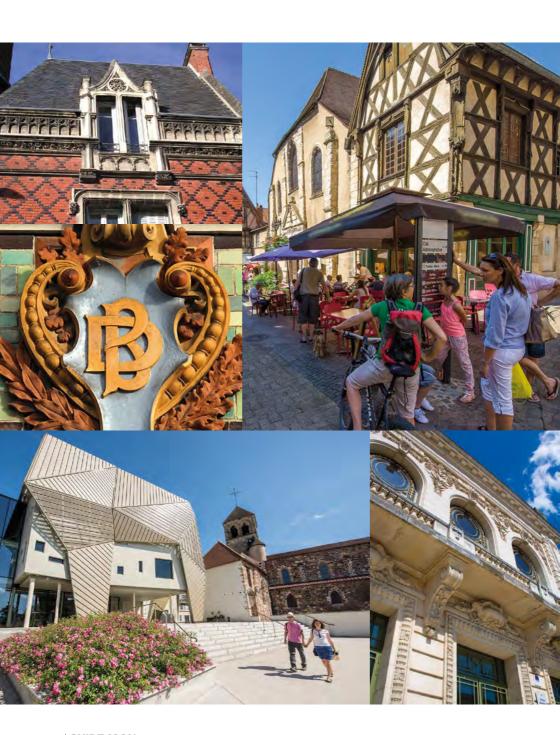




MONTHION

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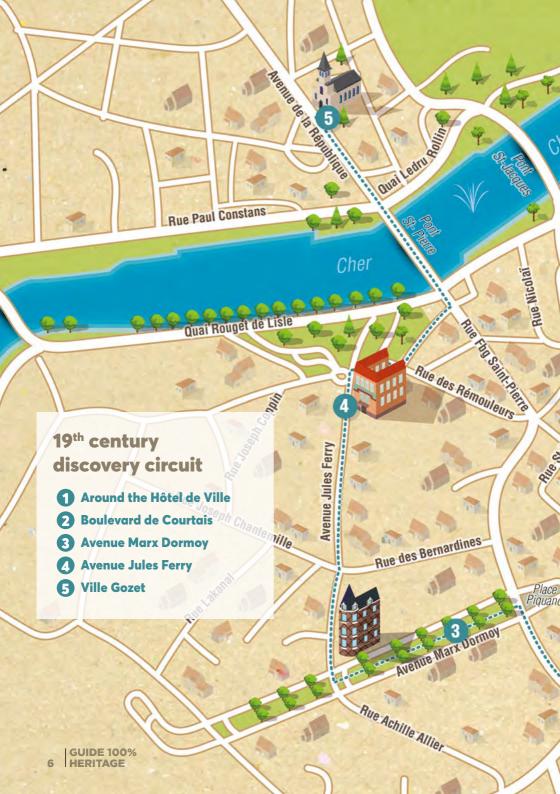


MONTLUÇON

City of contrasts and discoveries

sitting at the foot of the Castle of the Dukes of Bourbon, this Medieval city promises you are leisurely stroll through its narrow streets dotted with magnificent timber-framed houses and private mansions, witness to Montluçon's glorious past. Not-to-be-missed: the Esplanade du Château with its spectacular views over the city.

Montluçon entered a new golden age during the 19th century with the advent of the first industrial revolution. The city expanded rapidly, building new roads that offered sightseers visions of elegant houses in a range of architectural styles typical of this period. Find out more as you leaf through this guide...

