



The Castle

Le château d'Asnières

89 rue du Château

Métro ligne 13, station Gabriel Péri

Train : gare d'Asnières-sur-Seine. Lignes L et J.

Bus : 165 - 175 - 238 - Désiré

Horaires d'ouverture au public :

1^{er} dimanche de chaque mois

On January 1750, Marc-René de Paulmy de Voyer d'Argenson, marquis of Voyer, purchased his Asnières estate. The estate if made up of a large mansion, the outbuildings, and the gardens; and is known because it was formerly the ownership of the Countess of Parabère, mistress of the Regent. The Castle was built from 1750 to 1752 over the foundations of this country house. The design is from Jacques Hardouin Mansart de Sagonne, the King's architect; and brilliant artists such as Nicolas Pineau or Guillaume II Coustou took part in the interior and exterior decoration.

The Castle of Asnières is a typical and significant 18th century work. The marquis' room still keeps the typical features of this period and the two main staircases display fine banisters of wrought iron works from this era.

When the Marquis of Voyer, who was Marshall of the King's Camps and Army among other things, was appointed General Manager of the Stud Farm of France, his duty was to keep the best horse elements which breeding has to constantly meet the incessant needs of the army. His estate stretched out from the current Clichy bridge to the Asnières bridge and included several gardens, large stables and an open-air school.

In 1769, the Marquis was heavily in debt and sold the Castle, which was already emptied of its furnishings. Several owners will follow one another, including Jean-Baptiste Duchesnay who became Mayor of Asnières and castle owner in 1836! The town finally purchased the castle in 1991 and ordered several renovation campaigns, a part of which has been inaugurated on September 15, 2006.



Grand salon

First public opening

This project was contracted by the town of Asnières-sur-Seine and managed by Frédéric Didier, Chief Architect of the Historical Monuments, assisted by Fabrice Ouziel, interior architect, and was financially supported by The Ministry of Culture (DRAC Île-de-France) as a classified Historical Monument, and by the département of the Hauts-de-Seine.

High and low of a pleasure castle

The first step of a rebirth

The works carried out between February 2005 to September 2006, while finishing the exterior renovation, started a new phase of rebirth of this exceptional heritage. This phase allowed for the first time to open some of the most remarkable rooms inside, as well as offering it a worthy setting. Once the building structures has been strengthened, after having suffered from serving as a school for more than a century and three decades being neglected, the entire eastern part of the ground floor of the castle was renovated and fitted with all the modern facilities.



The gallery, a miraculous return from exile

The gallery hosted the collections of the Marquis of Voyer but lost its remarkable rocaille paneling by Nicolas Pineau in 1897. The décor was stored in the warehouse of an antiquarian during a century before being bought back in 1996. It has just been refitted in its original place.

The Versailles panel parquet, restored according to the marks in place, underwent a colored finish in line with the 18th century customs. The carved paneling has also been restored to its original color re-established from the original marks. Along with the mantelpiece and the three lost glass frames that are recalled by the trompe l'oeil from the drawings of Pineau, these elements reconstitute one of the major testimonies of the Parisian rocaille style.

The great lounge and the Marquis' room: scattered masterworks.

The carved and golden woodwork décor of the great lounge was sold at the same time as the décor of the gallery, and is currently in England. The rear vaults of the apertures and the cornice were restored to their 18th century colors. The mural paintings, painted in 1897, were also repaired while the Versailles panel parquet, similar to the gallery parquet, was restored. The same goes for the Marquis' room where the golden cornice and the Louis XVI mantelpiece have been renovated.

The garden front building: a strengthened carved décor

Mansart de Sagonne commissioned a richly carved décor for this major element of the structure of the Castle's main façade. From this décor only remain the agraffes of the openings, the capitals and the consoles.

The two original sculpted sets depicting Apollo and Venus, which were kept in the United States could be

cast and put on their plinth whereas the bust of the upper floor are castings of works kept at the Versailles Castle. Finally, the arms trophy and the effigy of Louis XV being crowned were remade from Pineau's drawings and similar works, which reconstituted this true bravura piece.

