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RESPONSIBLE
TRAVELER

ecolodge

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VARIS WOMEN
EMPOWERMENT CENTER

auberge

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Seasonal Agriculture: From Bekaa to Shouf



EDITO



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Almost ten years ago, the brick earth village Taanayel was born. Over that same period, the cultural pillar of sustainable development was integrated to the vision of arcenciel's strategists. By reviving a historic environment and constructing energy efficient and insulated houses, arcenciel puts the environmental issue at the core of its action. Taanayel village was the first of its kind. The aim is to reconnect with an unrecognized, even depreciated heritage, moving headstrong against the trend in the Bekaa plain where harsh architecture disregards natural landscapes of the region. This magazine is meant to speak out for all the diverse forms of Lebanese local heritage.

«Il y a bientôt 10 ans le village en terre de Tannayel est né, résultat de la vision plurielle de responsables à arcenciel, d'architectes et d'anthropologues. Certains étaient portés par la « Madeleine » de leur enfance, d'autres par une fascination pour cette architecture sans architecte alliant simplicité et beauté. À cette même période, le volet culturel du développement durable était intégré dans la vision des stratégies de l'association. Quoi de mieux alors que de valoriser un héritage architectural ? Le village en terre est donc la concrétisation d'une réflexion dont les objectifs premiers consistaient à renouer avec un patrimoine méconnu, voire déprécié parce que synonyme de pauvreté, à changer le regard porté sur l'architecture en terre en remettant en valeur des matériaux de construction qui participent d'une importante économie d'énergie et à faire renaître une architecture non agressive à l'inverse de tout ce qui se fait actuellement dans la plaine de la Bekaa où les constructions actuelles sont tant un viol du regard qu'un viol de l'environnement.

À travers la renaissance d'un habitat parfaitement cohérent avec son environnement naturel qui offre de remarquables qualités d'isolation thermique et qui permet une importante économie d'énergie, arcenciel mettait la préoccupation environnementale au cœur de son action. Sa valorisation d'une architecture oubliée, son encouragement au retour aux architectures traditionnelles régionales pour préserver le paysage des plaines et de la montagne, lui permettait de participer au développement culturel de toute une région et ainsi de contribuer à la préservation, de l'oasis climatique, géographique, politique et culturelle que constitue le Liban en luttant contre l'absence d'urbanisme et le développement sauvage. Le village en terre de Tannayel est le premier né de ce projet d'envergure. Et il est le prétexte à la sauvegarde de bien d'autres volets du patrimoine local ; culinaire, culturel, immatériel... dont cette revue se veut le messager.»

THE TOURISM PROGRAM

arcenciel is a Lebanese non-profit association founded in 1985 which contributes to the sustainable development of society by indiscriminately supporting vulnerable communities and integrating all marginalized people.

The tourism program of arcenciel is structured around 3 main pillars:

- **preserving and promoting the cultural and natural heritage** of Lebanon through its centers Ecolodge de Taanayel and Al Khan al Makssoud. The Domaine de Taanayel also develops activities in a natural reserve that promotes ecotourism in the region.

- **strengthening social harmony** with the opening in 2002 of the Auberge Saint Michael in Maasser el Shouf. The center aims to facilitate dialogue and community building.

- **encouraging local and environmental projects**, such as the Agnes Varis center which will open next June.



To fulfill this mission, arcenciel's tourism program includes two touristic centers in Shouf and Bekaa regions that seek to participate in sustainable development of Lebanon through a social and responsible tourism.



All the benefits generated in the touristic units are reinvested in arcenciel's social activities.

ECOLOGDE DE TAANAYEL

In line with its vocation to participate in sustainable development, arcenciel built the Ecolodge de Taanayel in 2006, in central Bekaa.

In an ecofriendly approach, arcenciel has been fostering a traditional construction method inspired by Lebanese architecture made of mud-bricks.

arcenciel will soon inaugurate the Agnès Varis center, dedicated to the women of the region

**Ecolodge de Taanayel – Al Khan al Makssoud
Damascus Road, Taanayel, Bekaa.
Reservation 08 544 881 / 03 124 279.
Open everyday all day long.**



Ecolodge de Taanayel is composed of 7 houses with the capacity to accommodate 35 guests who can experience the genuine "Bedouin" way of life.

The village also includes the traditional Lebanese restaurant "Al Khan al Makssoud" that can welcome up to 1 000 people. With its lush garden, this restaurant is ideal for a country lunch get away that serves regional special dishes.



