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ARCHITECTURE OF TERRITORY
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Evian Plateau: Strategic Landscape of Water

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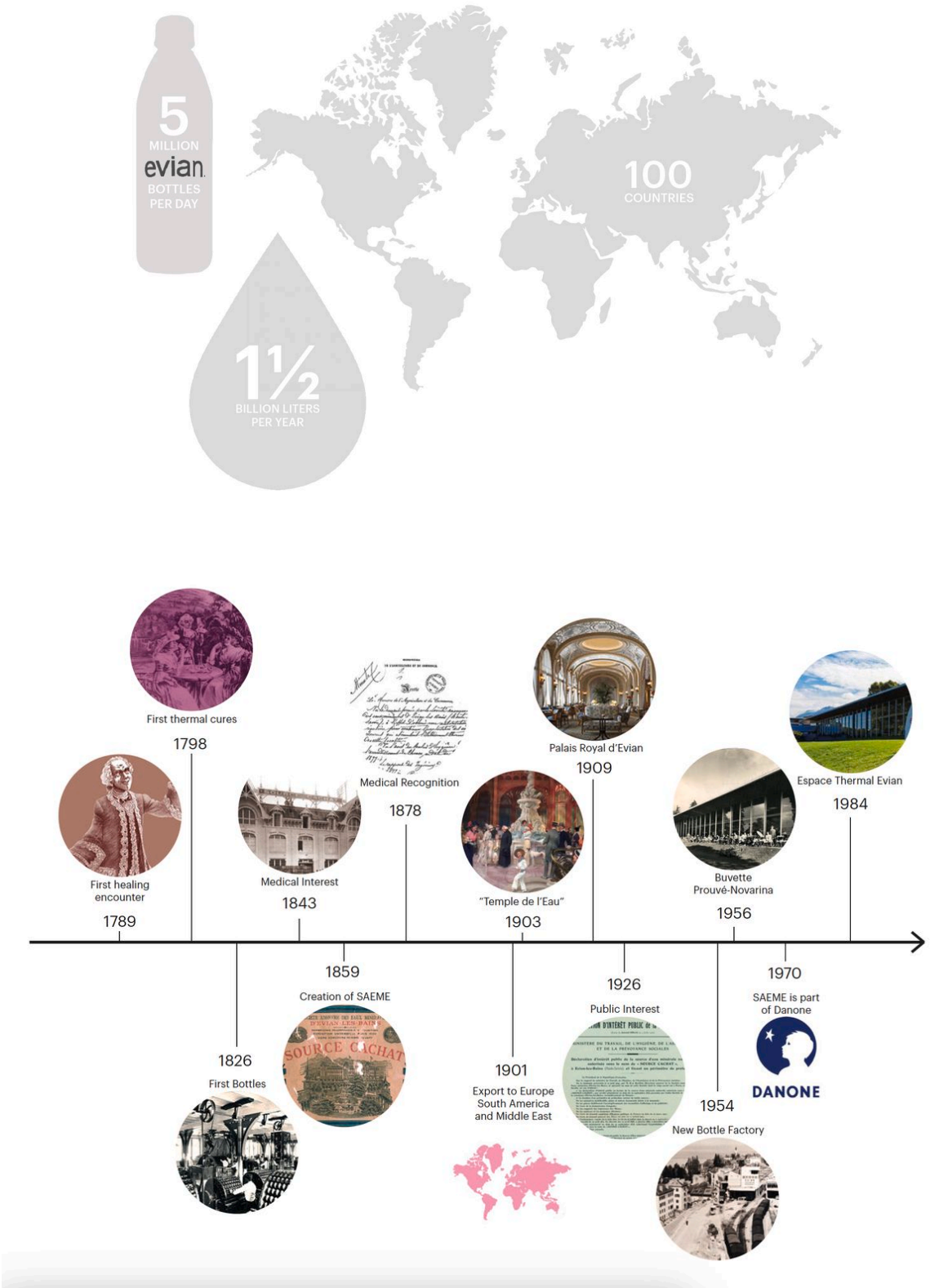
The area between Evian-Les-Bains and the Alps holds one of the most strategic resources of the region. Here the springs of Evian—potentially the most branded water worldwide—create a landscape of extreme value, as well as a tourist attraction.

Due to the water resource Evian-Les-Bains has been one of the most recognizable historic destinations on the shores of the lake, a high-market holiday resort and spa town. Since the 19th century, the interest for Salus per Aquam (health through water) generated the “spa-cities” and the Evian mineral sources very soon attracted numerous hotels and spa centers. The Belle-Époque, the golden age of hydrotherapy, brought about the area an intellectual and aristocratic clientele promoted by the construction of the port and railway station. In the beginning of 20th century, the hills and the lakeshore were already covered with noble houses, luxurious villas, expensive hotels, a theatre and a casino on the lakeside.