A period of perfection for French Art

Under the reign of Louis XIV...

Asnières is one of the few survivors of the castles in the surroundings of Paris. It is famous because of the great artists who designed it to such an extent that rumor had it that the marquis of Voyer was building a new residence for the King.

The marquis de Voyer, a collector and a patron

The Castle of Asnières was simply a pleasure house near Paris, built in the early 18th century and beautified by Madame de Parabère, mistress of the Regent, when Marc-René de Paulmy de Voyer d'Argenson, General Manager of the Stud Farm of the Kingdom and close friend of King Louis XV decided to rebuild it in 1750. The marquis was a rich and luxurious lord, a collector and a man of taste, and transformed the castle into a lavish residence with a sophisticated decoration, featuring a large garden that stretched out to the Seine.

The castle's decline started in 1769 when it was sold, and then re-sold from one owner to another during the nineteenth century until it became a place for parties during the Second Empire. The Ozanam School, then the Sainte-Agnès institute occupied the castle until its purchase by the municipality of Asnières, after its interior decoration has been dismantled and its gardens divided and sold by lots.

Jacques Hardouin-Mansart de Sagonne is the grand-

Légendes photos double page suivante :

1.Tête de Neptune en façade - 2.Petit escalier - 3.Galerie - 4.La première anti-chambre - 5.Médaille de Louis XV - 6.Chambre du Marquis - 7.Deuxième anti-chambre, salle à manger - 8.Lustre du Grand Salon



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Caves du château

son of Jules Hardouin-Mansart, First Architect and superintendent of Buildings of Louis XIX and builder of Versailles. He designed several edifices such as the Saint Louis' Church of Versailles, an impressive testimony of the 18th century religious architecture. He masterfully converted the existing building into a castle, particularly designing the front building in the gardens.

Nicolas Pineau and his son Dominique were ornamentalists and sculptors, and were amongst the best décor designers of the 18th century. They were so famous that in Russia Czar Peter the Great called upon Nicolas to decorate the Peterhof Palace near Saint Petersburg. They were the masters of the rocaille style

and their allied talents can be found in the paneling of several Parisian mansions. The gallery of Asnières is a recovered testimony of their virtuosity.

Guillaume II Coustou, the King's sculptor, is the son of the sculptor of the famous Horses of Marly. He executed several commissioned works for the King's buildings, including the mausoleum of the Dauphin and the Dauphine in the Cathedral of Sens. His Asnières works include the two groups of sculptures of Appolo and Venus in the front building as well as probably the mask of Neptune in the opening of the center of the ground floor, the only original that remains.

An aspiration for the future

This achievement is a clear sign of the commitment of the municipality of Asnières to develop and emphasize its heritage, indicative of a quality of life at everyone's service. The next works are already planned in order to carry out a complete restoration of the castle and its use as a place for cultural events and corporate conferences, in order to solidify its integration in the life of the city.

This enterprise is a step in a global approach toward developing the ancient heart of the city, including

Learn more:

"Que la fête commence" (Let Joy Reign Supreme) is a 1975 historical movie directed by Bertrand Tavernier from the true story of the Pontcallee conspiracy in the 18th century, starring Philippe Noiret, Jean Rochefort and Jean-Pierre Marielle. In this movie, Marina Vlady, who plays Madame de Parabère, talks about her estate in Asnières.

the dog cemetery, a precious green patch inside the heavy western Parisian urban area...

Private person or company, if you are interested in a visit or would like to join the enterprise of helping to rebirth an exceptional place, contact us to become a partner of the Castle of Asnières:

Municipality of Asnières — www.mairieasnieres.fr

Did you know?

- the Castle of Asnières were identically duplicated in the United States: the Elms, owned by the coal magnate Edward Julius Berwind is located in Newport (Rhode Island) and was built in 1901 by the architect Horace Trumbauer, assisted by the Duveen for the decoration.
- The Castle hosts several plays during the summer.

Full programme at
www.mairieasnieres.fr



Galerie vue du Grand Salon

Façade du château

