

VISIT GUIDE



CHÂTEAU DE
CHENONCEAU

CHÂTEAU OF CHENONCEAU, THE LADIES' CHÂTEAU



Katherine Briçonnet 1494 - 1526

Wife of Thomas Bohier, Comptroller-General of Finances to King Francis I, Katherine Briçonnet was the true developer of the original château, later named the Logis Bohier, built to the plans of a Venetian Palazzo. She was also the first of the "Ladies" of Chenonceau, who would play a major role in the embellishment of the complex and its gardens.



Diane de Poitiers 1499 - 1566

In 1547, King Henri II donated Chenonceau to his favourite lady, Diane de Poitiers, renowned for her beauty, intelligence and sense of business... At the château, she created gardens which were among some of the most spectacular and modern at that time. By building the famous bridge on the River Cher, she made the architecture of Chenonceau unique in the world.



Catherine de' Medici 1519 - 1589

Henri II's widow, Catherine de' Medici, removed Diane, made the gardens more magnificent and pursued architectural works. She raised the height of the two-floored gallery, so as to organize glorious parties. The Regent Catherine ran her kingdom from her Cabinet Vert, introduced the Italian splendour to Chenonceau and established the authority of the young king.



Louise of Lorraine 1553 - 1601

In 1589, on the death of her husband Henri III, Louise of Lorraine withdrew to the château and went into mourning, in white, as required by court protocol. Forgotten by all, she had trouble maintaining her queen-dowager life style. She spend her time reading, working and praying. Her death marked the end of royal presence at Chenonceau.



Louise Dupin 1706 - 1799

In the 18th century, the exquisite representative of the Age of Enlightenment, Louise Dupin, gave renewed splendor to the château. She started an outstanding salon with the elite among writers, poets, scientists and philosophers, such as Montesquieu, Voltaire or Rousseau. A wise protector of Chenonceau, she managed to save the château during the Revolution. She was laid to rest in Parc de Franceuil.



Apolline, Countess of Villeneuve 1776-1862

In 1799, Apolline de Guibert married the Count of Villeneuve, the heir to Chenonceau through his great-aunt Louise Dupin. They devoted themselves to restoring it to its former glory, with restoration of the monument and reconstruction of the gardens. The Countess, passionate about botany, planted the plane trees of the famous Grande Allée, restored the Green Garden and reintroduced white mulberry trees.



Marguerite Wilson Pelouze 1836 - 1902

In the 19th century, in 1864 to be precise, Marguerite Wilson, a child of the industrial bourgeois, decided to turn the monument and her park into a theatre of her sumptuous tastes. She spent a fortune on restoring the estate for it to resemble the way it was at the time of Diane de Poitiers. A somber political affair caused her ruin. Chenonceau was sold once, and then again until 1913.



Simonne Menier 1881 - 1972

During the First World War, far from the trenches, Chenonceau also knew the troubles of wartime. Simone Menier, the matron, was in charge of the hospital installed in the château's two galleries, transformed and equipped at her family's expense (Menier chocolate factory). Over 2 000 wounded were looked after here, up to 1918. Her bravery led her to carry out numerous actions for the resistance during the Second World War (1939-1945).

To build **the Château of Chenonceau** on **the River Cher** in the 16th century, Thomas Bohier and his wife Katherine Briçonnet demolished **the fortified castle** and **mill** belonging to the Marques family and left standing just the keep: **the Marques tower**, which they restored in Renaissance style.

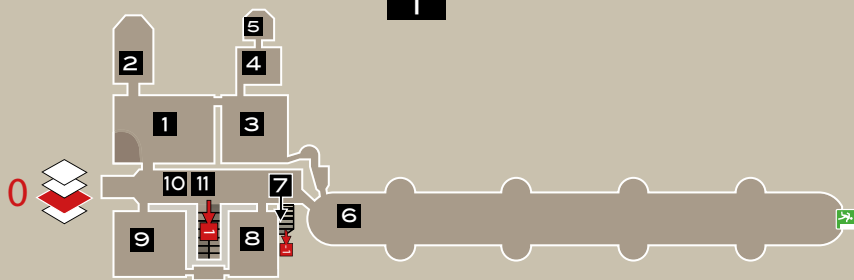
The Terrasse des Marques echoes the plan of the former medieval château, its boundaries shown by the moats.

Still standing too, besides the tower is **the well**, decorated with a chimera and eagle, emblem of the Marques family.

