

Glossary

Amaranth: ornamental plant with red flowers. A deep violet-coloured wood used in cabinet making.

Bonheur du jour: small lady's writing desk.

François Boucher (1703-1770): French painter.

Coromandel: town on the eastern coast of India where lacquers imported from China were exported to Europe.

Country house: "small house" built in the countryside just outside Paris, so that people could get away from the rigid way of life in the Royal court.

Pilaster: square pillar projecting from a wall.

Stamp: mark stamped by joiners and cabinet makers on the items they produced by way of their signature.

Practical information

Visit takes on average: 1 hour 30 minutes

Guided tours.

Special tours for disabled people.



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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The grounds

The Château de Champs grounds were designed by a pupil of Le Nôtre around 1710, as a French-style garden. During the Revolution, however they were used for farming, then in about 1800 transformed into an English-style garden. After 1895, the landscape designers Henri and Achille Duchêne, fervent defenders of classical "French-style" gardens, restored the grounds to their original design.

- 17 The Diane and Apollo parterres** stretch out on both sides of the knot gardens. Two copies of antique sculptures help to tell them apart: Diane and the deer on the right and the Apollo Belvedere on the left.

18 The Scylla Pool. When the Goddess Scylla refused the advances of Glaucus, he turned her into a sea monster. Here, she is emerging from the rock with dog and serpent heads. This lead composition, which was once gilded, depicts the start of her metamorphosis.

19 Apollo's horses close the perspective.

20 The Philosophers' Copse. A 16th-century marble baptismal font, decorated with the profiles of various popes, is surrounded by the busts of ancient philosophers. Statues of Venus, Flora and a young hunter stand in the surrounding alleys.

21 The Lady's Room is a latticework folly made by the Duchênes for Madame Cahen d'Anvers, based on an 18th-century model.

22 The Dairy built in 1884 so that dairy foods could be enjoyed, was used by the Cahen d'Anvers as a summer room. The ceiling imitates that of a tent.

23 The orangerie built by Walter Destailleur in 1896, faces east rather than south as is the done thing, so that it emerges from a crosswise alley.

Château de Champs

A country house

For two of Louis XIV's financiers

Built in the early 18th century by the architects Pierre Bullet and his son, Jean-Baptiste Bullet de Chamblain, the Château de Champs belonged to

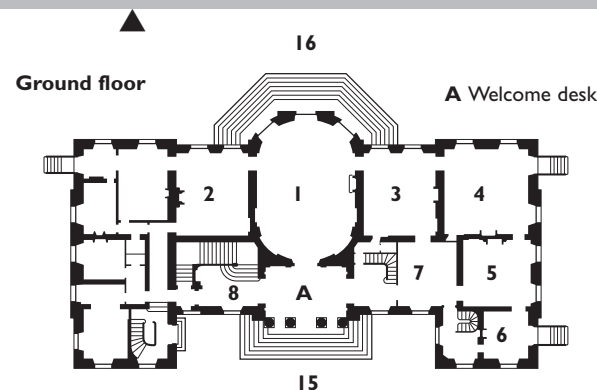


two of Louis XIV's treasurers in succession. The first went bankrupt, so was unable to carry through his building plans, and it was the second, "Bourvallais" who had the Château built from 1703 to 1708. He too went bankrupt, was put in the Bastille, and the Château passed from one owner to the next.

A paragon of comfort

Built as a model comfortable country house*, from 1757 to 1760 the Château played host to the Marquise de Pompadour, among others, but was damaged during the Revolution. In 1890, Count Louis Cahen d'Anvers bought it, restored it, refurnished it with lovely Regency and Louis XV pieces, and decorated it with a collection of 18th-century porcelains. In 1934 his son, Charles Cahen d'Anvers, sold its collections and donated the Château to the State, which listed the estate as a historic monument in 1935. Until 1971, the site was assigned to African Heads of State, who used it as a residence and for receptions.

* Explanations overleaf.



