DOMAIN OF CHAUMONT-SUR-LOIRE
CHÂTEAU - HISTORIC GROUNDS - STABLES

DOMAINE
DE CHAUMONT-SUR-LOIRE
CHÂTEAU PARC ÉCURIES

THE "HISTORICAL" APARTMENTS

Once you have crossed the drawbridge and passed through the entrance gate and the shop, make your way to the East Wing Gallery, followed by the Porcupine Gallery.

The so-called Ruggieri Room takes its name from a symbol on the mantelpiece: the Greek letter delta (the initial of Diane) accompanied by three circles, or three full moons. This carving was initially interpreted as a cabalistic sign belonging to Ruggieri, one of Queen Catherine de Medici's astrologers, but it may also refer to Diane de Poitiers, since in Roman mythology, Diana is the goddess of the moon. The furnishings include a canopy bed from the late 17th century, a portrait from the 17th century, presumably depicting Cosimo Ruggieri, and a three-level bench from the 15th century, which represents the hierarchical status of the lord and his family or the position of members of the clergy. The room also contains a winged cabinet with a drawer, a ring, and a lockable roll-top flap dating from the first quarter of the 17th century. The room features a 16th-century polychrome fireplace, a reminder that all fireplaces were once painted, and walls built of both brick and natural stone, a construction technique typical of the early 16th century.

The so-called Catherine de Medici Room (formerly a ceremonial bedroom) features the oldest tapestry preserved in the Château's collections, woven in Tournai at the end of the 15th century (*The Story of Perseus and Pegasus*). Also on display are a full-length portrait of Catherine de Medici (a 19th-century copy), a Flemish tapestry from the late 16th century (*The Story of David and Abigail*), and a remarkable 19th-century Henry II-style bed, richly carved with figures, mascarons, cornucopias, laurel garlands, and fruits. The headboard is flanked by half-relief mermaids and surmounted by an Amazon and a warrior forming the canopy supports. The furnishings also include a 16th-century high-backed wooden bench, carved with a heron swallowing an eel beneath an arch and two opposing unicorns holding a shield, as well as a wardrobe near the bed whose 15th-century façade displays iconography typical of the period: the upper register shows the three theological virtues (Faith, Hope, Charity) and the Four Seasons; the lower register represents the five senses.
This room displays sixty-three medallions and six moulds created in the 18th century by the Italian artist Jean-Baptiste Nini. He portrayed many renowned figures of his time (Louis XV, Louis XVI, and Marie-Antoinette) as well as more modest individuals such as doctor, notary, and estate manager. Today, this collection is recognised as the most prestigious of its kind in the world.

The Council Room features an exceptional 17th-century Majolica tile floor, acquired by the de Broglie family and originating from the Palazzo Collutio in Palermo, Sicily. The room is furnished with a 16th-century table with pull-out leaves, a fireplace plate from the late 17th century originating from the Château de Ménars (near Blois), and a 19th-century painting depicting Diane de Poitiers.
The wall hung tapestries *of the Planets and the Days* were woven in 1570 in the workshops of master weaver Martin Reymbouts. Comprising eight tapestries, its main theme is astrology. Each Roman deity, corresponding to a day of the week and a planet, is seated in a chariot symbolizing the movement of the celestial bodies. The wheels of the chariot contain one or more zodiac signs and are drawn by a fantastic or real animal associated with the deity. Starting from the right of the fireplace, one can identify Diana, Saturn, Apollo, Venus, Mars, a fragment of another tapestry from Martin Reymbouts' workshop (*Le Mariage*), Mercury, and Jupiter.

The Guards' Room, located at entrance gate, occupies a strategic position above the Château porch. It contains a rare late 16th-century safe weighing more than 250 kilograms, a late 17th-century tapestry depicting a scene from the life of Cimon (Athenian general), an array of 19th-century Ottoman weaponry (mounted on the mantelpiece) offered to the de Broglie family by the Maharajah of Kapurthala, and three paintings: *The Road to Calvary* (17th century), *Extreme Unction*, and *The Resurrection* in the neo-primitive style of the 19th century.