Walking towards the Château, built on **the piers of the old fortified mill**, we come to **the impressive main door**. Dating back to François I, made of sculpted wood and painted, it bears, on the left, the arms of Thomas Bohier, on the right, those of his wife Katherine Briçonnet - the builders of Chenonceau - and at the top, the salamander of François I with the Latin inscription: «*FRANCISCUS DEI GRATIA FRANCORUM REX - CLAUDIA FRANCORUM REGINA*» («*François, by the grace of God, King of the Franks and Claude, Queen of the Franks*»).

THE TERRACE AND THE MARQUES TOWER





In this room were the men-at-arms charged with protecting the royal family.

The coat of arms of Thomas Bohier decorates **the 16th-century fireplace**. On the oak door (also from the Renaissance), just below the figures of their patron saints (Saint Catherine and Saint Thomas), is the motto of Thomas Bohier and Katherine Briçonnet : *«S'il vient à point, me souviendra»* which means: *«If I get to the end of this construction job, I will be remembered»*.

Hanging on the walls is a series of **16th-century Flanders tapestries** illustrating scenes of daily life in the Château, a marriage proposal, a hunt.

The chests are from Gothic and Renaissance periods. In the 16th century they would have been used to carry silverware, crockery and tapestries from one royal residence to another. The exposed ceiling joists bear the two intertwined **«C»** of Catherine de' Medici.

On the floor are the remains of 16th-century majolica tiles.

THE GUARDS' ROOM



From the guards' room we enter the Chapel through a door above which is a **statue of the Virgin**.

The panels of this great oak door depict Christ and Saint Thomas and show words from the Gospel of Saint John : "*INFER DIGITU TUUM HUC - DNS MEUS ET DEUS ME*" : ("*Place your finger here - My Lord and My God*"). The **stained-glass windows** are from the 20th century (1954), made by the master glassworker, Max Ingrand. The original stained glass was destroyed by bombs in 1944. In the Loggia on the right, is the **VIRGIN AND CHILD MADE OF CARRARA MARBLE** by **Mino da Fiesole**. Dominating the nave is the **Royal Gallery**, bearing the date 1521, from where the queens attended mass. To the right of the altar is a finely-carved stone credence table with the Bohier motto.

The walls still show readable **inscriptions** in Old English, dated 1543 and 1546, left by the Scottish guards of Queen Marie Stuart: the right on entering, "*The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*" and "*Be not overcome of evil*".

On the walls are **paintings** on religious subjects:

- **Il Sassoferrato**: THE VIRGIN IN A BLUE VEIL
- **Alonso Cano**: JESUS PREACHING IN FRONT OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLE
- **Jouvenet**: ASSUMPTION
- **Sebastien del Pimbo**: ENTOMBMENT
- **Murillo**: SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA
- **Flemish School of the 15th Century**: THE ANNUNCIATION.

The chapel was saved during the French Revolution thanks to the idea of the owner at that time, Madame Dupin, to turn it into a wood store, thus camouflaging its religious character.

THE CHAPEL



This was the bedroom of King Henri II's favourite lady, Diane de Poitiers, to whom he donated Chenonceau. In 1559, on the death of Henri II, killed in simple combat during a tournament by Gabriel Montgomery, Captain of the Scottish guards, his widow, Queen Catherine de' Medici, had the Château of Chenonceau given back to her by Diane in exchange for Chaumont-sur-Loire. **The fireplace by Jean Goujon**, French sculptor from the French School of Fontainebleau, is engraved with the initials of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici (as is the coffered ceiling): H and C, which when intertwined can form the D of Diane de Poitiers. Its restoration was ordered by Madame Pelouze. **The four-poster bed**, the Henri II armchairs covered with Cordoue leather and the magnificent marquetry table next to the bed are from the Renaissance. **A magnificent bronze statue** from the 19th century of « Diane d'Anet » brings back to memory the royal favourite. Take note also of the painting over the fireplace: a **Portrait of Catherine de' Medici** by **Sauvage**.

Two 16th-century Flanders tapestries of outstanding dimensions represent:

- **THE TRIUMPH OF STRENGTH**, riding on a chariot drawn by two lions, surrounded by characters from the Old Testament.

Along the top border reads a Latin sentence meaning: «*He who loves the gifts of heaven with all his heart will not shrink from deeds that Piety dictates*».

- **THE TRIUMPH OF CHARITY**, surrounded by biblical scenes, with Charity holding a heart in one hand, the other hand pointing to the sun. The Latin sentence reads: «*He who shows strength of heart when in danger will receive Salvation as his reward at his time of death*».

To the left of the window: **CHRIST STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHES** by **Ribalta**, Ribera's master. To the right of the fireplace: **VIRGIN AND CHILD** by **Murillo**. Beneath this painting is a bookcase containing the **archives of Chenonceau**, a copy of which, on display, shows the signatures of Thomas Bohier and of Diana van Poitiers.

