

## The Tiled Stove in the Guild House “Zunft zum Schlüssel”

The octagonal tiled stove was donated to the Zunft (guild) zum Schlüssel in 1884 by 4 brothers, members of the guild.

- Emmanuel Passavant-Allemandi  
1843-1922, banker
- Hans Franz Passavant-Iselin  
1845-1909, entrepreneur (earthenware manufactory)
- Carl Passavant  
1854-1887, physician and natural scientist
- Georges Passavant  
1862-1952, banker

They were the sons of Emmanuel Passavant-Bachofen (1817-1879), a descendant of Nicolas de Passavant-de Martelière (1559-1633), who was naturalized in Basel in 1596 and made a member of the Zunft zum Schlüssel in 1604.

The tiled stove originally stood in the guild hall on the second floor. It was moved to its present location in the restaurant on the first floor following the complete renovation of the guild house in 1984/85.

The tiled stove was manufactured at the Tonwarenfabrik und Ziegelei Passavant-Iselin & Cie. in Allschwil, founded in 1878. The polychrome paintings are by faience artist Fritz Söffert (1861-1937); he was an independent decorative painter in Basel.

### Description of the paintings:

- The oven's crown features a frieze showing the coats of arms of the Basel guilds. Under this upper ring,
- four main panels present views of Basel; the Spalentor, the St. Albantor, the Cathedral and the “slanting bridge”: the first Wettsteinbrücke built in 1878-1880.
- Depicted around these historical monuments are allegories of the five senses with original sayings, such as “A woman's favour and the sound of a harp may ring sweet but do not last long” for the sense of hearing or “Enjoy the rose and its fragrance, for it will wilt at the first smack of cold air” for the sense of smell.
- The names of the four donators are affixed beneath the painted townscapes. Underneath the jutting rim there are paintings of historical figures illustrating the city's past.
- Munatius Plancus; Emperor Heinrich II; Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini; Erasmus von Rotterdam; Johannes Frobenius; Mayor Johann Rudolf Wettstein, next to Carl Felix Burckhardt-Vonder Mühl, the last acting mayor of Basel; Albert Emanuel Hoffmann-Burckhardt (1820-1896), the acting Master of the Guild at the time of the donation, founder

and President of the Swiss Alpine Club; Theodor Vischer-Vonder Mühl (1839-1919), engineer and guild board member (in charge of all matters pertaining to the building) from 1882-1909.

◦ Under the arches are six images illustrating the history of Basel:

1) In his field camp St. Margarethen, during the siege of the city of Basel in 1273, Rudolf von Habsburg accepts the electors' letter of credence from the Burgrave of Nürnberg, in which he is informed that he has been elected German King. 2) The reformer Johannes Oekolombad in the pulpit of the St. Martin's Church. 3) The swearing-in ceremony of Basel as a Swiss confederate municipality on Emperor Heinrich's day in 1501. 4) The end of the Rappenkrieg ('penny war') in May of 1594; City Councillor Andreas Ryff meets with Hans Siegrist, one of the main leaders of the insurgents from the canton of Baselland, in the field behind Wildenstein Castle. 5) Military measures during the suppression of the Neuchâtel uprising in 1856, which led to increased threats of war by the Prussians and therefore better border protection for Basel. 6) Wounded French soldiers and refugees from the German-French war of 1870/71 are cared for in the convent Klingenthal.

◦ On the columns next to the images illustrating the history of Basel are allegorical figures and Latin aphorisms alluding to: wisdom, hope, courage, love, simplicity, joy, justice and luck.

◦ The cornice shows the signs of the zodiac.

This paper was authored by Claude Passavant, Georg Passavant-Fichter's grandson, partially as a result of an article by Gustav Adolf Wanner that was published in the Basler Nachrichten, October 16/17, 1965.