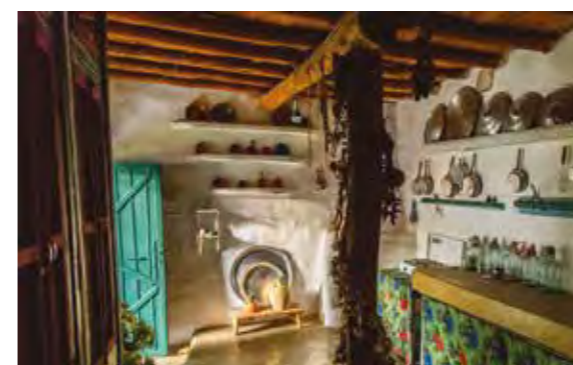
What to see?

The **wetland of Aammiq**, hosting the richest biodiversity in Lebanon, is located in the wonderful domain of Aammiq. This region includes the fertile fields of West-Bekaa, grassy and rocky hills, the beautiful oak forest spreading throughout the Barouk mountains.

The Aammiq domain remains a preserved testimony of the rural past in Lebanon and a sanctuary for birds. In the region, migratory birds such as white storks, pelicans, eagles, buzzards take refuge in their natural environment.

Yet birds are not the only inhabitants of the area; reptiles, mammals, butterflies, dragonflies, amphibians, fish and flowers are thriving.

Aammiq wetland – Ecolodge de Taanayel : 17km



OPENING THE AGNES VARIS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT CENTER

Created in 2011, the Agnes Varis trust fund made a donation to arcenciel in 2014 to build a training center for women of the Bekaa.

Dr Agnès Varis (1930 - 2011) firmly believed in the power of philanthropy to raise individuals and the community. Born in Greece, Dr Varis immigrated to the United States where she studied. She was the first in her family to receive a higher education degree.

In line with the will of Mrs Varis, arcenciel chose to build the Agnes Varis center to enable women of the Bekaa to be trained there in hotel and catering services : restaurant services, booking management, mouneh techniques ...

The main objective of this center is to develop women's capacities, focusing on women from disadvantaged background. This training will help them in the long term as it comprises of both theory and practical exercises. It is designed for trainees to achieve financial autonomy.



© Agnes Varis, New York, 2011



Set to open in end of June, the center will welcome about ten women for trainings that will evolve according to their progress every month. The first line of mouneh (kabis, jam, sauce...) will be sold in Al Khan al Makssoud in August.

It enabled her to care for her 8 siblings. After graduating, she founded several pharmaceutical companies while being an example of support to women in entrepreneurship. After she died in August 2011, the Charitable Trust Agnès Varis was created to spread her passion for women's rights, the needy, animals' rights and the arts.



AUBERGE ST MICHAEL

The Auberge Saint-Michael and the guesthouse Beit el Hana are managed by arcenciel.

The Auberge Saint-Michael (13 family rooms) and the guesthouse Beit el Hana (6 rooms) are situated in the Maasser el Shouf village, a rural traditional village perched on the edge of the Al Shouf Cedar reserve.

Auberge Saint-Michael aims to promote the Shouf traditions and functions with the priority of employing women from the region who share their stories and traditions.

Aida, manager and caretaker of the Auberge Saint-Michael kitchen for 3 years running, has set the menus to reflect the region's culture and tradition. It is evident in the minor personalisation of the conventional recipes of the region.

Aida prepares her food with love and precision; her specialities include the customary dish "Hrisseh". Aida puts her heart into each dish as though cooking for her family, with love and pride of the Shouf traditions.

Elissar, a new member of the Auberge St Michael team, joined the kitchen around three months ago. She is originally from the Shouf area, where her husband and herself own several orchards with fruits and vegetables, such as tomato "Jabaliye" (Mountain tomato), olives and figs.

Elissar is well known in the area for her "Mecheh" dish, (a wild edible plant cooked with fried onions and garlic and seasoned with lemon juice) her "Mouneh", her dried figs and tomato paste.

Auberge St Michael – Maasser el Shouf Village
Reservation: 03 107 182. Open everyday.



What to see?

The **Beiteddine Palace** was built by Emir Bashir Shihab II between 1788 and 1818 to become his place of residence until 1840.

The building was then used by the Ottomans as a Mount Lebanon government building. Later on, the authorities of the French Mandate settled part of their local administration in it.