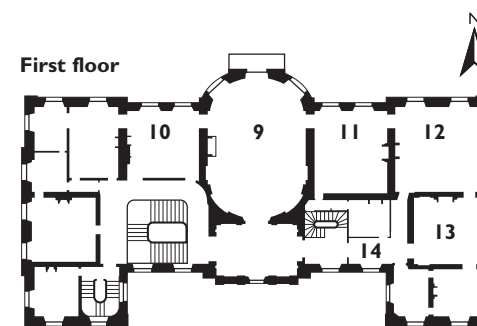
Welcoming and comfortable

Tucked away amid its French-style gardens, the Château is a prime example of a welcoming and comfortable early 18th-century country house. The main alley forms a centreline lending order to the estate, something also perceptible inside the Château through the large expanses that are visible.

Ground floor

- 1 The Assembly Room** gives onto the gardens through the forward projection of the central front building, through which light streams to be reflected around the room by the mirrors. The cornice, held up by sixteen pilasters, accentuates the room's oval shape. The set of 18th-century furniture includes a Coromandel* lacquer screen showing children being presented to a prince in a Chinese palace. The over-door hangings depict the four seasons.
- 2 The dining room** is one of the first rooms in France to be used solely for this purpose. It has a subtle variety of materials, fabrics and colours: two marble and gilded lead fountains, a bronze equestrian statue whose base is inlaid with tortoiseshell and brass, porcelain vases, a marble console and the oriental mat on the table.

- 3 The Smoking Room** with painted wood panelling was a music room in the 18th century. The roll top desk, stamped* Léonard Boudin, the five-legged armchair and the three occasional tables are 18th-century pieces.
- 4 The Chinese Room** shows one of the rare examples of wall paintings on this theme by Christophe Huet (1700-1759). The Duke of Vallière, who owned the Chateau at the time, asked him to paint these chinoiseries circa 1750. They show scenes from everyday life (hunting, fishing, gardening, etc) as they were pictured at the time. 18th-century tapestries illustrating La Fontaine's fables cover the six armchairs, the sofa, the stool and the Louis XV style gilded wood screen, made in the 19th century.
- 5 The Gentleman's Bedchamber** houses a portrait of Louis XIV while still young, on red damask silk from 1900.
- 6 The Boudoir** was also decorated by Huet, who painted these blue monochrome chinoiseries in 1748.
- 7 The Billiard Room-Library** was fitted with natural wood panelling for the Cahen d'Anvers family in the early 20th century.
- 8 The main staircase.** The handrail bears the monogram of Louis Cahen d'Anvers. His portrait can be seen on the upper floor with those of his wife Louise and son Charles. The Chinese vases are Ming period (17th-century) pieces.



The First floor

- 9 The Music Room** matches the oval room below. Twenty pilasters bring life to the wall surface, over which runs a frieze decorated with musical instruments. The room is furnished with card tables and an 1874 Erard piano.
- 10 The Blue Bedchamber** is so-named because of the wood panelling decorated with rocaille patterns, with shells, palmettes and foliage. Over the doors, the four seasons, in the form of gallant scenes, are copies from François Boucher*. Two cube marquetry desks are typical of the 1760-1770 period.
- 11 The main bedchamber** has an alcove separated off by a balustrade, and was reserved for use by the king or distinguished guests. In the middle of the room stands an early 18th-century shell and brass veneered desk, with a lute player and musician monkeys on the top. In the corner stands a bonheur du jour* inlaid with small Chinese utensils, attributed to Charles Topino, a renowned 18th-century cabinetmaker.
- 12 The Corner Room** is laid out as an office with eight Regency period cane armchairs and a large flat Louis XV desk.
- 13 The Lady's Bedchamber.** The sculpted cornice shows famous mythological couples, such as Bacchus and Ariadne, Mars and Venus, etc.

The wardrobes, from the end of Louis XIV's reign, have amaranth* veneering and copper highlights. The bronze mounts on their doors feature the seasons. On the window side, the commode dates back to 1730-1740.

- 14 The passageway** walls are covered with tapestries representing 17th- and 18th-century verdures showing hunting scenes or birds.

Architecture

- 15 The courtyard facade** has two very prominent lateral front buildings flanking the central bay, whose forward projection from the facade continues into the roof. Columns, pilasters and a pediment all enhance the entrance.
- 16 The garden facade**, unlike the courtyard facade, has singled out the central building for projection, thus helping light to penetrate into its two large rooms. The main building is particular in that on the ground floor it has three arched windows, and on the upper floor, a central window framed by bossed pilasters supporting a pediment. The balcony emphasizes this window yet further. From inside, the view over the gardens is perfect.

* Explanations overleaf.