

Paris Is Turning Its Dark Underground Parking Lots into Mushrooms Farms

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Unused underground parking garages in the French capital and beyond are being turned into bespoke mushroom farms, thanks to a company called Cycloponics.

Allowing an extremely nutritious crop to be grown and sold directly in Paris, the initiative is part of a number of renovation projects the City is encouraging and sponsoring.

Along with shitake, oyster, and white button mushrooms, [Cycloponics](#) grows chicory—a French delicacy that can grow in the dark—as well as microgreens like mini broccoli. These are delivered via bicycle to local organic grocery stores.

Their location in Paris is called “The Cave,” and it’s one of three such converted garages that have been co-founded since 2017 by the coincidentally named Theo Champagnat.

“70% of people live in towns today, and in this population there is a demand for local and organic products like ours,” [says](#) Champagnat.

In a [BBC video news report](#) on the operation, Dougal Shaw details how during the 1960s and '70s, large apartment blocks were almost always built with underground parking garages. Now

car ownership is dwindling, and many of the garages are becoming derelict haunts for illicit activity.



image credit: Cycloponics

in the mid-2010s, Parisian Mayor Anne Hidalgo launched *Reinventing Paris—The Subterranean Secrets of Paris* which offered designers, architects, and others a chance to help transform abandoned underground lots into cultural spaces, gastronomic eateries, and other civic-minded projects.

One such [project turned](#) an old metro stop into a market/food court on one side of the platform, and the other into a cocktail bar, featuring luminous light and trendy designs.

But this offering in Paris wasn't the first time Cycloponics took to the dark and dank in the heart of a French city. Their first project, built in an old German bunker dating back to 1878, is located in the city of Strasbourg, while their most

recent mushroom project is centered in Bordeaux.
These days? Champagnat and the 10 people who work with him [are able to harvest](#) around 100-200 kilos of mushrooms from their lots per week. Not bad for a bunch of college-age basement dwellers.

cover image credit [Cycloponics](#)