DIANE DE POITIERS' BEDROOM



On either side of the door are **two 16th-century Italian cabinets**.

On the walls, a collection of paintings, some of the most important of which are:

- **Tintoretto**: THE QUEEN OF SHEBA AND PORTRAIT OF A DOGE
- **Jordaens**: IVORY CATCHFLY
- **Golsius**: SAMSON AND THE LION
- **Ribera**: THREE BISHOPS
- **Jouvenet**: JESUS CHASING THE MERCHANTS FROM THE TEMPLE
- **Spranger**: ALLEGORICAL SCENE PAINTED ON METAL.
- **Veronese**: STUDY OF A WOMAN'S HEAD
- **Van Dyck**: LOVE WITH MONKEY
- **Andrea del Sarto**: THE HOLY FAMILY
- **Bassano**: SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF SAINT BENOÎT
- **Le Corrège**: A WOMAN MARTYR
- **Jouvenet**: HÉLIODORE
- **Poussin**: THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT, ABDUCTION OF HEBE, ABDUCTION OF GANYMEDE.

Also named after Catherine de Medici's favourite colour, the green shown off by the **16th-century ceiling**, in its original state; this was the room from which she worked.

On becoming Regent of the kingdom following the death of her husband Henri II, she governed France from her apartments. The two interlocked letters "C" of her initials can be seen on the ceiling.

THE GREEN STUDY



In this little room, close to her place of work, Catherine de Medici had her library with its wealth of knowledge.

From here there is a magnificent view of the River Cher, the island and Diane's garden.

The ceiling, dating from 1525, Italian-styled and in coffered oak, with small hanging keys, is one of the first coffered ceilings of this type discovered in France.

It bears the initials of the original builders of the Château T.B.K for Thomas Bohier and Katherine Briçonnet.

This ceiling is made of chestnut wood to prevent spider's webs.

THE LIBRARY



From Diane de Poitiers' room, we reach **the gallery** through a small passage.

In 1576, using the drawings made by Philibert de l'Orme, Catherine de' Medici had Jean Bullant build a gallery upon Diane de Poitiers' bridge.

Measuring 60 metres in length, 6 metres in width and with daylight from 18 windows, a tufa and slate-tile floor and exposed joist ceiling, this is a magnificent ball room.

It was opened officially in 1577 during the festivities organised by Catherine de' Medici in honour of her son King Henri III.

At either end are two superb **Renaissance fireplaces**, one of which is just the decoration surrounding the South door, leading to the left bank of the River Cher.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the gallery became decorated with medallions, from the Musée des Petits Augustins, representing famous historical people.

During the First World War, Mr Gaston Menier, owner of Chenonceau, paid for the setting up of a **hospital** whose different services occupied all the rooms of the Château.

In the Second World War, **the River Cher corresponded to the line of demarcation**. The entrance to the Château was therefore in the occupied zone (right bank). The gallery where the South door gave access to the left bank made it possible for the Resistance to pass large numbers of people into the free zone.

THE GALLERY





The kitchens at Chenonceau are located in the two enormous bases forming the first two piers built in the bed of the River Cher.

The pantry is a low room with two intersecting rib vaults. Its fireplace, dating from the 16th century, is the biggest in the Château, next to it is the bread oven.

The pantry serves at the same time:

- **the dining-room** for château employees only, and at one time for the nobles serving Louise de Lorraine.
- **the butchery** where we can still see hooks for hanging game and blocks for chopping it on.

- **the larder** where produce is stored

- a **bridge** leading to the kitchen itself. When crossing from one pier to the other, we can see a platform where boats carrying produce would moor (according to legend, it is called '**Diane's bath**' or '**the Queen's bath**').

During the First World War the Renaissance kitchens were fitted out with the necessary modern equipment to turn the Château into a hospital.

THE KITCHENS



In this room is **one of the most splendid Renaissance fireplaces**. On the mantel above the fireplace is the motto of Thomas Bohier: «S'il vient à point, me souviendra» - to echo the coat of arms surrounded by two mermaids sculpted above the door.

The furniture is composed of three French credence tables from the 15th century and a **16th-century Italian cabinet**, exceptional for its mother-of-pearl and fountain-pen engraved ivory incrustations, a wedding present to François II and Mary Stewart.

On the wall, a **portrait of Diane de Poitiers as Diane the Huntress** by **Primaticcio**, painter from the French school of Fontainebleau. The painting was painted at the Château in 1556; its frame bears the arms of Diane de Poitiers, Duchess of Etampes.

Around the room: **Three portraits of men** by Ravesteyn, a **self-portrait** by **Van Dyck** and **Lady in a collar** by **Mierevelt**.

