

L'Auberge Rouge (The Red Inn)

*A collection of historical photographs, artwork, and media associated with
L'Auberge de Peyrebeille.*



Figure 1. Old postcard of L'Auberge de Peyrebeille

The Inn of Peyrebeille (L'Auberge de Peyrebeille), better known across France as L'Auberge Rouge ("The Red Inn"), is one of the most famous and sinister true-crime sites in 19th-century European history. Located on a remote, windswept plateau 1,265 meters high in the Ardèche region of southeastern France, it became infamous as a trap where dozens of traveling merchants and lone travelers were allegedly robbed, murdered, and disposed of.

Humble Beginnings on a Cold High Road

In the late 18th century, **Pierre Martin** and his wife **Marie Breysse** were poor peasant farmers in the harsh, high plains of Lanarce.

Around 1805–1807, the couple recognized a lucrative business opportunity along the rough mountain road connecting Le Puy-en-Velay and Aubenas. The route was heavily traveled by livestock drovers, traders, and muleteers pushing through treacherous terrain subject to dense fogs and sudden winter blizzards. Recognizing that tired travelers on this isolated stretch had nowhere else to turn for shelter, Pierre and Marie established a modest stone inn at Peyrebeille.



Figure 2. Rugged landscape of Monts d'Ardeche. Strategic Location of the Inn

Building a Rapid Fortune

Starting with almost nothing, the Martins quickly expanded the simple farmstead into a substantial complex with guest rooms, a large barn, and a courtyard.



Figure 3. Interior of the Red Inn, now a museum

Over the next two decades, local neighbors noticed an unusual anomaly: despite charging modest rates for lodging and simple meals, the couple accumulated a vast fortune estimated at over 30,000 gold francs (equivalent to hundreds of thousands of dollars today). Pierre Martin also used his growing influence and brute intimidation to acquire neighboring lands and livestock on the cheap.

The Reign of Terror (1805–1831)

To run the expanding inn, the couple hired an illiterate, loyal servant named **Jean Rochette** (nicknamed *Fétiche*). Together, the trio allegedly ran a deadly operation targeting prosperous, solitary travelers.



Figure 4. *Meurtres en série à l'Auberge Rouge* (Author unknown)

- **Spying & Selection:** The hosts would eavesdrop on guest conversations (supposedly through a peephole in the dining wall) to identify who was carrying heavy purses or valuable goods.
- **Ambush in the Dark:** Selected guests were targeted late at night—often as they walked up the steep internal wooden staircase—where Pierre or Rochette would ambush them with heavy mallets or iron bars.
- **Disposal:** Possessions were looted, and the bodies were allegedly buried in nearby forests, thrown into deep ravines, or incinerated in the inn's massive bread oven.

Dark rumors circulated for years across the plateau. Terrifying local legends even claimed the innkeepers served stew containing meat from previous victims—though historians attribute much of this to later sensationalized folklore.

The Downfall and Public Execution

For over 23 years, no single body was directly linked to the inn due to the remote terrain and the frequency with which travelers went missing in winter storms. That changed in **October 1831**.

The Fatal Clue: A local horse dealer named **Antoine Enjolras** disappeared after stopping at the inn while searching for a lost cow. Weeks later, his beaten body was discovered washed up on the banks of the Allier River nearby.

The Witness Testimony: The key breakthrough came from a beggar named Laurent Chaze. Having been kicked out of the inn because he couldn't afford a bed, Chaze slept in a nearby shed and testified to witnessing the murder and the removal of Enjolras's body by cart.

The Mass Spectacle: Following a high-profile trial, Pierre Martin, Marie Breysse, and Jean Rochette were condemned to death. On **October 2, 1833**, a traveling guillotine was brought to the forecourt of the inn. An estimated **30,000 spectators** flocked to the remote plateau to watch all three executed.



Figure 5. Plaster death masks of the executed innkeepers

Modern Legacy

Today, the original stone inn has been preserved as a historic museum, complete with period furniture and the infamous stone hearth. A granite marker outside marks the exact spot where the guillotine stood.

