

Glossary

Count of Toulouse: the legitimated son of Louis XIV and his mistress, Madame de Montespan.

Cynegetic activities: hunting with dogs.

Delft tiles: fine Dutch ceramics from the 17th and 18th centuries with blue patterns on a white background.

English garden: a form of garden which originated in England and, as opposed to French regular gardens, privileged winding paths, natural slopes, and a wide range of trees and plants.

This form of garden became popular in France from 1770.

Folly: a small decorative construction in English gardens, illustrative of architectural diversity (Chinese pagoda, temple, thatched cottage, hermitage, etc.)

Monogram: interlaced initials.

Ox bone: protruding bones used for attaching climbing plants to walls and to drain away water.

Putto, plural *putti*: a naked cherub representing Cupid.

Practical information

Average length of visit: 45 minutes for the castle and 45 minutes for the dairy and cottage.

Guided tours in French.

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The Queen's dairy

Built by the architect Thévenin in 1786-1787 at the request of Louis XVI as a surprise for Queen Marie-Antoinette, this building once had a garden designed by Hubert Robert laid out around it.

- 23 On either side of the entrance** is a circular pavilion with brick chain bonds whose architecture imitates that of the dovecotes. The one on the left still has a rest room. The one on the right housed the working dairy, where milk was made into butter, cream, and cheese.
- 24 The central pavilion** housed the visitors' dairy, where dairy products were sampled. The main door with a column on either side is reminiscent of Greek temples.
- 25 The rotunda** with skylights is covered by a framed ceiling whose roses are formed by oak leaves and acorns. The white veined marble consoles follow the shape of the room whose walls are made of sandstone. This combination, with the grey and white floor, originally formed a harmony of milky colours.
- 26** The second room, **the cool room**, is surprising with its presentation of the infant *Jupiter as a child suckled by the she-goat Amalthea*; the feet of the main figure used to be bathed in springs of water flowing out from the back of the grotto. Jets of water on either side used to cool the bowls of milk.

A building altered on several occasions

Courtyard side

In 1805 Napoleon commissioned the architect Guillaume Trepsat to rebuild the castle. The crenellated tower to the right, part of the original 14th-century building, was left intact. The left wing leading onto an adjacent entrance chatelet was demolished. A new building was erected at the far end of the courtyard, with a tower to its east. The main entrance in the middle has a monumental doorway opening onto a double staircase where the medieval staircase once was. Semicircular railings enclose the courtyard.

Garden side

Between 1730 and 1736, the Count of Toulouse* doubled the size of the west wing leading off the medieval tower, adding dormer windows with brick pediments at regular intervals. The west tower was moved to the end of the wing to preserve the appearance and balance of this side of the castle.

The facade giving onto the grand canal was built in the early 19th century and is less homogenous. The first-floor windows on the left hand side have classical pediments. Three large arched windows on the right hand side were created around 1820 to light the dining room, instead of the six originally planned. A sculpted cornice along the eaves lends a degree of unity. The third facade facing the Rondeau flowerbed differs once again with an intermediary floor between the first floor and the top floor.

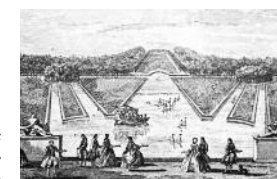
* Explanations overleaf.

Rambouillet estate

In praise of nature

An estate in the heart of the forest

In 1368, Jean Bernier, advisor to King Charles V, bought a manor in Rambouillet forest, which he



The grounds in the 18th century

turned into a fortified castle surrounded by moats. The large tower is the last remaining evidence of this. From the late 14th century to the late 17th century, the castle belonged to the d'Angennes family who substantially altered it. Joseph Fleuriau d'Armenonville, the owner from 1699 to 1706, had a regular French garden laid out around the castle. He sold the estate to the Count of Toulouse*. The Duke of Penthièvre, his son, had the English park created. King Louis XVI (1774-1791)** was interested in the cynegetic* virtues of Rambouillet and bought it in 1783.

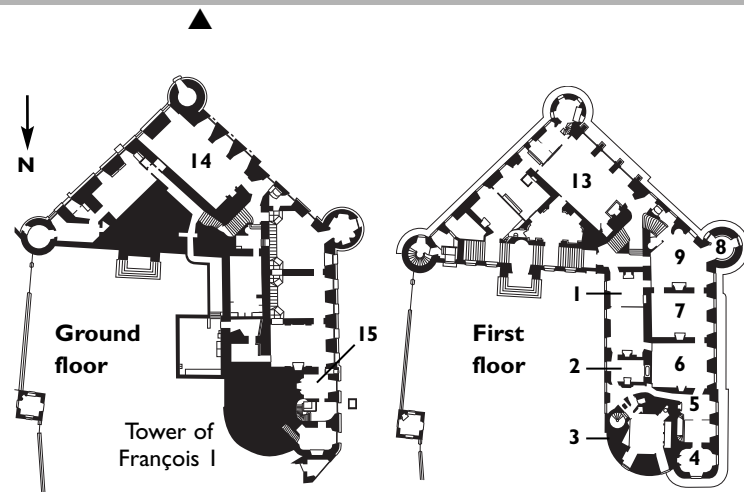
An official residence of the Head of State

Louis XVI had a grand dairy built for the Queen on this forest estate as well as an experimental sheep farm.

Rambouillet was subsequently beloved of Napoleon I (1804-1815). In the 20th century the castle became one of the residences of the President of the Republic, and was fitted out to host visiting foreign heads of state.

* Explanations overleaf.