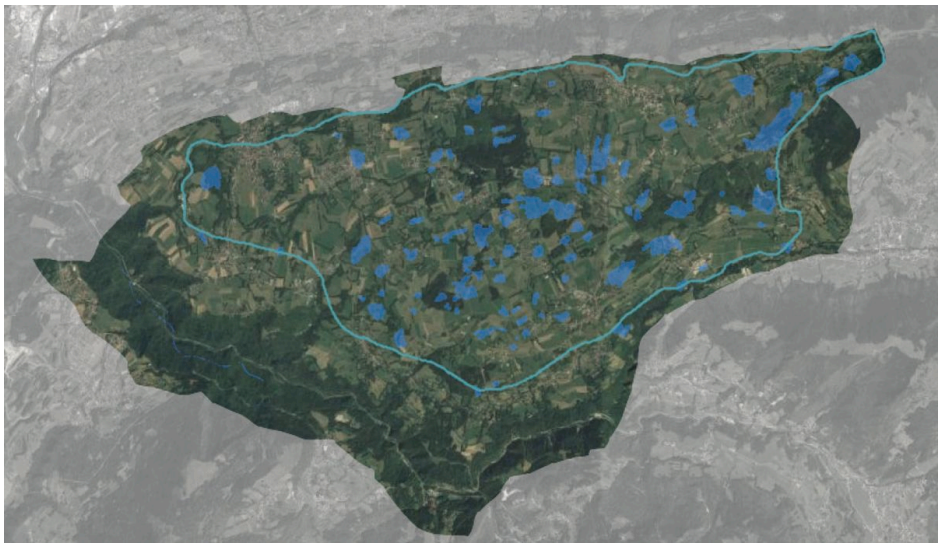
Postcard of Source Cachat, Évian-les-Bains.

Today Evian is one of the major brands of bottled Natural Mineral Water (NMW) originating from preserved areas in France and owned by the global French enterprise Danone. Landscapes around Evian have acquired strategic value and have consequently been preserved to protect the water quality. Overlooking the lake Léman and the town of Évian, Plateau de Gavot (35 km^2) is the surface of collection and the heart of the Évian mineral water impluvium: the place where the water infiltrates the soil. On the plateau, rainwater and snowmelt collected from the Alps are slowly filtered and purified via the multiple geological strata, starting a process that fifteen years later will result to the natural mineral water that comes out of the Evian springs few miles away, to be bottled under the brand name Évian. The Gavot Plateau wetlands were classified “protected zones” in 2008, within the framework of the international Ramsar Convention. The site’s protection is of environmental as well as economic importance because protecting the Gavot contributes to preserving the aquifer exploited by Evian Mineral Waters Ltd. and its right to use the “Natural Mineral Water” label, with is given out under strict regulations by the French government.

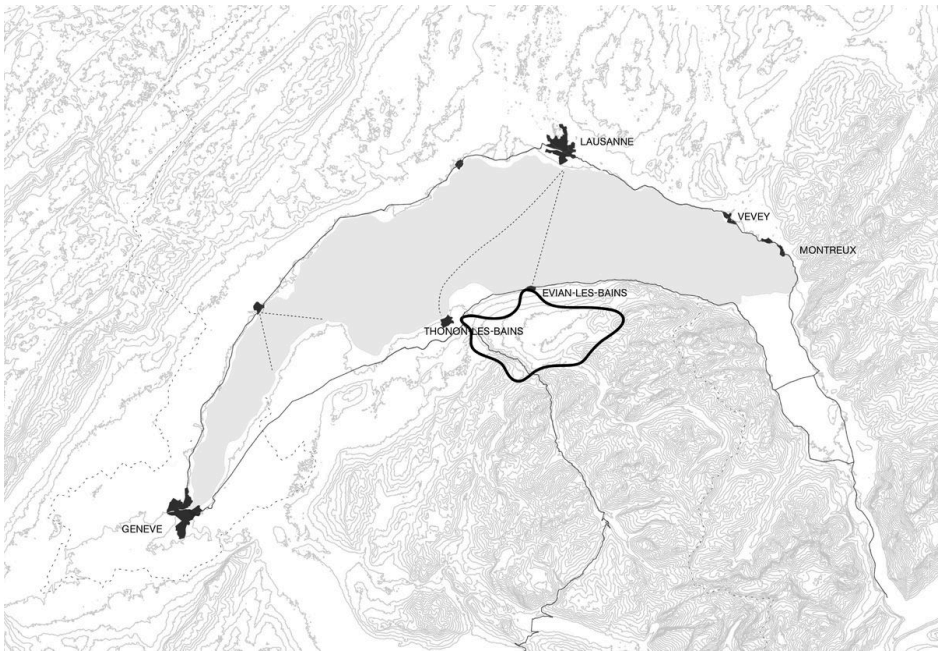


Timeline of spa culture and the Evian company.

