

Evidence from French cave suggests Neanderthals more sophisticated than previously believed

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In February 1990, thanks to a 15-year-old boy named Bruno Kowalszczewski, footsteps echoed through the chambers of Bruniquel Cave for the first time in tens of thousands of years.

Some 336 meters into the cave, the caver stumbled across something extraordinary—a vast chamber where several stalagmites had been *deliberately* broken. Most of the 400 pieces had been arranged into two rings—a large one between 4 and 7 metres across, and a smaller one just 2 metres wide. Others had been propped up against these donuts. Yet others had been stacked into four piles. Traces of fire were everywhere, and there was a mass of burnt bones.

These weren't natural formations, and they weren't the work of bears. They were built by people: specifically, the only early humans in the south of France at the time: Neanderthals. The discovery suggested that Neanderthals were more sophisticated than anyone had given them credit for. They wielded fire, ventured deep underground, and shaped the subterranean rock into complex constructions. Perhaps they even carried out rituals.

Read full, original post: [A Shocking Find In a Neanderthal Cave in France](#)