The study, known in the time of the de Broglie family as the King's Room because of the visit to the Château in 1503 by King Louis XII and his wife Anne of Brittany, features a rare mid-19th-century polychrome ceiling. The room contains two exceptional pieces of furniture (a low bookcase and a writing cabinet in black wood with bone inlay) from the second half of the 19th century, deposited by the *Mobilier national* (formerly the Crown Furniture Repository). A small Guéridon library, a pair of fireside chairs, and a late 19th-century Venetian crystal chandelier complete the furnishings.

The Grand Staircase, a spiral staircase, reflects the gradual assimilation of the Italian style by French artists around 1500: trilobed Gothic motifs give way to Renaissance foliage, and Italianate arabesques cover the shafts of the small columns. The windows are decorated with heraldic stained glass panels displaying the coats of arms of the various families who owned Chaumont. This staircase provides access to the Château's various contemporary art spaces, which are unfurnished, including the digital gallery and the former Princess de Broglie's bedroom, now converted into an art gallery.

THE PRIVATE APARTMENTS

The Dining Room features a remarkable fireplace created by Antoine Margotin, a pupil of the architect Paul-Ernest Sanson, which incorporates the main sculptural motifs found on the Château's exterior façades (a mountain in flames - *Mont Chaud*), the double "C" of Charles II d'Amboise, and the coat of arms of Cardinal Georges d'Amboise. The room also contains two tapestries: *The Judgment of Paris* (16th century) and *The Story of Aeneas* (17th century), as well as a 16th-century chest decorated with a panel depicting the battle between David and Goliath.

The Library has been faithfully reconstructed, even though part of its decoration was lost in a fire in June 1957. It features a 19th-century two-tier bookcase adorned with pilasters, lozenges, shell friezes and interlacing patterns in the Renaissance style, as well as a Napoleon III-era furniture set comprising an indiscret (a three-person circular Napoleon III seat), a sofa and armchairs. Two 17th-century tapestries woven in Aubusson depict episodes from the life of Alexander the Great: *The Submission of Darius' Family* and *The Meeting of Porus and Alexander*.

The Small Salon features a rare Empire-period furniture set (on deposit from the Loir-et-Cher Departmental Council) stamped by the cabinetmaker Pierre-Benoît Marcion, as well as an exceptional Empire-period clock in marble and gilded bronze, and an Empire-period backgammon table (on deposit from the *Mobilier national*), originating from the Palais de l'Élysée. This room recalls the visit to Chaumont from April to August 1810 of the writer Germaine de Staël, at the time her book *De l'Allemagne* was being printed in Tours.

The Billiard Room features a rare polychrome ceiling commissioned by Prince and Princess de Broglie, with various views of the Château on the main beam dating from the late 19th century and at each end the coats of arms of the Amboise and Broglie families. Two 16th-century Brussels tapestries depict episodes from the life of Hannibal, the Carthaginian general: *The Siege of Saguntum by Hannibal* and *Hannibal Showing His Lieutenants the Po Valley*.

The Great Salon was furnished in the mid-19th century in a historicist style inspired by the royal Château of Blois (polychrome fireplace featuring a depiction of the porcupine). The furniture (tables, chairs, stools, a two-tier sideboard, a confident, a tea table and a smoking chair) date from the Napoléon III period or the late 19th century. The yellow silk brocatelle with large floral motifs covering all the walls was rewoven in 2007 based on the original late 19th-century designs. Numerous recent acquisitions and deposits (from the *Mobilier national* and the Domaine national de Versailles) have helped to recreate the refined atmosphere of the Princess de Broglie's salon.

Upon leaving the reception rooms, you'll find yourself in the courtyard. Next, make your way to the chapel.

The Chapel, built in the early 16th century and adorned with flamboyant Gothic carved decoration, was restored between 1884 and 1886. The stained-glass windows, created by master glazier Georges Bardon, were installed in 1888 and depict the history of Chaumont from its origins to the de Broglie family.

Upon leaving the shop, first head to the kitchens under the entrance porch, where contemporary artworks are exhibited, then proceed down to the Stables, in front of the Château.

