

What Mat didn't have time to do...

So many people have written and told us about the extraordinary things Mathieu had achieved in his short life. Nothing ever seemed impossible. However, what is heart-breaking are the many concrete projects he was planning to undertake in the immediate future...

Just before he died, he had promised Gaston he was going to take both Gaston and Agathe to climb to the top of La Sure the following Saturday. That meant he'd be carrying Agathe and Gaston would hike the whole thing on his own!

He had asked for Stephanie's hand in marriage, one week before his death, with a beautiful bouquet of 30 multi-colored roses for her 30th birthday. The engagement ring was already paid for, but he wanted Steph to choose what she would like, with a jeweler in downtown Voiron that did custom creations...not just any ordinary ring for Steph!

Plans were already underway that they would be married in a church and the festivities would occur up at l'Alpe du Grand Serre. He wanted a big wedding, he had told Steph: about 150 people, and had already talked to his friend about the preparation of several roasted hogs.

Also Agathe was to be baptized.

In a week or two, Mathieu was supposed to distil 2 tons of apples that had been fermenting in barrels for a half a year. This would be done with his father-in-law along with friends. A significant number of bottles were to be reserved for Sophie's baby (Charlie Mathieu) because it was the year of his birth. For the occasion he had told Steph he wanted a big diots (sausage) outdoor party at their house, which would have been the typical big crowd, eating, drinking, playing pétanque, and then singing around a fire until the early hours of the morning.

Mat had just had his beautiful house estimated. He had multiplied the value of the house by exactly ten-fold in just a few years. He had huge plans nevertheless. The blueprints had already been drawn up to complete the extension of the upper level. The large windows were ready to install and he had already selected his logs to build the future staircase. It was to have another big glass panel on the floor so that from downstairs you could look all the way up and see the beautiful wooden framework and beams of this amazing 300-year house. They were planning on adding a large playroom, and another bedroom and bathroom. A number of other home improvements were in the making as well, such as an outdoor swimming pool.

Just a few months ago, Mathieu finished building a large fountain in his yard with continuous running spring water; very pretty, right in front of their bay window. He wanted to add another fountain a little higher up on his property that he would carve out of a log, also with constant running water. The little seedlings that Steph had started were growing, and Mat would soon be planting them in their impressive vegetable garden.

A couple of weeks ago, Mat and Steph decided, in addition to producing goat cheeses, they would raise young goats for meat to be processed into pâtés and sausages. Mathieu constructed a solid enclosure for a few dozen young goats and the new adventure was just beginning.

On a professional level, Mat had just decided to go into a partnership with one of the largest construction entrepreneurs of the region. It also happened to be one of his best friends. The contracts had already been drawn, and he was very excited about this.

In the month of August, Mat had reserved all his jobs waiting for him in the mountains at l'Alpe du Grand Serre and he had been planning on spending several weeks up at "La Tartine". This was one of his favorite places to be, especially in the summer, when it got hot, and of course also in the winter when it was cold.

On his agenda was also the annual camp-out at Lac du Bourget in May, where Steph Mat and the kids would come with the new camper that they had recently bought, and only used once.

In June is Sophie's wedding in Bretagne, and the whole Raynaud family, would finally have a wonderful family reunion.

These are just some of the things that were in the workings. Many of these plans we will try to make possible to come true, with the help of family and friends. However, we will miss the smile, enthusiasm, know-how, and the driving force and energy of Mat who had envisioned these plans, and would have loved to live to accomplish these things, and who could have done them better than any of us.