

Two important figures at Aulteribe

George Onslow (1784-1853)

George Onslow, a composer from the Auvergne region of English origin, used to visit Aulteribe when he was famous between 1833 and 1852. At the same time, Henriette, the composer's daughter, the Marquise de Pierre, decided to embark on restoring the château in the Romantic style, and began to collect old furniture and works of art.

Henri de Pierre (1871-1954)

The De Pierre family came from Le Velay and moved to Aulteribe in the late eighteenth century. Joseph de Pierre (1808-1885) was elected member of parliament for Le Puy-de-Dôme in 1852 and 1857. Henri de Pierre (1871-1954), the managing director of the French National Stud Farm, inherited Aulteribe in 1898. His wife, Antonia de Smet de Nayer, founded the Belgian League for the Protection of Birds (LBPO) in 1922. A large part of the Marquis de Pierre's correspondence has been kept at the château.

Glossary

Bartizan: an overhanging turret on a façade for defence purposes.

Bellevue château: built from 1748 for the Marquess of Pompadour, on the heights of Meudon to the west of Paris. It no longer exists and its rich collection of furniture has been dispersed.

Cartel d'applique: a clock on a base, fixed to the wall.

Damask: a single colour fabric with a matt pattern on a shiny background produced by the weaving technique.

Freize: marquetry with geometric patterns.

Highlight: a strip of contrasting colour to bring out a moulding or ornament.

Persian: made from silk fabric.

Turret roof: a small cylindrical construction with a conical roof.

Practical information

Average length of visit: 1 hour

Tours suitable for disabled visitors.



The Centre des monuments nationaux publishes a collection of guidebooks about French monuments translated into several languages. Éditions du Patrimoine publications are on sale in the bookshop-giftshop.

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Aulteribe château

Medieval and Romantic

From old fortified castle to pleasure residence

*Aulteribe
in 1794*

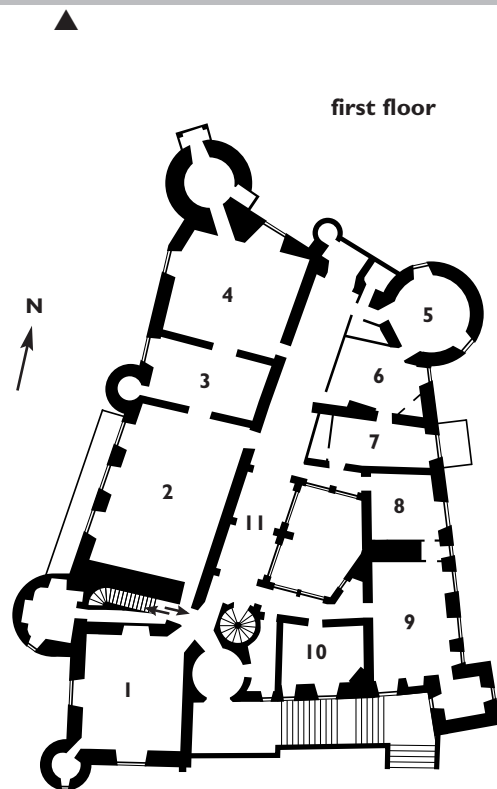


Aulteribe château was built in the latter half of the fourteenth century, and around 1450, was passed on successively to the aristocratic

La Fayette family and the Beaufort Montboissier Canilhac family. In the mid-seventeenth century, it became the property of the Montagus who sold it to Jacques de Pierre in 1775. From 1833 onwards, this family embarked on a major transformation of the monument, giving Aulteribe its present-day look. The château, which was opened to the public in 1965, exhibited the de Pierre family's finest pieces of furniture. The display was changed in 2006 to give the home a more private feel.

One of the best furnished chateaux in France

The legacy in 1954 stated that the Marquis de Pierre's exceptional collection of furniture was to be used "for the artistic education of visitors". When the château was opened to the public in 1965, the monument was presented in such a way as to restore the feel of the home of an early twentieth-century collector.



The Romantic restoration

On the instruction of Joseph and Henriette de Pierre, the square-shaped chateau featuring four towers underwent major alterations from 1833 onwards. A new façade was built, which was decorated with machicolations and a bartizan* opening above a Gothic doorway. The Eastern curtain wall was raised and repositioned, with a square tower placed alongside it. The southern residential building was extended, with a corner tower and turret roof* added. All the rooms were redone around the inner courtyard with a covered gallery. The chateau was then in a fit state to house the Pierre and Onslow families' furniture and artefacts; these collections were continually added to until the end of the nineteenth century.

An inhabited chateau

- 1 The green room**, which was restored and fitted in seventeenth-century style, was designed around the French-style sculpted wood fireplace. It holds a 2-door panel cabinet made of stained pear tree wood, with marquetry decoration and three outstanding paintings: an *Adoration of the Shepherds* by the Gerrit van Honthorst school, *The Temptation of Christ* by the Bologna school and a portrait of Monseigneur de Saint-Albin by Hyacinthe Rigaud.
- 2** The fitting out of the **great hall** inspired the painting by Georges Claude in 1886. On the wall opposite the windows, there are five tapestries showing peasant life in the cantons of Teniers. Beyond them, *Harvest* and *Planting the orange tree* are the work of Leyniers. Of note among the pieces of furniture here are the black lacquered two-door wardrobe profiled on three sides, the game table, made by Cramer, a bergère armchair and an armchair with the rare Bovo stamp mark and the Pleyel piano which belonged to the composer George Onslow.
- 3 The small drawing room**, with its charm and intimacy, contrasts sharply with the solemnity of the great hall. It has two water-green Louis XV corner bookcases with blue highlights* and a rosewood freize* cornerpiece with an amaranth frame, from Bellevue chateau*.
- 4 The large summer bedroom**, with its imposing Polish-style bed, has large tentered Persian* wall hangings. There is a small occasional table inlaid with mahogany, made by Topino, a low cylindrical cooling unit stamped Canabas, and a marquetry work table stamped Pierre Migeon.
- 5 Uncle René's bedroom** holds the souvenirs brought back from René de Pierre's trips to Africa. A tent has been reproduced to create the exotic atmosphere that was fashionable in the nineteenth century.

- 6 The small blue bedroom**. There are many souvenirs and portraits of the de Pierre, Onslow and Barral families on the walls. The writing desk decorated with knotted bouquets on a rosewood background is the work of Jean-Baptiste Fromageau.
- 7 The long bedroom** is furnished in Louis XVI style. There is a large collection of prints, mainly of the gardens of the chateau de Versailles, covering the wall opposite the fireplace.
- 8 The red bedroom**, with crimson damask* wall hangings, has a dappled mahogany roll-top desk and a landscape attributed to Hubert Robert. On the mantelpiece, there is a pair of large five-branched candlesticks either side of an elegant white marble Louis XVI clock, which is the period of all the furniture in the room.
- 9 The yellow room** is dedicated to the memory of the composer George Onslow.
- 10 The father's bedroom**. To the left of the fireplace there is a Theodor Van Thulden painting depicting a *Harmony and marriage* allegory and a cartel d'applique* wall clock above the door.
- 11 The gallery**. This long gallery of paintings is furnished with a large collection of Gothic and Renaissance chests and caned seats bearing the Meunier and Cresson stamps. Three paintings are of particular note: a copy of the portrait of Henri IV by Frans II Pourbus, *Richelieu* by Philippe de Champaigne and an old-style landscape by Hubert Robert.

* Explanations overleaf.