

## The main courtyard

In 1992, they were restored to their original XVIIIth century layout, featuring the front courtyard, stables courtyard and main courtyard. The lawn squares were reshaped, the central alley recreated and the wall separating the two courtyard was rebuilt.



## The stables

Built during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to house 14 horses, they have been transformed and mutilated over centuries. In 1987, they were restored and went back to their original function with the laying of 5000 paving stones and the installation of new stalls and boxes (from the 19<sup>th</sup> century).



The saddlery contains a stunning collection of harnesses with coats of arms. Originally, this building corresponded to the « small stables » (for service horses) and faced the old « large stables » (for saddle horses).

## The Orangery

The former « large stables » were first transformed into a jewel case for the Prince Massena's ornithological collection, then into an orphanage founded in 1900 by Madame Dessales (following the death of her son and which will last until 1944). In 1944, a fire completely destroyed whole building. Restored in 1989, this building now houses a large reception hall available for rental.

In the attics of the Orangery, you can find a large exhibition of porcelain dolls, works by the contemporary German artist Ruth Trefeissen, accompanied by antique toys.

## Ground floor

**The Vestibule :** Majestic entrance refurbished by Nicolas Bertrand, Marquis of La Ferté in 1775 and gentleman of the King's little ventry. He decided to partition the original large through gallery in order to create several adjoining rooms. He also lowers the ceilings on the ground floor. The « cabochon » paving dates from this period. The Louis the 15<sup>th</sup> marble table and the hunting trophies from the 1900's remind us that Sologne has always been a hunting ground. Two reproductions of statues from the gardens of the Palace of Versailles represent Diane Huntress and Aphrodite holding the golden apple from the Judgment of Paris. The two facing portraits are Henri 1<sup>st</sup> (next to Diane) and his son Henri 2<sup>nd</sup> from the Ferté Seneclère family.

**The Living Room :** This living room had kept its 18<sup>th</sup> century volumes when it was completely refurbished in a pure Louis the 16<sup>th</sup> style. On the left mirror is a medallion portrait of the Marshal of La ferté Seneclère, painted in 1670. On the opposite side you can observe a portrait attributed to Mignard, of his wife Madeleine, Duchess of La Ferté Seneclère. The history says that Madeleine was in contact with Lavoisin, the known witch of the Poison Trials under Louis the 14<sup>th</sup>'s reign. The duchess may have tried to poison her old husband, the Marshal, who was 29 years older than her.

**The Billiard :** Originally the antechamber to Monsieur's apartments, this room was entirely redecorated by the O'Gorman family in 1911. You can see their coat-of-arm and motto on the neo-gothic furniture. The Countess of O'Gorman, Sixtus O'Gorman's wife – he helped Charles de Gaulle – is represented by the portrait on the left of the chimney. At the center, a French billiard from the Chevillotte house in Orléans.

**Madam's Bedroom :** Preceded by an antechamber (billiard) and a wardrobe, this room kept its wooden decorations and floor, and Louis the 15<sup>th</sup> style chimney. Originally, this room was occupied by the Marshal of Lowendal. He bought the Ferté in 1746 in a time of peace to be close to his friend the Marshal of Saxe (from a foreign origin as well) who received as a present by Louis the 15<sup>th</sup> the castle of Chambord for his numerous victories. In 1911, the room is occupied by the countess of O'Gorman and gains the title of "Madam's Room".

**The dining room :** During the 17<sup>th</sup> century it was an antechamber, the checked floor is actually dated from that period (the white limestone and the black marble stone were put at the same time but the latter is denser than the other which means it is more resistant to the erosion). The rest of the room was decorated under Louis the 16<sup>th</sup>'s reign. In France, the living rooms didn't exist until the creation of the French table art in the 18<sup>th</sup> century ! In the alcove, the furnace is dated from the 18<sup>th</sup> century; it is in front of a reproduction of Louis the 14<sup>th</sup> bust according to Coysevox. On the right wall, is a portrait of the Marquis of La Carte, who became the Marquis of la Ferté Seneclère after marrying the daughter of the Marshal of La Ferté thanks to his friendship to "Monsieur" brother of Louis the 14<sup>th</sup>. Next to the living room: the office with an impressive kitchen dresser. You can also observe the 17<sup>th</sup> Century sculpted oak door, one of the rare decorations that survived from that period.