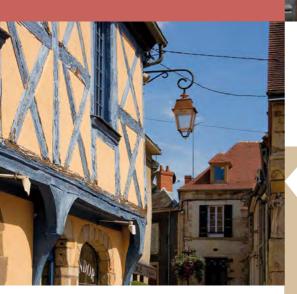


Montluçon **Medieval city Medieval city buildings Castle of the Dukes of Bourbon Saint-Pierre district Around the Jardin Wilson Boulevard Carnot** Place de la fontaine Jardin Wilson **Church of Notre-Dame** Aug Monte Dans Castle esplanade Passage du Doyenné MuPop Place Tribunal ean-Jaurès Rue de la Preste Rue Grande Boulevard de Courtais Square de la Romagère Pue des Forges GUIDE 100% | HERITAGE

Medieval city buildings

MONT UCON Medieval city

Most of the timber-framed houses date from the 15th and 16th centuries. Supported by a stone-built loadbearing wall the upper floors are made of a wood frame infilled with daub. The ground floor often contained artisans shops. Que Grande along with Que des Serruriers and Que de la Fontaine formed an elegant bourgeois thoroughfare in Montlucon.



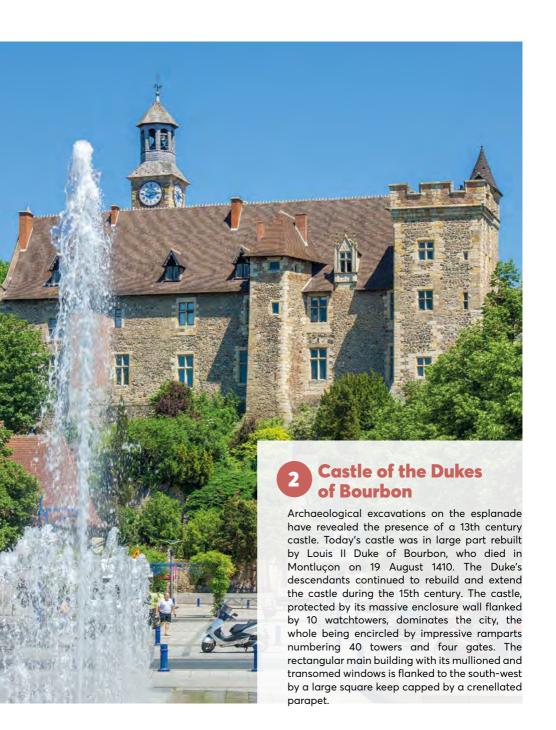


Rue Grande

Admire the wonderful building facades at Nos. 39, 56 and 64. The cross braces in the form of an "Croix de Saint- André" take their name from the terrible torture meted out to Saint Andrew, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Rue Porte-Bretonnie

The castle fortifications had four gates, the best preserved of which still has one of its towers, currently the site of a coffee roasting shop. The road takes its name from a 17-year period when the English (the Bretons) settled there, before being forcibly ejected by Philippe Auguste in 1188.



MONTLUÇON Medieval city





House of the **Twelve Apostles**

(To the right of the church of Saint-Pierre)

This is one of the most beautiful houses in the Saint-Pierre district. At one time, the first-floor timber frames bore carvings of the twelve apostles. Sadly, these were all destroyed during the Revolution, but you can still make out where they used to be.



Don't miss

La fontaine des lions

In earlier days a fountain-grotto, you can still see a sandstone arch, a relic of the original 12th century building. The fountain was modified in the 19th century using Volvic lava stone. Two cast iron lion's heads were added as adornments for the new wall. In former times, the water in the fountain was thought to have healing powers. It may be the origin of the popular saying: "Nez des lions tu mouilleras, bonheur, toute l'année, tu auras". (Wet the lion's noses, and you will have happiness all year round).



Don't miss



The building opposite the House of the Twelve Apostles is doubled corbelled; in other words, it has a space-saving, overhanging upper storey that had the added advantage of minimising the tax bill calculation which was based on a building's footprint.

MONTLUÇON Medieval city



Church of Saint **Pierre**

The church is a mixture of styles typical of the Auvergne and Berry regions, especially evident in the shortened transept crossing berrichons". In the transept, to the right of the choir stalls you can see three remarkable statues, listed historical monuments, that date back to the "Bourbonnais Golden Age" (spanning the years between 1475 and 1525).

