



Les sonnailles Daban

Manufacture of small bells

24 rue des Pyrénées
64800 Nay
NOUVELLE AQUITAINE
Tel : +33 (0)5 59 61 00 41

E-mail : etsdaban@club-internet.fr

<http://www.daban.fr>

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Part of the pastoral tradition of Béarn since the 17th century, the "sonnailles" are bells used to locate the herds and to tell when a hunting dog has discovered game. Les Sonnailles Daban makes bells for herd animals (sheep, cattle and goats), for hunting dogs and also for various folk music groups. Nicolas Daban, the company's present managing director, represents the tenth generation of bellmakers. The production process, which is very traditional, involves several stages. First, sheet metal plates are cut out and stamped with the name of the manufacturer, then cold-hammered on beak irons (small anvils). Some are hot-shaped using an air hammer. The bells are then enclosed with brass in a clay cake which goes into a furnace heated to a minimum temperature of 1200°C. The brazing (giving a brass plating) gives the bell its resonance by sealing all the joins and impregnating the entire surface of the metal.

When it comes out of the furnace, the clay cake is allowed to cool, dipped in water and then broken open. Lastly, the bells are hammered to give them the required sound.