In 1877, Prince de Broglie commissioned the architect Paul-Ernest Sanson to design **stables** intended to be the most splendid and modern in Europe. Two stables were built: the larger ones for the Château owners and the other for their guests (*not open to visitors*).
The Great Stable is divided into several areas. The so-called "half-blood" stables housed carriage horses destined to pull horse-drawn vehicles. The interior layout has remained unchanged since 1877: stalls, cartouches inscribed with the horses' names, benches, cast-iron feeding troughs and drinking basins topped with polychrome enamelled cast-iron plaques, brass balls and hooks and arc lamps. Beyond the carriage horse stable are the boxes for riding horses. The Great Courtyard also provides access to the working saddlery and kitchen. Adjacent to the working saddlery is the gala saddlery. This room, preserved in its original state since the late 19th century, along with its remarkable collection of driving harnesses, bits, and whips, is today considered one of the finest saddleries in France. All saddlery and harness items come from the most prestigious workshops active in the 19th century, including Hermès, Clément, Adler, and Adam. At one corner of the courtyard, a small covered riding ring, about twelve metres in diameter, allowed for horses to be trained on the longe line. To construct this riding ring, Paul-Ernest Sanson reused the substructure of the pottery and glass kiln from the factory established by Jacques-Donatien Leray de Chaumont. Only the walls above the circulation gallery belong to the original kiln, the floor level having been lowered since. The lower parts of the walls, as well as the cupola roof, are Sanson's work. Following this is the stable reserved for ponies. It has preserved its original fittings, including wall panelling, partitions, feeding troughs, and hayracks.

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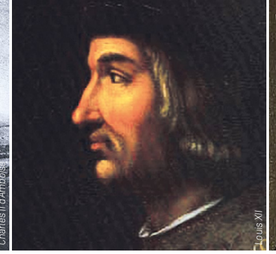
RÉGION CENTRE VAL DE LOIRE

Charles II d'Amboise


Louis XII

Catherine de Medici

Diane de Poitiers

Jacques Donatien Leray

Germaine de Staël

Prince Henri-Amédée de Broglie

Princesse Henri-Amédée de Broglie

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FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE RENAISSANCE

The Château of Chaumont-sur-Loire was founded around the year 1000 by **Odo I** (973/978–996), Count of Blois, to keep watch over the border between the County of Blois and the County of Anjou, held by Fulk III Nerra (978–1040).
The Norman knight Gelduin (circa 996–1040) received Chaumont and strengthened its fortress. His son and heir Geoffroy, who had no children, chose his great-niece Denise de Fougères (circa 1035–1096) as his successor; she married **Sulpice I d'Amboise** (circa 1030–1074) in 1054. The Château thus remained in the Amboise family for five centuries.
In 1465, Louis XI (1423–1483) had Chaumont burned to the ground to punish **Pierre I d'Amboise** (1408–1473), involved in the League of Public Weal (an uprising of nobles against the King). His estates were restored when he returned to favour. Assisted by his son **Charles I** (1430–1481), he then began rebuilding the Château, a task that was later continued by **Charles II** (1473–1511) with the help of his uncle, **Cardinal Georges d'Amboise** (1460–1510).
This powerful family, close to the royal court, reached its peak during the reign of Louis XII (1462–1515). Its members were also great patrons of the arts, notably Georges d'Amboise and his nephew Charles II d'Amboise.
Georges d'Amboise was Archbishop of Narbonne and later of Rouen. Made a Cardinal and then Papal Legate, he became the chief advisor to Louis XII. One of the first to bring the Italian Renaissance style to France, he oversaw the construction of the Châteaux of Chaumont, Gaillon and Meillant.
Charles II d'Amboise, a close friend of the King who visited him in 1503, was appointed Governor of Lombardy, Marshal, and later Admiral of France. He was the first Frenchman to commission Leonardo da Vinci, whose pupil, Andrea Solario, was invited to France in 1507.

FROM CATHERINE DE MEDICI TO DIANE DE POITIERS

Queen **Catherine de Medici** (1519–1589), wife of King Henri II (1519–1559), purchased the Château of Chaumont in 1550. At that time, the estate was highly profitable, thanks to tolls on the Loire and extensive agricultural lands. She probably used Chaumont-sur-Loire as a hunting lodge and as a stopover between the Châteaux of Amboise and Blois.
Throughout her life, Catherine de Medici surrounded herself with astrologers, the most famous being Nostradamus (1503–1566) and Cosimo Ruggieri (?-1615). According to legend, it was at Chaumont that Ruggieri predicted to Catherine de Medici the end of the Valois dynasty in favour of the Bourbon dynasty, with the rise of Henri de Navarre (1553–1610), the future Henri IV. Cosimo Ruggieri reportedly revealed the faces of the queen's three sons destined to reign in a mirror. The mirror rotated as many times as the years of each king's reign: François II (1559–1560), Charles IX (1560–1574) and Henri III (1575–1589).
Upon Henri II's death in 1559, during a jousting tournament, Catherine de Medici, by then Regent of France, asked her former rival **Diane de Poitiers** (1499–1566) to return the Château of Chenonceau, a royal gift that was inalienable since it belonged to the crown. In exchange, she gave Diane de Poitiers the Château of Chaumont.
Henri II's former favourite only stayed at Chaumont occasionally. Concerned for her residences, she continued the Château's construction until her death in 1566, giving Chaumont much of its present-day appearance.
Upon becoming the new owner, Diane's daughter was the first to express a desire to create a park around the Château in 1573. However, her death the following year brought the project to an end.