## First floor

**The Massena Bedroom :** The room contains contemporary furniture (Empire) that belonged to the Prince Masséna, duke of Rivoli, prince of Essling and son of the renowned Marshal of the Empire, François the 5<sup>th</sup>. Massena had a passion for ornithology and accumulated a collection of 12 000 species of birds throughout his life that he exhibited in the old stables (the actual Orangery). After his death his collection was offered to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.

**The guard room :** It is the biggest room of the castle with a five meters height which corresponds to the original height of each room. This magnificent room has kept its 17<sup>th</sup> sculpted oak woodwork and a lovely French ceiling. In the chimney, a lead plate shows the coat-of-arm of the Marshal of La Ferté, the builder of the castle.

**The Lowendal Bedroom :** The tapestries were made after sketches from the Ribeaupillé Manufacture and were renovated according to original fragments found in the room. The bed « à la polonaise » (polish style) is from the Louis the 16<sup>th</sup> period; it is always placed in an alcove as opposed to the bed « à la française » (french style) which is placed with its head against the wall. The chimney and the writing desk on its left are from the Louis the 15<sup>th</sup> period. At the center, a beautiful games table from the Louis the 16<sup>th</sup> period.

## The Castle's attics

At the mezzanine floor, the beautiful 16<sup>th</sup> century wooden framework shelters a movie explaining the restorations of the castle with exceptional archive images. On the last floor a large collection of old utensils and various objects illustrating the memory of life in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries at La Ferté Saint Aubin. The big room in front of the latter exhibits a reconstitution of an old grocery store with all its accessories as well as a classroom.

## The historical kitchens

They were entirely restored in 1995 according to an archive from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Everything in it works, the 18<sup>th</sup> Century roasting jack, the stony kitchen garden (stove used to cook vegetables and fruits with water), the fish tank, the butcher's block next to the boar. On the stone sink you can observe a « couffignot » (a ladle with a long beak, the ancestor of the faucet). On the workplan is a beautiful collection of kitchen ustensiles and copper pots. On the right of the chimney, you can see a baker's oven and a 19<sup>th</sup> century cast iron stove.

*NB : the activities in the kitchen with madeleine tasting happen on the July and August afternoons, as well as on sundays and bank holidays.*



## The gardens and park

Covering 40 hectares (80 acres) the park is classified in the Historical Monuments. During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Prince of Massena transformed the gardens to fit the taste of the period. The Fench gardens on geometrical terraces behind the castle were replaced by a romantic english park. Various exotic trees were planted : Sequoia, Tuliptree, Bald Cypress, Lebanon Cedar... The succession of artificial islands brings the romantic aspect loved at that time.

## The Marshal's castle with a few dates

● **11<sup>th</sup> century** A castle guarding the Cosson already existed. Until the end of the 16th century various family succeeded each other as the owners before it was inherited by the « Saint-Nectaire » family who afterwards became « La Ferté Seneçtere ».

● **1625** Henry the 1<sup>st</sup> of La Ferté Seneçtere began the construction of the castle (right isle), the two imperial entrance lodges and the monumental treshold where there originally was a drawbridge. According to the initial plan, the old castle (below) was supposed to be entirely destroyed in order to create a symmetrical castle but halfway through the construction the family ran out of money and had to stop everything.



● **1675** Henry the 2<sup>nd</sup> of la Ferté Seneçtere became Marshal of France, Duke and a kingdom peer. Instead of finishing the castle, he built two stables facing each other that surround the courtyard. Each one is decorated by 17<sup>th</sup> Century's earthenware horse heads on the pediment.

● **1746** The castle is sold to Woldemar, Count of Lowendal, Marshal of France and great-grand-son of Frederick II of Danemark. Lowendal is one of Louis the 15<sup>th</sup> greatest military chief.

● **1822** François Victor Masséna, Duke of Rivoli, Prince of Essling and the Marshal of the Empire's son, buys the castle. Sold again in 1864, the castle has various owners until 1911.

● **1911** Bought by the O'Gorman (Irish origin) and kept in the family by heritage for 70 years.

