



THE CASTLE OF ANSOUIS



Originally a classical, medieval fortress, the castle of Ansois has been home to the Sabran Pontèves family ever since the XIth Century. The originally strict architecture was softened by numerous transformations and extensions throughout XIIth and XIIIth Centuries. A magnificent collection of XVIIth and XVIIIth Century furniture, as well as splendid tapestries, can be found inside the castle. It also boasts a Provençal kitchen with its Middle Age floor, XVIIth Century green and yellow tile counters, and a chimney filled with gleaming copper. The exterior gardens and terraces add grace and charm to the setting as a whole, as well as the elegant southern façade. This beautiful medieval castle can be visited even though it is still privately owned, belonging to the same family for 10 Centuries.

THE CASTLE OF THE TOUR D'AIGUES

In the heart of La Tour d'Aigues, one of the most incredible, and the certainly the most beautiful, castles of the Renaissance can be found. The castle is similar to the ones found in the Loire Valley or the Isle de France because it was designed off of their structures. An immense fire that lasted 5 days and 5 nights destroyed most of its walls, but what is left is an amazing site: the elegant proportions of its XVIth Century wall, its theatrical décor, the intact gateway which takes the form of a triumphal arc and the terrace that overlooks the surrounding hills and vineyards. The Faïence (earthenware) Museum is equally located in its basement, the cellars hosting exhibits found during the restoration works and a well documented local history Exhibition Museum. The Southern Luberon theatre, music and dance festival is held at the castle each summer.

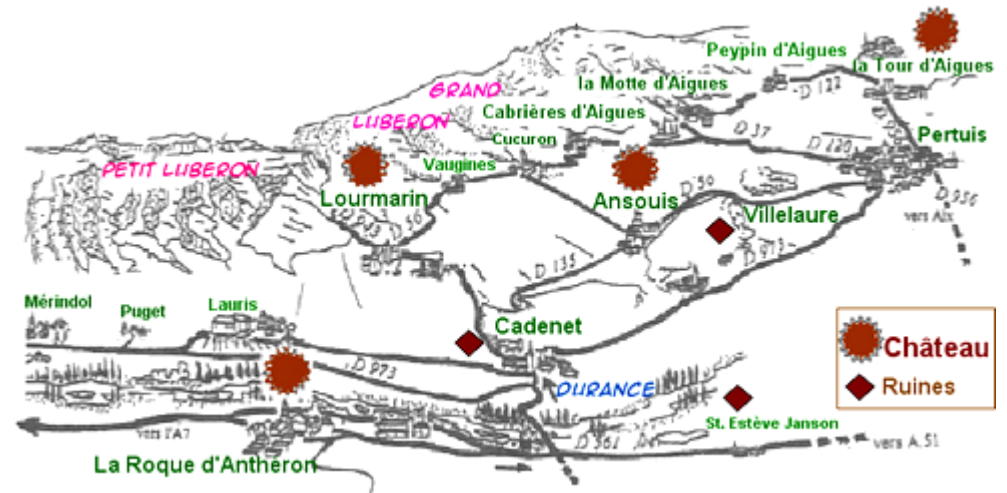


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THE TRAIL OF CASTLES



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THE FLORANS CASTLE OF LA ROQUE d'ANTHERON



Built during the year of "l'Edit de Nantes", the castle is linked with the one in St. Estève Janson. Its architecture is typical of the provençal Renaissance, the entrance a common relic of this time period. Behind the façade that connects the two turrets, is the Courtyard of Honor. On each side of the Courtyard can be found the small (left) and the

large (right) castles. A richly decorated central stair case rises within a rounded arch. The rooms with fire-wood chimneys and painted ceilings are awe-inspiring and mark the ancient times. The Italian influence of the interior decorations is also very clear.

The castle is of XVIth Century et Provençal Renaissance style, featuring the phrase that Louis XI said to Palamède de Forbin, "You made me Count, I make you King." King René reigned over the kingdom of Provence, and his dying wish to attach the kingdom of Provence to the Monarchy of France was made to his counselor, Palamède de Forbin. One year later when his wish was realized by Palamède, Louis XI reigned over France and the newly attached Provence under the condition that he would be considered the Count of Provence, not king. In exchange, Palamède de Forbin was named "Vice-King" of Provence.

It is in this castle of la Roque d'Anthéron that Auguste de Forbin was born... an officer of the emperor, lover of Pauline Borghèse, sister of emperor l'Empereur, and it is because of him that the Luxembourg museum, the revival of the Louvre, french-speaking communities and Egyptology exist today.

Today the castle shelters a private clinic and can not be toured. Its majestic park is open during the summer season while the International Piano Festival takes place in its gardens.



A FEW RUINS STILL PRESENT TODAY

IN SAINT ESTEVE...

You can see the ruins of the Castle of Janson in this small, Provençal village. Its monumental chimney can be found in the Saint-Estève stud farm.

IN CADENET...

The village possesses a feudal castle where you will have a panoramic view of the Durance River, the Luberon valley, the Sainte-Victoire Mountain and the Alpilles. This castle in ruins overhangs Cadenet : the built-up, medieval area formed around the high-placed structure set atop a hill during the XIth Century under the direction of the master Rostaing de Cadenet. Strategically placed on a rocky headland dominating the Durance River, the castle of Cadenet traversed the Moyen Age to modern times undergoing numerous alternations from one condition to another. The castle was rebuilt various times, and today it lies in ruins from different eras. Today the castle of Cadenet is a cultural space in which its greenery serves as a theatre for musical evening festivities during summer.

IN VILLELAURE...

You can see the traces of the « Château de Tréséminesé » that stands in the tiny, Provençal village known as Villelaure.

The city endured a bustling history, passing from seigneur to seigneur until the XVIth Century. The actual village was established in 1512 with 19 founding inhabitants but Villelaure bravely suffered numerous misfortunes and dismantling thereafter. The village was then reborn in 1582 due to a reestablishment of peace and a population that worked in and survived from agricultural farming.

THE WALDENSIAN CASTLE OF LOURMARIN

The XV-XVIth Century chateau was built by the Agoult family between 1479 and 1545. It was the very first Renaissance castle built in Provence and is composed of two parts. The old wing of the castle was built in the late XVth Century by Foulques d'Agoult. The Italian-style loggia adds a touch of grand elegance, whereas the XVIth Century Renaissance wing is completely furnished and houses XVth to XIXth Century art collections. The castle can be visited all year round, the furnished apartments and the library (with some 28,000 books) being the parts of the castle open to the public. It hosts artists in the summer (painters, sculptors, musicians...), and serves as the Cultural Centre, giving sumptuous concerts on the castle terraces (jazz, classical and theatre shows). The "Amis de Lourmarin" association organises conferences on various different themes (truffles, lavender, Einstein...) the rest of the year.