ENLIGHTENMENT AND ROMANTICISM

The Enlightenment and Romanticism periods at Chaumont were marked by two exceptional figures: **Jacques-Donatien Leray** (1726–1803), Governor of Les Invalides under Louis XVI (1754–1793), and **Germaine de Staël** (1766–1817), a prominent woman of letters of the 18th and 19th centuries.
A native of Nantes, **Jacques-Donatien Leray** made his fortune in trade and bought the estate of Chaumont in 1750. In 1772, he founded two factories (one producing pottery, the other fine glassware) on the site of the current stables. He entrusted their management to Jean-Baptiste Nini (1717–1786), a renowned Italian sculptor. Sympathetic to the American Revolutionary cause, Leray acted as an intermediary between King Louis XVI and the American representatives (Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, Silas Deane) and also financed the American army with his personal fortune.
Jacques-Donatien Leray Junior, also known as James (1760–1840), moved to America in 1785 but continued to spend time at Chaumont. He married an American woman and became an American citizen.
During the exile imposed by Napoleon, **Germaine de Staël** made the most of her friend James Leray's absence to stay at Chaumont from April to August 1810, overseeing the printing of her book De l'Allemagne in Tours. Her presence brought many famous guests to Chaumont, including Madame Récamier, Adelbert von Chamisso, the Counts of Sabran and Salaberry, as well as Benjamin Constant, author of *Adolphe*.
In 1833, the **Count of Aramon** (1787–1847) acquired the estate. He devoted most of his efforts to creating the grounds, which had previously been lacking at Chaumont. Upon his death, his widow remarried **Joseph Walsh** (1782–1860), who called on architect Jules Potier de la Morandière (1813–1883) to restore the Château, listed as a Historical Monument since 1840. Despite his efforts, Potier de la Morandière could not complete his costly restoration programme, and in 1872, Chaumont was once again put up for sale.

THE PRINCESS DE BROGLIE AND THE BELLE EPOQUE

Marie-Charlotte-Constance Say (1857–1943), heir to the Say sugar refineries, was the last private owner of the Château of Chaumont from 1875 to 1938. At just 17 years of age, heading one of the largest fortunes in France, she bought the Château in March 1875 and married Prince **Henri-Amédée de Broglie** (1849–1917) in June of that year. The princely couple made extensive changes to the Château to make it worthy of the grandest receptions. Many European and Eastern sovereigns were welcomed at Chaumont (Edward VII of England, Don Carlos of Portugal, Charles I of Romania), as well as the Maharajas of Kapurthala, Baroda, and Patiala, and artists such as Francis Poulenc, Francis Planté, Marguerite Deval, and Sarah Bernhardt.
In 1905, Crosnier, director of the Say sugar factories, made some poor investments. His reckless speculations cost the de Broglie family a third of their fortune, and only the scrupulous administration of the Prince allowed them to maintain appearances. After his death in 1917, Princess de Broglie mismanaged her fortune. The 1929 stock market crash then led to currency devaluation. In September 1930, at the age of 73, she remarried His Royal Highness Louis-Ferdinand of Orléans and Bourbon (1888–1945), aged just 42, taking the title Princess of Orléans and Bourbon. Following multiple financial setbacks, Princess of Orléans and Bourbon divided the Domain of Chaumont, reducing it from 2,500 hectares to 21 hectares, sold her numerous properties worldwide, and parted with thousands of works of art.
In 1937, the French State launched an expropriation procedure in the public interest and took possession of the Domain on 1st August 1938, along with the sumptuous collection of tapestries and various pieces of furniture of "historical significance." Princess of Orléans and Bourbon spent her final days in two luxury hotels (the Ritz and the Georges V) and her Parisian flat on rue de Grenelle, where she passed away on 15th July 1943 at 86 years of age.
After having been a national monument, the Domain became regional in 2007.