Second church door (Rue des Cing Piliers): 15th century door in the flamboyant Gothic style, its ogee topped by ornately carved pinnacles.



Saint Barbe

A listed, 15th century stone statue

The history of Saint Barbe is represented by her symbols - the tower and the martyr's palm frond. Locked up in a tower by her father until the day of her wedding and christened in secret, Saint Barbe refused to marry the suitor chosen by her father. Her furious father made her endure dreadful torture before finally cutting off her head, after which he was struck down by a heaven-sent bolt of lightning. Believed to protect people against lightning strikes and sudden death, Saint Barbe went on to become the patron saint of firemen and miners until 1969 when her cult was discontinued.

Saint Madeleine

Listed, 15th century limestone statue

An exquisite example of late 15th century Bourbon art - the body is slightly arched, the waist girdled by a ribbon-edged surcot worn over a fine silk dress. Her delicate chin and slanting eyes represented the feminine ideal during the reign of Anne of France and Pierre II, Duke of Bourbon. Said to have been carved by Jean de Chartres, Saint Madeleine is holding the perfume bottle with which she anointed the feet of Jesus as he dined at Simon's home.



MONTLUÇON Medieval city





Porte Fouquet

(the tower is at the very end of N° 8, Rue Porte Fouquet)
During the 17th century, Louis XIV had Nicolas Fouquet, his Superintendent of Finances imprisoned here. Fouquet's wife and three children were exiled to Montluçon where they were housed in the Château de la Gaîté, outside the city walls To make it easier to get to the church of Saint-Pierre, Madame Fouquet had the former Porte de Cohelene reopened, hence the name Porte Fouquet.

Jardin Wilson

This French-style garden, also known as the Jardin des Ramparts, was created in 1937 in the gardens of neighbouring private mansions and officially inaugurated by Marx Dormoy in 1939. Most of the original fortifications were destroyed in the 18th century leaving only a portion of the curtain wall as a reminder of the former medieval ramparts. Take the time to wander round and discover every corner of this park, taking in the rose garden, the shady terraces and the colourful, flower-filled paths in the parish priest's garden.

Bust of André Messager

(at the far end of the garden, facing the pond

Born in Montluçon on 30 December 1853, Messager was one of greatest composers of classical French operetta. He was also a significant contributor to the history of music in general, modernising the operetta style and opening it up to new influences.



Hôtel de Charnisay

m

Overlooking the Jardin Wilson, this hotel dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries. Its last owner, Amable-Philippe Artuys, Baron de Charnisay, ceded ownership to the city in 1919. The building now houses the MuPop (Museum of Popular Music).



Hôtel Alexandre de Beausson

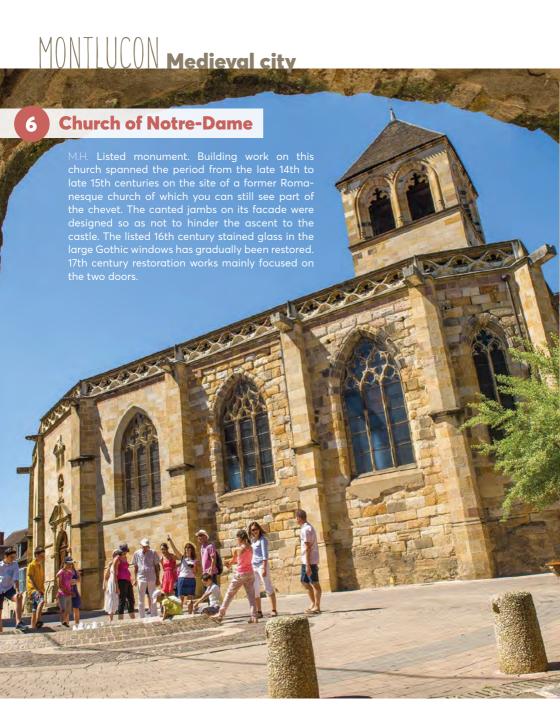
The Alexandre family goes back several generations and has owned this hotel since 1575. Note the stone gate topped by an arched pediment, added during renovation works in the 17th century. The wooden door has a carving of a pelican feeding its young with her own entrails. Legend has it that this carving was commissioned by a local Freemason who was a knight of the Rose-Croix. The pelican, symbolising Christ giving his blood to save the human race, adorns the collarette worn by a knight of the Rose-Croix.