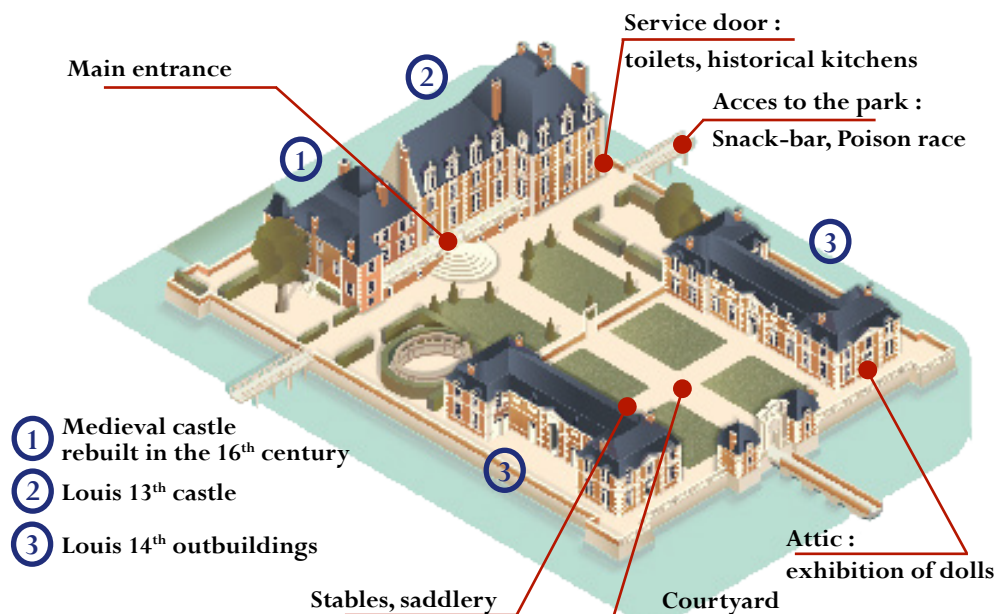
● **1987** Bought by Jacques Guyot, the actual owner, who opens the castle to the public and allows big necessary restorations on the building.

## The Chapel Island :



The 19<sup>th</sup> Century is the origin of its creation. Originally, a geometrical platform was designed to show the French gardens. The chapel was constructed in 1880 by Mr and Madam Dessales, the owners of the castle, because they sadly lost their 22 years old son Leon. They now rest in the crypt. This neo-gothic chapel was swiftly built with poor materials, which explains why it is not protected by the Historical Monuments. Because of its strong degradation and safety purposes the chapel is not open to visitors... The Chapel Island was previously named "the Princess' Island" (before its construction) because it was Prince Masséna's wife's secret garden. He had installed a fabulous collection of orchids.

*The image show the forecourt (1), the courtyard (2) and the French gardens (3).*



- ① Medieval castle rebuilt in the 16<sup>th</sup> century
- ② Louis 13<sup>th</sup> castle
- ③ Louis 14<sup>th</sup> outbuildings

### AGENDA

**February holidays :** Murder party in the castle

**Easter holidays :** big egg hunts for children and adults

**All Saints holidays :** Castle's ghosts

**Christmas at the Castle :** Christmas decorations in Santa's Castle, workshops, magic show...

### ESCAPE GAME

With family or friend, try to get out of our escape games :

*The bedroom of Mysteries and The Cellars*  
Reservation required, from 3 to 10 players

### CONTACT

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Dear visitors,



Welcome in this private house,  
inhabited for more than 350 years.

We are the eighth family to have the privilege of living in this exceptional place. We hope that you will enjoy your visit that we wanted as free and original as possible for all generations find their groove and spend a moment out of time.

In fact, it is you who enable each year the survival of this masterpiece of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century which was the home of two Marshalls of France and a son of marshal of Empire. The financial autonomy of this castle is made with you and thanks to you ! For example, the purchase of each entrance ticket is equivalent to 4 new slates for the castle roofs. If the roofing works come to an end, there will still be a long way to stabilise the buildings built on an artificial terrace supported by wooden pilings or to restore all the frames and interiors. However our philosophy for the preservation of a historical monument is based on the conviction that restoration must blend into the general atmosphere of the monument. We like the patina of time, the imperfections on the stones, the woodwork, the frames or the furniture.

It is these imperfections that tell a story. All these wear, these glares, these lacks, are in our view of lovers, the wrinkles and smiles of time that has passed. That's why, we hope your comprehension as for the daily difficulties of the current rescue but also your encouragement to continue to carry it out successfully. Finally, we hope that during your visit, you will feel welcomed as sincere friends of the heritage but also that you will be touched by the beauty of this place which has seen dramas, tears as well as splendors, laughs and happiness.

The Guyot Family