Modern historians still debate whether the trio actually killed 50+ victims as popular myth suggests, or if regional hysteria, political rivalries, and weak circumstantial evidence led to an overblown conviction. Nonetheless, the tale remains one of France's most enduring horror legends, inspiring multiple French films and novels.

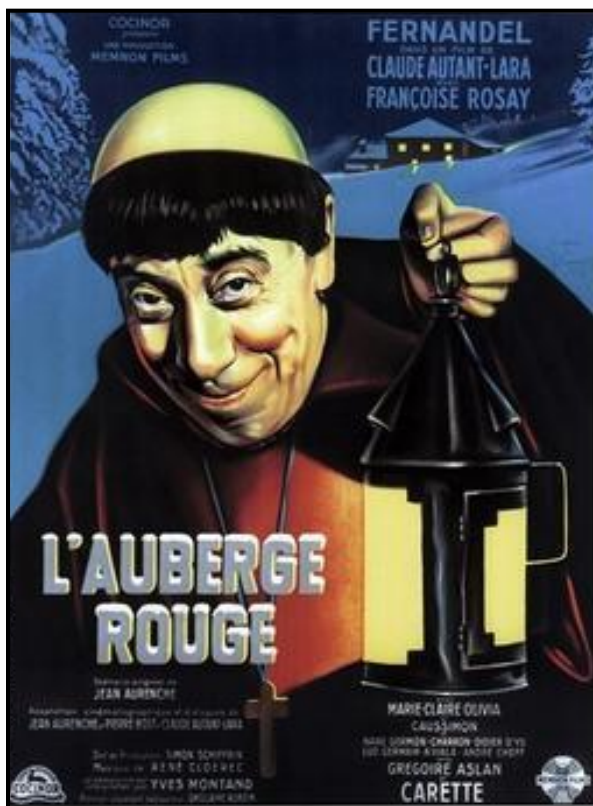


Figure 6. Poster L'auberge rouge (1951)



Figure 7. Poster L'auberge rouge (2007)

Board Game and Cinema

The board game visual design directly references the 1951 and 2007 film adaptations, brought to life through Weberson Santiago's distinct, angular Gothic art style. You can see a similar aesthetic in his artwork for the board game *Dracula vs. Van Helsing* on BGA.



Claude Autant-Lara's **1951 film adaptation** is a pure classic of French cinema—a masterpiece of dark comedy that can easily be rewatched with pleasure multiple times.

In the film, you will encounter the prototypes for the Monk and Novice from the game, as well as a range of characters that directly correlate with those found in the card deck.

Gérard Krawczyk's **2007 remake film** update brings French comedy veterans Christian Clavier, Josiane Balasko, and Gérard Jugnot together. While it keeps the core premise intact, the film shifts tone drastically toward colorful, fast-paced slapstick.



It replaces subtle moral irony with exaggerated physical gags, gross-out humor, and theatrical set-pieces. High production value and vivid color photography make it visually striking, though it lacks the lingering sinister atmospheric weight of the original.

In the remake, you can spot even more character prototypes from the game—most notably the distinct *Priest*, played by Christian Clavier. The game's *Newsboy* was likely inspired by the novice from the film.

The look of the game's **Butcher** was most likely inspired by the imposing woodcutter (*le bûcheron*) from the 2007 film.



The film also features a range of nobles and gendarmerie police characters with the similar distinctive looks seen in the game.



In my opinion, the 1951 version remains superior due to its razor-sharp screenplay, brilliant pacing, and Fernandel's iconic performance. The 2007 remake provides an entertaining, easy-watching farce, but it trades the original's bite for broad, accessible laughs.

Whether you come to it as a cinephile or a fan of The Bloody Inn, both films offer a delightfully dark slice of French cinematic history.

*Thank you for taking the time to read,
It was a true pleasure for me researching the
fascinating story behind the board game we play.
Happy watching, and enjoy playing!*

*P.S. I would like to pay a small tribute to a fellow Ukrainian
player Knjaz_Evol, who shared these film adaptations with me.*

P.P.S. Check out "The Bloody Union" group for TBI fans.

