

THE INTERVIEW: SÉVERINE TRÉFOUEL, FOUNDER OF SIMON-SIMONE



THIS IS ALSO LA MAISON DE LA MAILLE'S STRONG POINT: JOINING FORCES WITH LEADING CREATIVE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL FIGURES IN MADE IN FRANCE AND ETHICAL TRADE TO CREATE INNOVATIVE, SURPRISING AND UNIQUE COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS. TODAY, IT IS THE TURN OF SÉVERINE TRÉFOUËL, FOUNDER OF THE SIMON-SIMONE CONCEPT STORE WITH WHICH LA MAISON DE LA MAILLE RECENTLY COLLABORATED, TO ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS. HERE'S WHAT SHE SAID.

SÉVERINE, CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT WHO YOU ARE, ABOUT SIMON-SIMONE?

MY WORKING LIFE HAS ALWAYS BEEN IN VERY LARGE GROUPS SUCH AS LVMH, KEYRING, ETAM, LA REDOUTE AS HEAD OF THE BUSINESS UNIT, IN THE FINANCE SECTOR, IN PRODUCT MARKETING AND PARTICULARLY IN FASHION. BEFORE SIMON-SIMONE, I HAD NO EXPERIENCE OF THE WORLD OF DECORATION. TODAY, SIMON-SIMONE IS A CONCEPT STORE - I DON'T REALLY LIKE THE TERM MARKET PLACE – THAT HAS BEEN VERY CAREFUL TO SELECT BRANDS THAT ARE 95% FRENCH AND 5% MADE IN EUROPE. ALL THE BRANDS CHOSEN HAVE IN COMMON THIS ECO-FRIENDLY ASPECT, SHORT SUPPLY CHAINS, HANDCRAFTED PRODUCTS, AND A GENUINE STYLE. THE SITE HAS 150 BRANDS AND 1500 PRODUCTS.

HOW DID THE IDEA FOR THIS PROJECT COME ABOUT?

FOR A VERY LONG TIME NOW I HAVE WANTED TO START A BUSINESS BUT NEVER FOUND THE RIGHT TIME TO DO IT. THAT WAS ONE GOOD THING ABOUT COVID; SIMON-SIMONE CAME INTO BEING LARGELY AT THAT TIME. AT THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, I SAW A WHOLE LOAD OF BRANDS THAT NO LONGER HAD ACCESS TO THEIR CUSTOMERS. SO I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO CREATE A KIND OF ECOSYSTEM. AND THE IDEA BEHIND IT? TO BE STRONGER TOGETHER. THIS SKILL-COMBINING PROJECT GAVE RISE TO SIMON-SIMONE, BRINGING TOGETHER A NUMBER OF BRANDS AND THUS OFFERING THE CUSTOMER A MORE GLOBAL EXPERIENCE THAN ON SOME OTHER EXISTING SITES. I AM IN CHARGE OF EVERYTHING RELATED TO MARKETING COSTS, WHICH ARE OFTEN SUBSTANTIAL FOR SMALL DESIGNERS, AND THE SITE GIVES THEM THE POSSIBILITY OF OPENING UP TO A WIDER CLIENTELE.

IT'S A WIN-WIN SITUATION.

WHAT DOES SIMON-SIMONE HAVE THAT SETS IT APART FROM THE REST?

ITS AESTHETIC AND ITS DESIGN. NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT.

FOR ME, WHEN IT COMES TO DECORATING, YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH THE STYLE OF THE PRODUCT BEFORE LOOKING TO BUY GREEN. AT LEAST THAT'S HOW I WORK ON A PERSONAL LEVEL. THE PROBLEM I HAVE HAD UNTIL NOW WITH HANDCRAFTED DECORATION AND "MADE IN FRANCE" HAS BEEN PRECISELY THIS DIFFICULTY IN UNEARTHING BRANDS WITH A REAL AESTHETIC STRENGTH, A CUTTING EDGE DESIGN. THE ROLE OF SIMON-SIMONE IS TO BRING TOGETHER ALL THESE BRANDS EXISTING ON THE MARKET TODAY. MY AIM WAS TO FOCUS THE SELECTIONS ON QUALITY, WHICH IS OBVIOUSLY ESSENTIAL, BUT ALSO ON STYLE.