Next to this is a large portrait of **Laura Vittoria Mancini as Diane the Huntress**. She was Mazarin's niece, wife of Louis II (Duke de Vendôme), Duchess of Mercoeur, and owner of Chenonceau in the 17th century.

Around the window: **Archimedes** by **Zurbaran** and **Two Bishops**: **German School of the 17th Century**.

On the right of the fireplace, **The Three Graces** by **Van Loo**, representing the young ladies of Nesle: Madame de Châteauroux, Madame de Vintimille and Madame de Mailly, three sisters, successive favourites of King Louis XV.

FRANCOIS I'S DRAWING ROOM



In memory of the visit he made to the Château on 14th July 1650, Louis XIV, many years later, offered his uncle the Duke of Vendôme, his **PORTRAIT** by **Rigaud** - in an extraordinary **frame** by **Lepautre**, composed simply of four enormous pieces of wood - in addition to the **furniture** covered with Aubussin tapestries and a **console** made by the famous cabinet worker **Boulle**.

On the **Renaissance fireplace**, the Salamander and the Stoat bring back the memory of François I and Queen Claude of France.

A cornice all the way round the exposed-joint ceiling bears the Bohier initials (T.B.K.).

On the East wall, **THE CHILD JESUS and SAINT JOHN-THE-BAPTIST** by **Rubens**, bought from Joseph Bonaparte, who had been placed by his brother, Napoleon I, on the Spanish throne.

The drawing room holds a collection of 17th and 18th-century French paintings:

- **Van Loo**: **PORTRAIT OF KING LOUIS XV**
- **Nattier**: **THE PRINCESS OF ROHAN**
- **Netscher**: **PORTRAIT OF CHAMILLARD, Minister of Louis XIV and PORTRAIT OF A MAN.**
- **Jean Ranc**: **PORTRAIT OF PHILIP V, KING OF SPAIN and grandson to Louis XIV.**

In addition, there is a large **PORTRAIT OF SAMUEL BERNARD**, banker of Louis XIV by **Mignard**. The wealthy Samuel Bernard was also the father of **Madame Dupin**, whose **PORTRAIT**, painted by **Nattier** is full of grace and intelligence. **Louise Dupin (1706 - 1799)**, grandmother by marriage to George Sand, was the owner of Chenonceau in the 18th century. A defender of the Encyclopedists, she welcomed Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Diderot, d'Alembert, Fontenelle and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre to the Château. Her kindness, generosity and intelligence saved Chenonceau from destruction during the French Revolution.

LOUIS XIV'S DRAWING ROOM



The hall is covered with a series of **rib vaults** where the keys, detached from one another, form a broken line.

The baskets are decorated with foliage, roses, cherubs, chimeras and cornucopia.

Made in 1515, this is one of the most remarkable examples of decorative sculpture from the First French Renaissance.

At the entrance, above the doors, two recesses shelter **statues** of Saint John-the-Baptist (Patron saint of Chenonceau) and of an Italian Madonna in the style of Luca Della Robbia.

The hunting table made of Italian marble, surmounted by a **Venetian Lion**, is from the Renaissance. Above the main door, there is a modern stained glass window (1954) made by the famous glassworker Max Ingrand, representing the legend of Saint Hubert.

From the hall, a **16th-century oak door** gives access to the staircase. Its sculpted leaves represent the Old Testament (in the form of a lady with her eyes blindfolded, carrying a book and a pilgrim's stick) and the New Testament (an uncovered face, with a palm and chalice in hand). **The staircase** which leads to the first floor is remarkable as it is one of the first straight staircases - also called "banister on banister" - to be built in France based on the Italian model.

Above the staircase is a pitch vault with ribs intersecting at right angles. The joints are decorated with keys and the coffers have sculptures of human faces, fruit and flowers (some parts of the sculpture were made during the Revolution). The staircase has two banisters and is cut by means of a landing forming a loggia with a balustrade, from where the River Cher can be seen. A very beautiful ancient **medallion** decorates the start of the second flight of steps representing the bust of a lady with flowing hair.

THE HALL





The hall on the first floor is tiled with small baked-clay tiles stamped with a fleur de lis pierced by a dagger. The ceiling is made of exposed joists. Above the doors are **marble medallions**, brought back from Italy by Catherine de' Medici, with faces of Roman emperors: Galba, Claude, Caligula, Vitellius and Nero. The **suite of six Audenarde tapestries** from the 17th century represents **HUNTING SCENES** from sketches by **Van der Meulen**.