** The dates given are for the beginning and end of his reign.



The castle

The Emperor's apartments

- 1 The dining room and bedchamber** are where Napoleon spent his last night before being exiled to Elba.
- 2 The bathroom**, designed in 1807, still has its original painted decoration. The decorative repertoire, inspired by the Pompeii style, depicts the Empire with its representations of trophies and naval battles. The fourteen painted medallions depict views of Italy and imperial residences. On the back wall above the zinc bathtub, a hive flanked with griffons refers to the imperial symbol of the bee.
- 3 The medieval tower**, built in 1345, has two deep cutaway portions in the stone, which were part of the system for operating the drawbridge.

The Assemblée apartment was fitted out between 1730 and 1736 for the Count of Toulouse*. The small size rooms and their refined decor introduced 18th-century tastes to the castle. The sculpted wood panelling shows great delicacy and virtuosity.

4 The boudoir, known as the Marie-Antoinette boudoir, was painted white in 1978 in reference to the original colour of the panelling. Animals in the corners of the room symbolise the four known continents at the time. Above the mirror and windows are sculpted *putti** depicting the four elements, and the frieze contains the signs of the zodiac.

5 The antechamber opens onto the library, now decorated with an 18th-century Aubusson hanging, *The Boar Hunt*.

6 The grand drawing room: the 18th-century wood panelling, among the finest remaining examples, evokes the four seasons, work in the fields, music, and hunting.

7 The Council chamber was so named during the presidency of Félix Faure (1895-1899), when Rambouillet became a presidential residence. Originally this room had been dedicated by the Count of Toulouse* to his wife, Marie Victoire Sophie de Noailles, whose monogram* may be seen on the panels and cornice. The Gobelins tapestry, woven in 1791 from a cartoon by François Boucher, depicts Venus emerging from the waters and Psyche contemplating Cupid asleep.

8 The oratory was created for the Duke of Penthièvre and consecrated in 1772.

9 The Meridian room served as an antechamber to the *Assemblée* apartment, and also perhaps as a dining room. The 18th-century faience stove was a gift from the town of Reims to President René Coty (1953-1959).

10 On the upper floor are the bedchambers for the guests of the President of the Republic. **(not on plan)** The apartment reserved for foreign heads of state is at the end of the wing beneath the eaves.

11 The drawing room and study, created during the presidency of Vincent Auriol (1947-1954), **(not on plan)** were designed by Jules Leleu.

12 The bedchamber is in the medieval tower. This **(not on plan)** is where François I is thought to have died in 1547. The keystone is sculpted with the arms of the d'Angennes family. The table in polished pear wood dates from the period of Henri II.

13 The grand dining room, on the first floor, known as the "King's Chamber" in the 18th century, was used as a banqueting hall during the Empire. Two Gobelins tapestries from 1792 depict *The Negress being carried in a hammock* and *The Indian Hunter*.

14 The marble room has the oldest decor in the castle, carried out in 1556 for Jacques d'Angennes, with tiles of Languedoc marble forming geometrical patterns.

15 The Count of Toulouse's* bathroom was installed between 1730 and 1736. The Delft* tiles on the walls are all different.

The regular garden

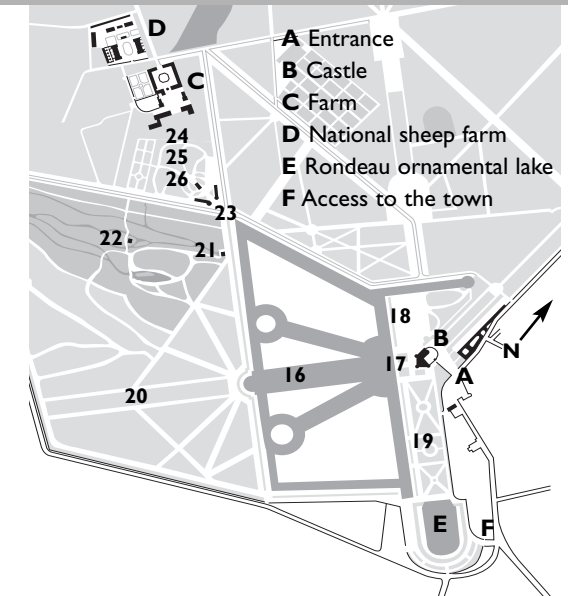
16 The canals were created in several phases during the 18th century.

17 The landing stage is the focal point for the perspectives through the garden, formed by the canals. These canals border six islands, which used to be accessible by boat or gondola.

18 The staggered rows of lime trees are the only remaining signs of the geometrical flowerbeds of the former French garden, designed for the Count of Toulouse*.

19 The contemporary garden follows the outlines of the former French garden as far as the 'Rondeau' ornamental lake. This restoration was carried out in 1995 by Jacques Sgard, a landscape gardener.

20 The greensward, a long lawn running in the same direction as the grand canal, is flanked by forestry plantations. They form the boundary of the English garden to the right.



The English garden*

This extends over 25 hectares, including some hilly land, with a mixture of meadows, rare and exotic trees and indigenous species, following the course of a winding river crossed by several bridges. The beauty of this garden is largely due to the Duke of Penthièvre, whose favourite place was this estate which he had inherited from his father.

21 The grotto was used as the base for the Chinese pavilion, the only folly* to have disappeared from the overall design which the architect Jean-Baptiste Paindebeld drew up for the Duke of Penthièvre.

22 The shell cottage was built in 1779 for the Princess of Lamballe, the Duke's daughter-in-law. With its thatched roof and ox bones*, it is a copy of late 18th-century buildings. The inner decor contrasts strongly with the rustic outside appearance: the room is adorned with Doric pilasters and topped with a mother-of-pearl dome. There is an exquisitely refined shell decor on the walls.

* Explanations overleaf.