WHY DECORATION?

THE CRAFT INDUSTRY IS VERY IMPORTANT IN FRANCE. DECORATION DRAWS ON IT TO A GREAT EXTENT, MUCH MORE THAN FASHION, WHICH WAS MY SECTOR OF ACTIVITY FOR A LONG TIME. AND I AM TRAUMATIZED BY STOCKS. SOME YEARS I HAD MORE THAN 10% OF MY PURCHASES LEFT OVER EVEN AFTER THE SALES, WHICH IS ABSURD. SO WHEN I LAUNCHED THIS ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECT, MY PRINCIPAL AIM WAS TO PROMOTE SHORT SUPPLY CHAINS AND TO MAKE SMALL SERIES, PRODUCTION ON DEMAND.

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE YOU WANT TO PUT ACROSS WITH THIS TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP?

BRINGING A COMMUNITY TOGETHER. I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE RESPOND TO EACH OTHER, BECAUSE WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER. WITH SIMON-SIMONE, THE MARKETING EXPENSES ARE MANAGED, ALLOWING THE BRANDS TO FOCUS ON CREATING THEIR PRODUCTS AND PUTTING ALL THEIR ENERGY INTO THAT. THE COLLABORATION ASPECT MEETS THIS COMMUNITY NEED THAT I WANTED TO EMPHASIZE WITH THE CONCEPT STORE AND "DOING THINGS TOGETHER". MOREOVER, BY BEING AT THE HEART OF THE SYSTEM WITH THE CONCEPT STORE, I CAN SEE THE SHORTCOMINGS MUCH BETTER; AND WHILE IT'S TRUE THAT LA MAISON DE LA MAILLE MAKES SUMPTUOUS PRODUCTS, THEY ARE ALSO THE HEIGHT OF LUXURY. HENCE THE IDEA OF A PARTNERSHIP TO DESIGN TOGETHER A LESS EXPENSIVE THROW. TOGETHER WE CHOSE THE MESSAGES, THE COLORS AND THE WOOL, WHICH IS RECYCLED WOOL.

WHY LA MAISON DE LA MAILLE?

CHARLOTTE AND I HAVE LOTS OF THINGS IN COMMON. IF WE WEREN'T WORKING TOGETHER I THINK WE WOULD BE GOOD FRIENDS. THIS PROJECT CAME ABOUT IN A VERY FLUID WAY, WE SHARE THE SAME VALUES, THE SAME DESIRES AND CHARLOTTE IS REALLY PROACTIVE, SO EVERYTHING FELL INTO PLACE VERY SIMPLY.

ARE YOU INVOLVED IN A LOT OF COLLABORATIONS?

TWO FOR THE MOMENT, BUT I WOULD REALLY LIKE TO DEVELOP THIS FURTHER. I LOVE THE IDEA OF OFFERING UNIQUE PRODUCTS THAT CAN'T BE FOUND ELSEWHERE. TODAY WE HAVE THE COLLABORATION WITH LA MAISON DE LA MAILLE AND WE ALSO HAVE A LINE OF 3 SOFAS DESIGNED WITH 1083, BELLEVILLE AND SPLICE, IN FLANNEL, DENIM AND LINEN. IT IS A PERFECT PRETEXT TO PROMOTE THE BRANDS AND ALSO THE WEBSITE, FURTHER CONVEY THE VALUES OF THE FRENCH CRAFT INDUSTRY AND A CHANCE TO PRESENT NEW ITEMS AT THE "MADE IN FRANCE" TRADE SHOW.

AND WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

NOTHING YET, BUT I AM GOING TO WORK ON IT, I PROMISE! THE END OF THE YEAR WAS QUITE AN INTENSE PERIOD (LAUGHS).

ARTICLE ÉCRIT PAR LAURA ISAAZ

SUBSCRIBE TO LA MAISON DE LA MAILLE:

THE VERY COSY LETTER