The vestibule opens on to the **balcony**, which in turn provides a view of **the Tower and the Terrasse des Marques**, this shows the layout of the former mediaeval fortress. On the right, bordered by terraces is Diane de Poitiers' garden guarded by the **Chancellerie**. On the opposite side is Catherine de' Medici's garden, offering greater intimacy with its central pool.

KATHERINE BRIÇONNET'S HALL



This bedroom was given this name in memory of Catherine de' Medici's two daughters and three daughters-in-law.

Her daughters: Queen Margot (wife of Henri IV), Elisabeth of France (wife of Philippe II of Spain), and daughters-in-law: Mary Stuart (wife of François II), Elisabeth of Austria (wife of Charles IX) and Louise of Lorraine (wife of Henri III). The 16th-century coffered ceiling is made of the panelling from the antechamber for Louise of Lorraine's apartments.

There is a Renaissance fireplace.

The walls are decorated with a **suite of 16th-century Flanders tapestries** representing: THE SIEGE OF TROY AND THE KIDNAPPING OF HELEN, CIRCUS GAMES IN THE COLISEUM AND THE CROWNING OF KING DAVID.

On the left of the fireplace, part of a **16th-century tapestry** illustrates an episode in the LIFE OF SAMSON.

The **furniture** consists of a large four-poster bed, two Gothic credences topped with the busts of two ladies in 15th-century polychrome wood, a studded travel trunk, two armchairs and two Renaissance tables including a castle table..

On the walls:

- **Rubens:** WORSHIPPING THE WISE KINGS, bought from the King of Spain, just a small part of the full work to be found at the Prado museum.
- **Mignard:** PORTRAIT OF THE DUCHESS OF OLLONNE
- **17th-century Italian school:** APOLLO AT THE HOME OF ADMETUS, THE ARGONAUT.

THE FIVE QUEENS' BEDROOM



Catherine de' Medici's bedroom is crowned with a **wooden square-coffer ceiling**, both painted and gilded. Within the coffers are numerous initials: there is the coat of arms of the Medici family with at its centre the 'C' and 'H' of Catherine and Henri interwoven. The other coffers are decorated with sculptures of plants, which recall the ceiling in the green study. The **magnificently carved furniture** and rare set of **Flanders tapestries**, illustrating a biblical theme: THE LIFE OF SAMSON, are from the 16th century.

These tapestries are remarkable for their borders full of animals symbolizing proverbs (SKILL IS GREATER THAN CUNNING) and fables, for example, THE CRAYFISH AND THE OYSTER:

In the centre of the room, **the four-poster bed** is characteristic of the Renaissance, decorated with friezes, pilasters, side-view portraits inspired from antique medals. On the right of the bed is a painting on wood by **Correggio** representing THE EDUCATION OF LOVE. A version painted on canvas is at the National Gallery in London. The fireplace, its surround and the terracotta floor are Renaissance.

CATHERINE DE' MEDICI'S BEDROOM



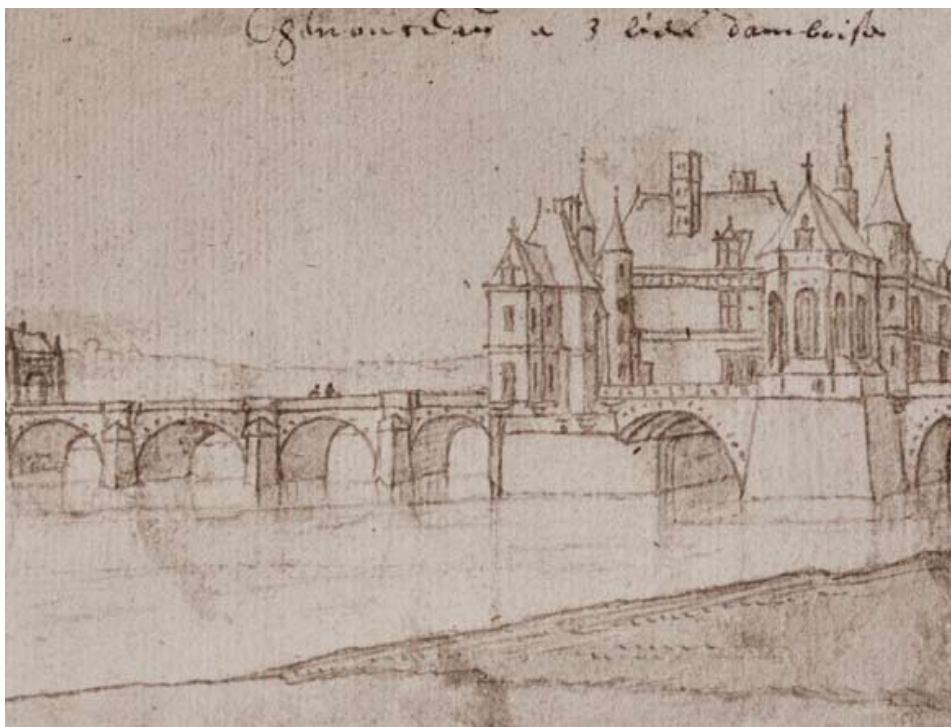
Catherine de' Medici's bedroom leads to two small apartments which form the exhibition rooms. The first presents a **magnificent ceiling** decorated with a canvas painting, and an elegant fireplace, which illustrate the decoration carried out by Madame Lupin at Chenonceau in the 18th century.