After independence in 1943, the Palace became the summer residence of the President of the Republic. Nowadays, it hosts the Beiteddine festival and the museum of Beiteddine.

April - October: 9AM - 6PM

November - May: 9AM - 3:45PM (close on Monday)

Auberge Saint Michael – Beiteddine: 15km

THE TRADITIONAL SHOUF MOUNEH

The Shouf area is still rich in culture and tradition, the culinary culture entails a variety of "mouneh" prepared by women from the region.

The following are well known and loved delicacies of the region:

The "Akub" is a thistle that grows on the Shouf mountains, preserved in jars for long term conservation. It is part of the traditional Shouf mouneh; usually marinated with olive oil, crushed garlic and eaten like salad



© Food Heritage Foundation

The "Serdeleh" (Ambarise) goat cheese prepared in the terra cota jar is also a speciality of the Shouf region. The abundance of aromatic plants in this area gives the milk a unique quality and flavor.



© Food Heritage Foundation

This is what sets it apart from similar products that come out of different regions. The "serdeleh" could be compared with strained yogurt "labneh".



© Food Heritage Foundation



© Food Heritage Foundation

Other famous delicacies of the area are brews prepared by local farmers who collect the petals of the Damascus roses every May and distil them to make mouneh's such as syrup, jam, and rose water. Dried rose petals are also soaked in boiling water to make an infusion.

THE DOMAINE DE TAANAYEL

Property of the Jesuit fathers since 1863, the Domaine de Taanayel is well known across the entire Bekaa region due to its antiquity, its standing, and its social works for underprivileged local populations.

Since 2009, arcenciel has taken charge of the management of the Jesuit Fathers' domain by developing its agricultural terrain. Encompassing 230 hectares, the Domaine de Taanayel strives

to preserve local biodiversity and welcomes people from all across the country and worldwide. Proof of this is the 120,000 persons who visited the Domaine de Taanayel in 2015: students, families, and all nature lovers.

The Domaine de Taanayel offers ecotouristic activities: hiking, cycling, horse riding, and sale of local dairy products (Laiterie du Couvent de Taanayel)



The Domaine de Taanayel – Damascus Road, Taanayel, Bekka. Contact : 08 543 105.
Open every day : 8am - 6pm.



ملبنة دير تعنايل
Laiterie du Couvent de Taanayel



Livraison à domicile - Lundi à Vendredi
Magasin Ashrafieh - Eglise St. Joseph - Grand Beyrouth 01.334 345
Laiterie du Couvent de Taanayel au Domaine - Bekaa 08.540 066

arcenciel
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SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

arcenciel and the Domaine de Taanayel lead new projects each year to keep improving the living conditions in the region.

This year, a water management project was launched to help deal with the situation described by the World Bank: Lebanon will face chronic water shortages by 2020 because of limited storage capacities, deficient distribution networks and damaged supply channels, generating massive waste of water whilst demand keeps increasing.

This project will bring a sustainable solution to supply and distribution in the Bekaa for:

- Farmers and agricultural workers
- Host communities and refugees living around the Domaine.

To succeed, the following points will be at the center of attention.

Wastewater treatment: Waste water treatment has been a constant issue in Lebanon. Due to wild urbanization, in particular in Bekaa, contaminated waters end up in water streams without any treatment, representing a major sanitary and environmental risk. The current project aims to implement a treatment system for wastewater generated by domestic activities, agriculture, industry and tourism in the Domaine de Taanayel. (Implementation date: July 2016)



© Destroyed water duct.



© The same water duct after replacement and building supportive walls.

Transportation: Rehabilitation of the irrigation canals. The re-building of concrete canals restored the needed flow of water to the lands, and saves the owners heavy yearly labor fees currently spent on labor to keep the existing earthen channels open. (Completed)

Catchment and storage: Two new water reservoirs were created, with respective capacity of 15,000 m³ and 35,000 m³, thus increasing storage capacity for water used into agricultural process. (Completed)



© Construction of an artificial lake, 15,000 m³ – Start of works.