THE LANDSCAPED PARK AND THE MODEL FARM

Chaumont's **landscaped grounds** are a relatively recent creation compared with the history of the Château itself. Until the 1880s, the site had a completely different appearance. In place of the current grounds, opposite the Château, stood a village consisting of two hamlets with 113 houses, the church and presbytery at the foot of Saint Nicolas Tower, and the cemetery behind the hamlets. Several lawns embellished with flowerbeds and intersected by roads formed the only real backdrop for the Château.
From 1880 onwards, Henri Duchêne (1841–1902), landscape architect, began creating the grounds. His plans involved a radical transformation of the site into a vast pleasure garden in the so-called "English-style". The works lasted from 1884 to 1888 and cost around 560,000 gold francs at the time.
To create the grounds, Prince Henri-Amédée de Broglie purchased and demolished all the buildings located in front of the Château. He then financed the construction of a new village on the banks of the Loire. Today's church and presbytery were designed at the same time by architect Paul-Ernest Sanson. Even the cemetery was relocated.
A system of curvilinear paths allows for a continuous walk with multiple viewpoints. The so-called belt path runs around the perimeter of the grounds, providing views over the entire park. Secondary paths branch off in a clever play of tangents, ellipses, and curls, extending the walk or leading to specific spots. Eight main viewpoints are integrated, five of which converge at the Château entrance. Evergreen species ensure the continuity of the paths and the outlines of the groves in winter. Various trees were chosen to create harmonious color compositions, especially in autumn. The dark foliage of the cedars planted around the Château provides a pleasing contrast with the light stone.
The most remarkable trees were planted individually. Duchêne's composition also makes full use of the site's natural advantages, integrating the Loire and the vast agricultural and wooded lands of the Broglie Domain through skilful perspectives.
The grounds also feature various structures and ornamental elements: the reservoir, also called the "water tower", the picturesque or "rustic" bridge (*closed to visitors*) and the dog cemetery.

The Model Farm

In 1903, Prince and Princess de Broglie commissioned the architect Paul-Ernest Sanson to design a model farm combining rationalisation and modernisation. Due to the costs of such a project, the Prince opted for another architect, Marcel Boille (1850–1942), who began the work in 1903. The construction continued for ten years but was never fully completed.

ARCHITECTURAL EVOLUTION OF THE CHATEAU

1468 - 1481 : Pierre I d'Amboise and his son Charles I built the North Wing (now gone), the West Wing, the Amboise Tower, and the first bay of the South Wing. This initial building phase retained defensive features: ramparts and machicolations.

1498 - 1511 : Charles II continued the construction and added the chapel, the Saint Nicolas Tower, the East Wing, the entrance gate, the Grand Staircase, and the South Wing. This phase introduced Italianising motifs (shells and foliage) characteristic of the Renaissance.

1562 : Diane de Poitiers took possession of the Château of Chaumont. She completed the ramparts of the entrance gate and the Saint Nicolas Tower, left unfinished in 1511. She had these adorned with her initials and emblems (interlaced D's, arches and quivers, hunting horns, and moon crescents).

After 1750 : Jacques-Donatien Leray completed the South Wing, which had remained unfinished, and demolished the North Wing, considered dilapidated, thereby creating a vast terrace offering one of the finest views over the Loire. The Château then ceased to resemble a fortress and became a pre-Romantic stately residence.

After 1847 : at the request of Viscount Joseph Walsh, Jules Potier de la Morandière added a Norman-inspired covering to the Grand Staircase. He remodelled the South Wing in a Neo-Renaissance style, added a large skylight and two projecting corner turrets at the end of the West Wing, and restored the drawbridge as well as the coats of arms on the entrance gate.

1875 - 1900 : the de Broglie family called on the architect Paul-Ernest Sanson (1836–1918). He was responsible for restoring the Château and designing the details of the private apartments, which he adapted to the requirements of modern comfort (installation of running water and electricity). He also fitted out the so-called "Historical" apartments on the first floor of the East Wing: the Ruggieri Room, the Catherine de Medici Room, the Council Room, and the Guards' Room.