In the second room which overlooks the River Cher, the ceiling and fireplace are Renaissance. The exhibition room houses a **complete and varied collection of drawings**, engravings and prints representing the château through the ages. From the 16th century, the time of Diane de Poitiers, with a red-clay engraving (the first drawing in which the bridge appears), up to the water-colour drawings by the 19th-century architects, it is possible to trace the most important stages in the construction of Chenonceau, the way the projects varied from one owner to another, and also how the gardens were elaborated.

The Medici Gallery, located on the first floor of the building, unveils a **previously unseen collection of paintings, tapestries, furniture and pieces of art**: "THE CHATEAU OF CHENONCEAU", oil painting by **Pierre-Justin Ouvrié** (1806-1879), "THE CHER" a tapestry by Neuilly (1883), a Haute-Epoque double buffet, furniture originating from the Chateau of Chenonceau... Without forgetting, of course, a **precious Cabinet of Curiosities**.

A number of **documents and archives** give you a better understanding of the stages of construction of the chateau and the key events in its history. This visit is also enriched with a journey through the centuries in a biography of Eight Remarkable Ladies who watched over the fate of Chenonceau.

EXHIBITION ROOMS



This room brings back memories of Cesar, Duke of Vendôme, son of King Henri IV and Gabrielle d'Estrées, uncle of Louis XIV, who became owner of Chenonceau in 1624.

The Man in the Iron Mask was none other than his second son, François de Vendôme, Duke of Beaufort. Imprisoned in Vincennes after his attempted assassination of Cardinal Mazarin, he escaped in incredible circumstances. After this event, César de Vendôme negotiated the marriage of his first son Louis de Mercœur, to Laure Victoire Mancini, a niece of Cardinal Mazarin, in order to seal the reconciliation. This celebration took place in Chenonceau in the presence of King Louis XIV, the Queen Mother and the Cardinal, on 14 July 1650. For this reason, the portrait of the monarch - offered by himself - can be found in the salon, bearing his name. The young couple were given Chenonceau as a wedding gift at their wedding in Paris on 4 February 1651.

To be noted:

- A splendid **ceiling** with exposed joints upholding a cornice decorated with canons.
 - **The Renaissance fireplace** was coated in gold and painted in the 19th century with the coat of arms of Thomas Bohier.
 - The window opening to the west is framed with **two wood caryatides** from the 17th century.
 - The walls are covered with a suite of three **17th-century Brussels tapestries** *THE CYCLE OF CERES*, illustrating the myth of the change of seasons.
- The beautiful borders, typical of Brussels tapestries, represent garlands of fruit and flowers overflowing from cornucopia.
- The four-poster bed and furniture in this room are Renaissance.
- On the left of the window:
- **Murillo: PORTRAIT OF SAINT JOSEPH.**

CESAR OF VENDÔME'S BEDROOM

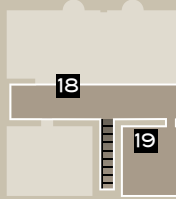


This room is in memory of Gabrielle d'Estrées, the favourite and great love of King Henri IV, and mother to his legitimate son Cesar of Vendôme. The ceiling has visible joists and the floor, fireplace and furniture are all Renaissance. Near the four-poster bed is a **16th-century Flanders tapestry** called **SCENES FROM CHÂTEAU LIFE, LOVE**.

The three other walls are covered with a rare **17th-century Brussels tapestry** called **THE LUCAS MONTHS: JUNE** (Sign of Cancer, sheep shearing), **JULY** (Sign of Leo, falcon hunting), **AUGUST** (Sign of Virgo, harvesters' pay). The original drawings were by **Lucas de Leyde**, a friend of Dürer. Above the cabinet is a canvas by **Michiel Coxie "Raphael of the North"** (16th Century) depicting **SAINT CECILIA**, the patron saint of musicians. Above the door is **Ribalta: CHILD WITH LAMB**.

GABRIELLE D'ESTRÉES' BEDROOM





This second-floor vestibule has kept intact the restorations carried out in the 19th Century for Madame Pelouze, the owner at the time, by Architect Roguet, a student of Viollet le Duc.