© A view of the same lake after completion of works and filling

Distribution: Optimizing the irrigation system in the Domaine and providing power by a photovoltaic panels farm will improve water usage and availability of the resource for agriculture. (Completion : August 2016)

Irrigation water quality: The quality of the irrigation water stored in the lakes will be improved by the installation of floating vegetation islands (phyto-epuration) and by the installation of water aeration systems powered by solar photovoltaic panels and by wind power (Completion : August 2016)



© Installation of a solar PV panels farm, 28.6 KW peak

Potable water: 5 public potable water fountains were installed in and around the Domaine, providing daily up to 6,000 m³ of drinking water for neighbouring refugees and local communities (Completed)



© Excavation and installation of a potable water network

Capacity building: The 120 000 visitors of the Domaine de Taanayel each year, including tourists, scholars, students, entrepreneurs, will be able to discover, observe and understand the water conservation techniques implemented. In addition, special awareness and training sessions will be conducted, covering the above water management topics and targeting local agriculturists.



© Domaine de Taanayel

did you know ?

BEKAA TRADITIONAL MUD-BRICK HOUSES DESIGN

Come rediscover the ancient lifestyle at Ecolodge de Taanayel and experience the genuine Lebanese traditions!

The Bekaa's traditional vernacular house was a functional home for the farmers; the walls of the houses were made of mud brick, which is a mixture of straw, mud, water and sand, that is left to dry in the sun.

Social and economic changes have contributed to spread other types of construction.



The wood of the surrounding trees was used for carpentry, doors and windows. The availability of these elements in the immediate environment is what led to this type of architecture. Mud brick houses were the standard, well before the introduction of modern materials: stone, tiles and cement.

SAVE THE DATE JULY 1-3, 2016

LA BROCANTE DES ARTISTES



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French Institute
of Zahlé

« CYCLE TINTIN » -

26th may

28

French Institute
of Deir el Qamar

« Révélez vos talents » -

28th may

31

French Institute
of Zahlé

«SCRABBLE»

31st may

20

Monte Alberto of Zahlé

Music festival
"Baden Baden" band

20th June

SEASONAL AGRICULTURE

The Bekaa region (North, Central and West) is renowned for its agriculture, as you can see from the richness of the land from Taanayel to Maasser el Shouf.



address

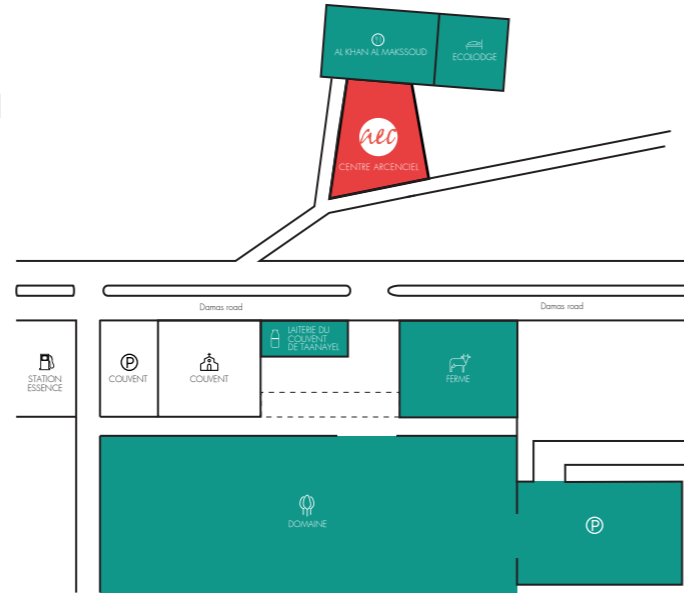
BEKAA

Ecolodge de Taanayel & Al Khan al Makssoud

Damascus street, Taanayel
 08.544881
 03.124279
 ecolodge@arcenciel.org
 www.ecolodge-arcenciel.org



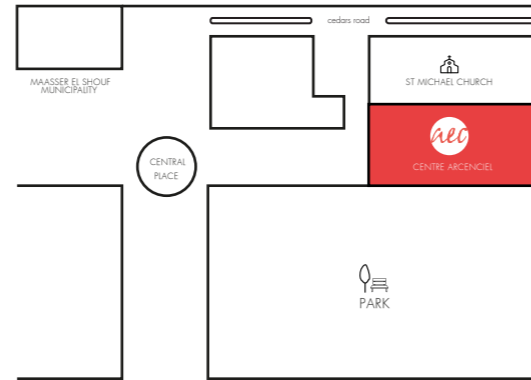
Domaine de Taanayel
 Damascus street, Taanayel
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SHOUF

Auberge St Michael & Les Terrasses

Central place, Maasser el Chouf
 05.350452
 03.107182
 auberge@arcenciel.org
 www.auberge-arcenciel.org



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