Rue de la fontaine

This fountain has been supplying the city with drinking water for centuries. The water is channelled from the Conches spring by concrete pipes, enamelled on the inside, that date back to Gallo-Roman times. The public standpipes added in the 19th century have since been removed, restoring the fountain to its original 15th century style with an octagonal basin.

Lintel





Saint Jean-Baptiste

The precursor, clothed in a camel hair robe, carrying a lamb, the symbol of Christ and brandishing the Old Testament in his left hand. The figure has delicate features, a mass of curly hair and a penetrating gaze from its almond-shaped eyes.

Christ aux liens

Listed 15th century stone monument (on the left as you enter)

Christ is seated, his hands bound, the crown of thorns upon his head. This intensely moving work by Brabant expresses the renunciation and resignation on Christ's face, providing a fresh representation and meditation on the mysteries of the Passion.



Retable de la Vierge

Listed 17th century, carved gilded wood The scene shows the Assumption and is flanked by four fluted columns topped by Corinthian capitals. The statue shows the Virgin Mary, seated, presenting the Christ Child who is holding a pear. The statue was consecrated in 1656. "Our Lady of Montluçon" is celebrated each year on 8 September for her benevolence and blessing.



MONTLUÇON Medieval city



Rebuilding started in the late 14th century with an Italian-style gallery and a clock tower being added to the castle in the 15th became part of the French forgotten. The ruins were eventually turned into a barracks, before being Paul Constans, had a monumental flight of stone steps, thus opening the castle up to the city.



Passage du Doyenné

Taking its name from the Dean of the Chapter of Saint-Nicolas, this magnificent vaulted passage has large intersecting ribs, the lower ends of which rest on sculpted corbels. At the time, there were two churches, one on either side of the passage: the Chapel of Saint-Louis on the left, with the remains of its buttress walls, and the Church of Saint-Nicolas, nearly opposite Saint-Louis. Saint-Nicolas was destroyed after the Revolution.

Don't miss



The Dean's window

If you look up to your right, you can see an arched 13th century window with three tores supported by three colonnades topped by ornate capitals.





MuPop, the Museum of Popular Music that will make you want to dance!

In the heart of the Medieval city, in an innovative 3,300 m² museum, discover the largest collection of musical instruments in France against the backdrop of an entertaining and interactive light show. Put your earphones on and let yourself be transported through a musical universe from jazz to rock, passing through French musette, pop music, and many more. Share unique sound experiences with family or friends!

MONTIUCON 19th century





Don't miss

(4 Place Jean Jaurès)

Above the door is a high-relief carving of two lovers back-to-back, each playing a musical instrument. Take a look at the figure on the right; he is playing the "cabrette", a traditional local type of bagpipe.

Palais de justice

In the early 19th century, the Montluçon law courts were located on the ground floor of the castle. The new Palais de Justice, opposite the Hôtel de Ville was inaugurated in 1888.

Gabrielle Robinne Theatre

Built on the site of the former Ursuline Chapel, the theatre was completed in 1913 and inaugurated on 17 January 1914. The "Louis XVI-1900" style facade has three arched windows opening onto a balcony that forms a balustrade. The windows are topped with ornate carvings. Montluçon native Gabrielle Robinne was the most famous actress of the early 20th century, and had her photo taken 817 times! The theatre was named after her in 2006



MONTLUÇON 19th century

2 Boulevard de Courtais

Formerly known as the Boulevard des Ramparts, this is the city's main street. It takes its name from Général de Courtais, famous for his exploits when fighting for the Empire, born in Montluçon in 1790. The general died in 1877 without heirs, leading to part of his fortune going to his nephew the Vicomte de Paillhou, responsible for building the Aérium de la Charité. If you look up you can see the wonderful architectural details of the Boulevard de Courtais nowadays a busy shopping street thronged by the local inhabitants.