Notice the **16th-century Oudenaarde tapestry** relating the **BATTLE OF KOSOVO POLJE (Battle of the Field of Blackbirds – 15th June 1389)**. The uncertain outcome of this battle, opposing the Christian princes of the Balkans and the Ottoman empire, ended in a peace settlement between Milica, the queen of Serbia, and Sultan Bayezid I.

On either side of the tapestry are two works by **Pierre Justin Ouvrié**, a friend of Eugène Delacroix representing **THE CHÂTEAU OF CHENONCEAU**. The two credences, the two tables and the paved floor are all Renaissance.

THE VESTIBULE BOURBON VENDÔME



After the assassination of her husband King Henri III, by the monk Jacques Clément on 1st August 1589, Louise of Lorraine retired to Chenonceau to meditate and pray.

Surrounded by a small number of faithful courtiers and always dressed in white according to the protocol for royal mourning, she was given the name «the White Queen».

Guided by the **original ceiling**, it was possible to rebuild her room. It is decorated with objects of mourning: feathers (from the old French word “penne”, meaning sorrow), silver tears, grave-diggers shovels, widows’ cordons, crowns of thorns and the Greek letter lambda (L), initial of Louise, intertwined with the letter Hêta (H) of Henri III, whose **PORTRAIT** by **François Clouet** adorns the turret in the corner.

THE GOTHIC CHRIST IN A CROWN OF THORNS, THE RELIGIOUS SCENE (part of a 16th-century painting on wood) and the **prie-Dieu** bring out the pious, mournful atmosphere of this room.

The marble sculpture is a 14th-century MADONNA OF TRAPANI, by **Nino Pisano**. The bed and the furniture are from the 16th century.

The Capuchin Nuns whom Louise de Lorraine wished to establish alongside her, on the third floor of the château, did not return to their convent until the 18th century.

LOUISE OF LORRAINE’S BEDROOM





DIANE'S GARDEN

The layout of this flowerbed has remained unchanged since its creation by Diane de Poitiers, although its current design can be credited to Achille Duchêne (1866-1947). The Chancellery, once the house of Catherine de Medici's estate steward, looks out over this garden.

Two perpendicular and two diagonal paths border eight large, lawned triangles decorated with delicate scrolls of santolina (12000m²). The original water feature has been reinstated as it was in the time of Diane de Poitiers.

The raised terraces that protect the garden when water levels rise in the river Cher are decorated with urns, and offer a chance to discover the shrubs, yew trees, spindle trees, box hedges and viburnum tinus arranged around the beds. In the summer, more than a hundred hibiscus syriacus flower here. Between these flowering shrubs, flowerbeds underline this garden's strict geometry.

All around the garden, the walls that support the terraces are clad with 'Iceberg' climbing roses.



CATHERINE'S GARDEN

The more “intimate” (5500m²), Queen Catherine de Medici’s garden is the very picture of refinement. Looking out over the water and the park, its paths offer magnificent views of the château’s west façade. Its design centres around five lawns, grouped around an elegant circular pond, and dotted with rounded box hedges.

To the East, the garden is bordered by a low wall, lined with pleached “Clair Matin” roses, that overhangs the moat. Standard roses trace out the harmonious design. The northern view that opens out toward the Green Garden and the Orangery can be credited to Bernard Palissy.



GREEN GARDEN

Designed by Lord Seymour in 1825 for the Countess of Villeneuve, the owner at the time and a renowned botanist who wanted an English-style park, the Green Garden faces the north side of Catherine's Garden.

This lawned, enclosed garden enjoys shade from a collection of remarkable trees. This exceptional ensemble with age-old branches is made up of: three plane trees, three blue cedars, a Spanish pine tree, a catalpa, a horse chestnut, two Douglas firs, two sequoias, a robinia, an Eastern black walnut and an evergreen oak.

In front of the Renaissance Fountain, a Hortulus (micro landscape) presents a range of plants and grape varieties from the Loire Valley. In the 16th century, Catherine de Medici chose this place to house her animals and her aviary.



RUSSELL PAGE GARDEN

From the family archives, the original plates by Russell Page (unpublished and newly discovered documents) directly inspired this garden. Opened in the summer of 2018, it is a true homage to this illustrious landscape gardener, the master to many young contemporary creators. The fauna of François Xavier Lalanne, sculptor and master bronzier, have come to enrich the flowerbeds of this “English” garden and return to Chenonceau after the magnificent retrospective of the artist in 1991. Russell Page and François Xavier Lalanne respond to each other here, in an art where all dreams are permitted, where animals and plants encounter... In all the gardens he created, Russell Page invented his ideal garden... Nourished by the birdsong and the colours of the flowers, as a painter prepares his palette. A garden that simply seeks to move us and return us to the spontaneity of our childhood.



