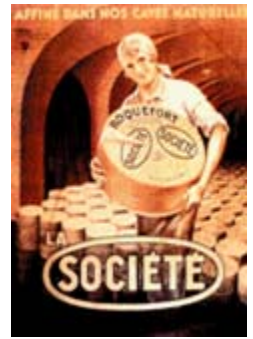




the "Grotte du Combalou"



# The Legend Of Roquefort

Once upon a time a young shepherd was guarding his herd of ewes (sheep) near the "Grotte (caves) du Combalou", a large cliff face that dominates the village of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon. He was just about to prepare his midday meal when he saw in the middle distance a young lady. She appeared to be remarkably beautiful.

Fascinated, he decided to follow her. He left his dog to look after the herd and hid his lunch consisting of bread ("pain de seigle", this is bread made from 60/70 percent rye flour and 40/30 percent wheat flour) and cheese (curd from ewe's milk) in the cool, damp rocks of the "grotte". The chase was on. Unhappily, history relates that our shepherd never found the young goddess.

He returned to his herd, tired, hungry and disappointed. In his absence the bread had decomposed and given the cheese streaks of blue veins. He was too hungry to ask himself what had happened ; all he knew was that the taste was remarkable. It did not take long for him to share the mystery with his fellow herdsman.

Within a short time many of the " grottes" had been converted into "cabanes en bois "(oak planks were built in the interior of the grottes where the cheeses were left to ripen). The word "cabanes" is still with us today as the people that work in the cellars are called "cabaniers."

That is the legend of how Roquefort cheese was born. This exquisite alchemy is the product of milk, bread, air and time. In the words of Curnonsky, a well known Parisian gastronome, "the Roquefort is the son of the mountains and the wind."