Square de la Romagère

This castle built by Hélion Vincent Louis, Comte de La Romagère, an important 19th century industrialist, was divided into several lots and sold to the City of Montluçon, which then developed the charming 500 m² square. The building is in the neo-Louis XIII style (brick facade with white stone surrounds).







On 7 August 1864, Napoleon III inaugurated the station and avenue that would bear his name until 1870. The avenue would be renamed no less than five times before becoming Avenue Marx Dormoy in 1944. A handsome thoroughfare in the Haussmannian style, 400 m in length and 40 m in width, the avenue is lined with beautiful 19th century mansions in a range of styles: Neo Louis XII, neoclassical, and so on.



Marx Dormoy

Born in Montluçon in 1888, Marx Dormoy became Mayor in 1926. Appointed under-secretary of the Office of the Prime Minister under Léon Blum, he went on to become Minister of Internal Affairs and was involved in the 1936 "Accords de Matignon". He was assassinated in Montélimar, where he had been placed under house arrest, on 25 July 1941, (a bomb had been placed under his bed).







Collège Jules Ferry

The college stands on the site of the former Bernardine Convent which had been there since 1631. The convent was confiscated during the French Revolution, and demolished in 1881. In 1884, a new boys' high school was built here, now the site of the present-day secondary school for boys.

Former public baths

(on the corner of Avenue Jules Ferry)

Built by the architect Pierre Diot in 1912, who designed many of the buildings of this style in Montluçon. Notice the floral motifs imprinted into the tiles and the white wood balustrades, typical of this period. Most of the decors are in the Art Deco style, with brightly coloured, geometric patterns forming mosaic shapes. The cartouches above the windows are richly decorated with sculpted foliage. The central facade shows the intertwined letters B and D.





Church of Saint-Paul

M.H. 1985

Built in 1864 by the famous architect Louis-Auguste Boileau. The cast iron support for the metal cupolas was cast in Montluçon's Hauts-Fourneaux blast furnaces. The church of Saint-Paul is one of the 3 churches in France supported by a cast iron architectural frame



Ville Gozet

Pont Saint-Pierre



Municipal building

French Supplementary Historic Monument List 1999

The Municipality of Jean Dormoy decided on the building's construction in 1896. As with the church of Saint-Paul, the building is supported by a cast iron architectural frame. A genuine public building, it housed a community centre, labour offices and a library; its cost-efficient ovens allowed it to serve workers hot meals.



HÉRISSON

Petite Cité de Caractère®



irst you see the ruins of the castle standing proud on its rocky outcrop, next the curve of the river Aumance comes into view, and finally you see the Medieval streets ... You have arrived in Hérisson and are just starting out on your voyage of discovery. Keep going and you will come across the beautiful painted church of Châteloy, stroll along the banks of the river and discover the the village's amazing cultural heritage!

HÉRISSON Petite cité de caractère°

Lower courtyard and upper courtyard (Isted historical monument) of the Castle of the Dukes of Bourbon