THE VEGETABLE AND FLOWER GARDEN

The vegetable and flower garden, open to visitors, is an ideal place to wander. It is composed of twelve square plots bordered with apple trees and Queen Elizabeth rosebushes, covering more than a hectare. A team of about ten gardeners grows a hundred or so different varieties of cut flower, needed for the interior floral decoration of the Château and more than 400 rose bushes. Visitors may also discover a wide range of vegetables and plants, as well as astonishing flowers like tuberose and agapanthus. Two greenhouses from the past are used for the cultivation from bulb of hyacinths, amaryllis, narcissus, and tulips, and for seed planting. Birds and animals of the Park are free here to roam, right next to the donkeys of Chenonceau.



THE MAZE

Situated in a clearing in the 70-hectare grounds, the Italian maze, as desired by Catherine de' Medici, is planted with 2000 yews covering more than one hectare. At its centre, a raised gloriette offers a clear view all around. This small monument is covered with flourishing willow. And nearby, a statue of a nymph carrying Bacchus, topped with a statue of Venus all placed on the top of a cedar trunk. An arbor with pots here and there containing boxwood and ivy surrounds the maze and at the same time opens up eastwards to Jean Goujon's monumental Caryatids. These Caryatids, Pallas, Cybele, and the Telamones, Hercules and Apollo, that once decorated the château facade, have been reunited behind the labyrinth.

THE DÔMES BUILDING

Built by Catherine de Medici, this building, with its 'Philibert de l'Orme' roof, houses the Queen's Apothecary, the Cabinet of Curiosities, the restaurant (The Dômes Terrace) and the historic Cellar Door.



THE QUEEN'S APOTHECARY

Created by Catherine de Medici, the most famous of Chenonceau's 'Ladies', it has been reborn in its original location. This new museum room, with its remarkable proportions, showcases a very rare collection of Albarelli (medicinal jars), apothecary jars, pill boxes, jugs, Theriac pots and mortars, which makes it an exceptional site in the Loire Valley. The earliest remedies slightly resembled 'witches remedies': stag horns, crayfish eyes, slugs, toads... snail drool (still used today). Thereafter, the apothecaries made plant-based preparations. The most common were grown in the 'Psychic Garden', the main source of medicine at that time.



THE SCIENCE CABINET

A unique collection in its genre, created between 1743 and 1747, at the Château of Chenonceau. Most of these precious 'machines' were built by Dupin de Francueil, the son of the owner (the husband of the famous salon host Madame Dupin). He was helped by his assistant, one Jean Jacques Rousseau, whose 'Discourse on the Sciences and Arts' made him famous in 1750. These instruments relate to mechanics and optics as much as astronomy and constitute an exceptional panoply for research and teaching. The earliest Renaissance Cabinets, 'descendants' of Wonder Rooms, were essentially natural history collections. In the 17th century they became Cabinets of Science, such as the one at Chenonceau, then gave way to museums.

THE ORANGERY

Constructed in the 17th and 19th centuries and originally designed to shelter orange and lemon trees during the winter, The Orangery is opposite the Green Garden, where visitors can discover a remarkable collection of trees. A haven of peace, from its terrace you can admire the château's elegant profile. The entire space is available for private or corporate hire.



THE ORANGERY AND ITS TEA ROOM

offer, in the winter garden, a menu of savoury dishes and sweet treats, created by our patisserie chef.



THE DÔMES CELLAR DOOR

The château's vineyards have lived through many centuries, and their successive owners each cultivated prestigious vintages. La Cave des Dômes Cellar Door in the historic 16th century wine cellar, with stunning vaulted ceilings, has several areas in which you can discover, taste and also buy wines, such as the AOC Touraine Chenonceaux and products connected to the world of wine...



- | | | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|----|--------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Ticket office | 11 | Domes cellar door | 16 | Vegetable and flower garden |
| 2 | Maze | 12 | The Orangery restaurant | 17 | Medicinal Plant Garden |
| 3 | Caryatids | 13 | Green garden | 18 | Donkey pen |
| 4 | Chancellery | 14 | Russell Page garden | 19 | Picnic area |
| 5 | Diane's Garden | 15 | 16 th -century farm | 20 | Covered picnic area |
| 6 | Castle - Terrace - Marques Tower | | | | |
| 7 | Catherine's Garden | | | | |
| 8 | Domes Terrace | | | | |
| 9 | The Science Cabinet | | | | |
| 10 | Apothecary | | | | |