Agriculture, being the main economic activity in the impluvium area, developed in this set-up a crucial role for the protection of the water resource. A specific regime of rules of agricultural cultivation, initiated by the Evian Mineral Waters Ltd., has been established in order to protect the watershed from the intrusion of pollutants. The aim is to protect the agricultural land of the plateau from development and intensification of the production while maintaining biodiversity.



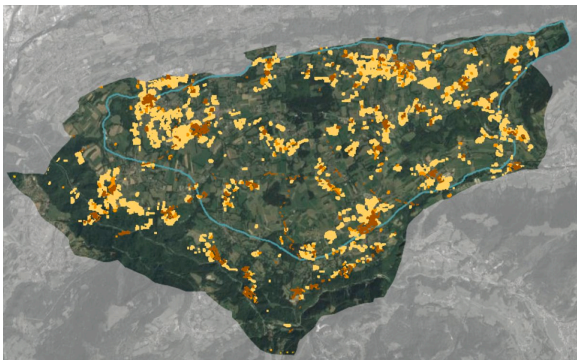
The impluvium takes 35 km^2 of the plateau's area and is defined by topography and wetlands, that are spread and take in about 10 % of the surface but through topographical disposition they'll absorb 30 % of the fallen water. With the turn of the Millennium the focus of Evian water shifted more and more to the backside of Evian-les-Bains and a lot of protectional labels and facilities were launched. At the same time the company extended its product range.



Protected wetlands, Le Maravant, Saint-Paul-en-Chablais



Built land in 1950



Built Land in 2010

The Évian Impluvium as Urban Park

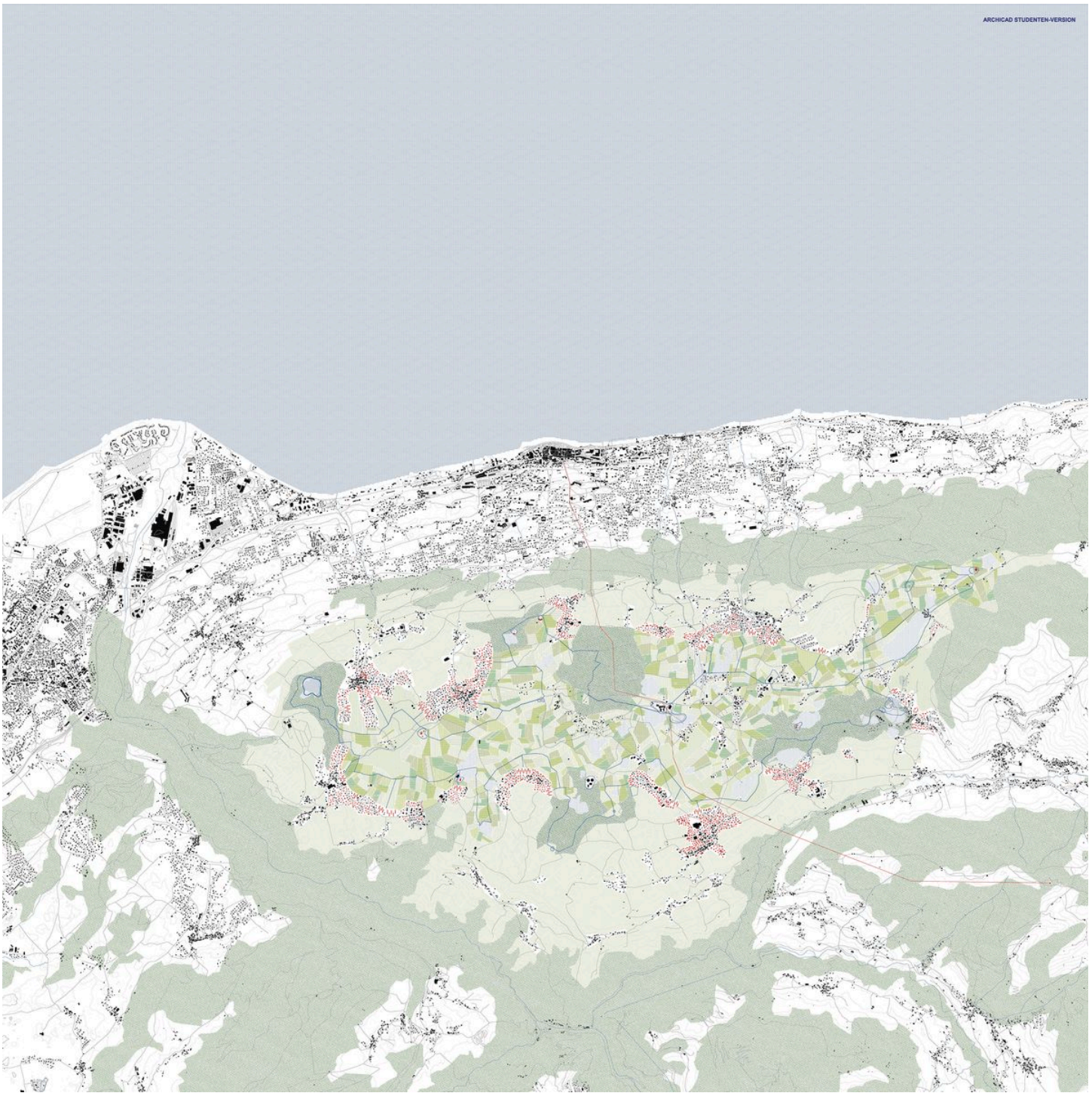
The project intends to use the potential of this special site condition and create an urban park for the Pays d'Evian and the whole lac leman region as well as taking the celebration of water from Evian-les-Bains up to the plateau and even connecting it to the mountains. A big common green space should unify and structure the plateau and its different elements. Further the project suggests specific and sustainable development around this green space while dealing with the existing problems of agriculture and construction and unrevealed qualities.