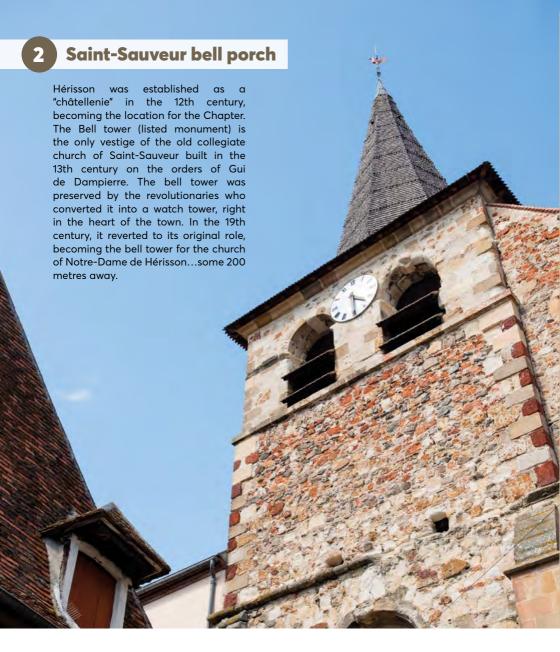
Located on a rocky outcrop, the majestic remains of the pink sandstone castle built by the Dukes of Bourbon stand above the winding river Aumance. The very first small fortress built on this rocky outcrop dates back to the 5th century, when the Cordes- Châteloy was abandoned following the Barbarian Invasions. The town of Hérisson was founded at this time.

Dating mainly from the 13th, 14th and 16th centuries. Hérisson castle was one of the main fortresses of the Dukes of Bourbon, From the Hundred Years War to the Fronde, the castle withstood several sieges and battles, becoming famous for its legendary resistance. Take a look at the imposing keeps, the formidable Watchtower, the Chapel Tower or the Hanged Man's Tower...





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4 Synagogue

the famous Edict of Nantes After 1598. assigned Hérisson as a protestant place of worship. The local inhabitants confused the two and accidentally baptised this building the "Synagogue", while it is actually the Protestant Temple. The building was demolished during the French Revolution; today, all that remains is the pink sandstone arched doorway.

Narrow streets and lanes

The narrow, shady streets of the Medieval town of Hérisson, still show the remains of the towers and curtain walls that formed the old ramparts, providing shelter to homes during the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries. The design of the facades and sculpted decors of the gates are reminiscent of the period when Hérisson was a centre for the armed forces, and also for the law, the church, artisans and the bourgeoisie. At each turn, visitors can espy small interior courtyards.

Porte de l'Enfer

The Porte de la Varenne, otherwise known as the Porte de l'Enfer dates back to the 14th-15th century. It is located west of the town and provides access via the Aumance valley and Châteloy. A statue of the Virgin Mary is placed under the arch, protecting the town against bad luck. The two supporting towers of the Porte de l'Enfer give visitors an idea of the size and strength of the wall during the Middle Ages.



HÉRISSON Petite cité de caractère°

Porte de Gateuil

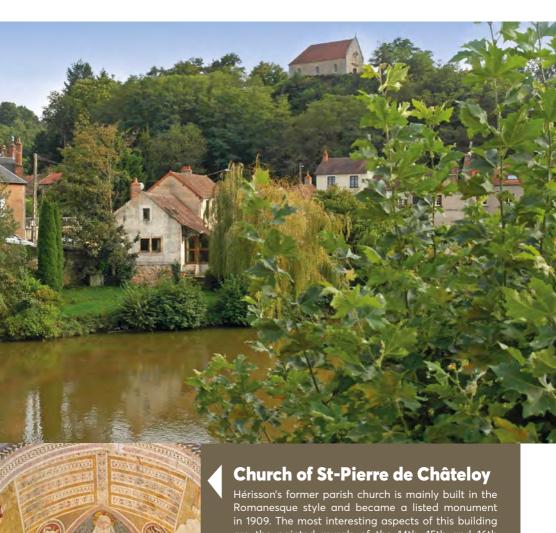
While you enter the town via the Porte de l'Enfer when coming from the north or west, you enter via the Porte du Pont, or Gateuil when arriving via the south or east. This gate stands over the old bridge and the road from Soulongis, and dates back to the 14th-15th centuries

Both gates were part of an impressive fortified surrounding wall, set into a loop of the river Aumance, and strengthened by Louis II de Bourbon to ensure it was capable of resisting invasion. Hérisson's ramparts are flanked by twenty-three towers.

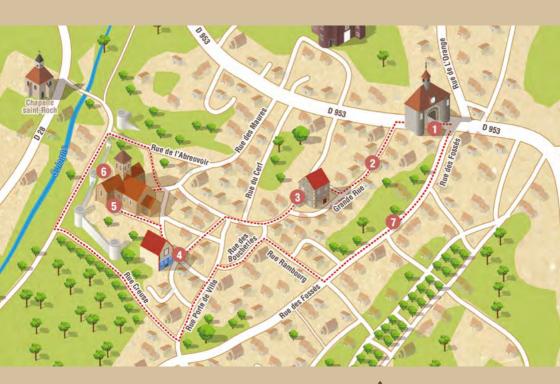


6 Quais de l'Aumance

Faithful to its 19th century design, this esplanade follows the line of the town's former moats, under the ramparts along the river that, at that time, acted as a protective natural frontier. The greater part of the walls were torn down after the French Revolution. After this, the Quais de l'Aumance became a favoured place for Sunday meetings and walks, a place to stop and chat. A role that it still plays today.



are the painted murals of the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. Among these works of art, you can admire the Saint-Principin fresco that depicts the legend of the martyr and his beheading. Nowadays, Saint-Pierre de Châteloy has been almost fully restored thanks to the efforts and support of the annual Bourbonnais Music Festival.



AINAY-LE-CHÂTEAU

An attractive city brimming with charm

hile its castle has long since disappeared, this Medieval village is still surrounded by its impressive ramparts and towers. Walkers will enjoy discovering the curtain walls built in the Middle Ages or strolling up to the Porte de l'Horloge, the town's main gate. The gate is one of the last vestiges of the town's Medieval history, dating back to the destruction of its castle in the 16th century. The recently restored ramparts invite visitors to walk along them, giving Ainay-le-Château its considerable charm.



Grande Rue

Porte de l'Horloge

This 12th century building was one of the three gates leading to the centre of the walled town. It is the only gate in a perfect state of preservation. It was initially known as the "Tour de la prison" with its ground floor dungeon. A belfry was added in the 1670. The present-day bell mechanism was installed in 1867.



To the left at the far end of the "rue Traversière", is the building that housed the Corps des Gardes Nationaux established in 1789, replacing the Bourgeois Militia. The building's facade is adorned with some exceptionally beautiful architectural details.

AINAY—LE—CHÂTEAU An attractive city brimming with charm



Place Paul Guignard

Film lovers will recognise one of the sets for the 2007 film "Michou d'Auber" made partly at Ainayle-Château. Gérard Depardieu and Nathalie Baye played the main roles based on a real story; that of the young Messaoud, afterwards known as Michou, during the height of the war in Algeria.

Church Saint-Etienne

Built in the 11th century, this church was modified and completed in the 16th and 17th centuries. The centrepiece of Saint-Etienne church is its Renaissance gate, a listed Historical Monument since 10 February 1913, topped by a statue of the Virgin Mary and Child dating back to 1661.





Chapelle Saint-Roch

This chapel was built in 1641 to ward off the 1621 plague epidemic. For many years, animals were brought to this holy site to be blessed, in memory of this Saint that healed plague victims.

Former moats

24 towers supported the Town's rampart walls. 12 of these towers are still visible today. Walking back via the Rue des Fossés vou can see the remains of the three half-towers overlooking the former moats surrounding Ainay-le-Château.

Remparts restored in 2015

The ramparts overlook the Sologne, offering visitors spectacular views overs the Chapelle Saint-Roch. In former times, an artificial lake extended to the foot of this section of the rampart walls. The walk leads to the restored ramparts, before winding back up the Rue Creuse, and back onto the round walk.



Ainay le Château... minus the château!

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April-May-June-September-October: Monday to Saturday 10h to 12h and 14h to 18h

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and 13h30 to 19h Sundays and bank holidays and the Sunday of the Journées du Patrimoine: 9h to 13h

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