Concept sketch

Right above Evian-les-Bains one can discover a unique landscape, well framed by a dense forest above the lake on a plateau at the feet of the mountains. This landscape features a beautiful vegetation and nature zones rich in biodiversity as well as a long-standing productive agriculture and accommodates former farmer settlements that have expanded into villages that today are part of the metropolitan influence of Lac Léman. Simultaneously the impluvium of Evian water is located on this marvelous plateau and preserves many of its amenities in the interest of the water's purity.

To activate the potential of this exceptional landscape a public park should be formed and connected directly to the historic town of Evian-les-Bains and the mountains. As all of the plateau's green elements are much influenced by the element of water—may it be directly visible on the surface like the wetlands or hidden many meters in the ground and simply implicit through something like the agriculture—a park to experience and understand the landscape as a part of this special ecosystem seems essential, even more as the question of water will gain in importance in the future. It should be an active part both of the Géopark Chablais as well as the water industry and spa culture located in Evian-les-Bains.

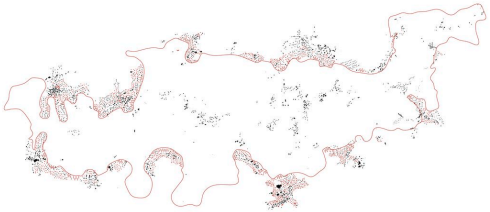


Elements of the Urban Park

New construction
Extensive agriculture
Intensive agriculture
Wetlands



Agricultural land



Construction



Park infrastructure

Public Spaces

The park provides public spaces and acts as a recreational area for both locals and tourists, with elements of an open-air museum. Agriculture and wetlands are the two main elements of water protection on the plateau. Therefore, all activities are related to them. The farmers have been the guardians of the plateau for generations and as they still play an important role, the meeting of locals, farmers and tourists should take place in as many moments as possible. To achieve this, tourist activities are always combined with everyday interests. For example, the show cheese dairy also offers cheese courses, and there is a dairy and information centre on the site of the methanisation plant. The cable car starts behind the Cachat Buvette, the last stop of the historical monuments of Evian-les-Bains. It climbs to the plateau and then up into the mountains, offering a panoramic view of the plateau, the town and the lake.




lookout le Château d'Oche
activity pavilion
stream exploration path
astronomical observatory
chapel Champeillant
climbing park Beunaz
wetland preserve and research farm
Gateway to the Plateau
methanisator
local market
cheese kiosk
black lake meditation
showcheesery
trail of knowledge
water playground
cow petting
cow spotting
theater with lakeview
forest preschool
wetland jumping
source Cachat

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