

Chateau Blois - Architectural Treasure in the Loire Valley

The Loire Valley is the "country of a thousand castles". The kings of France seduced by the temperate climate and the game-filled forests built their sumptuous homes here in the Loire Valley. They surrounded themselves with the greatest artists and architects of this era.

The valley is full not only of royal castles and renaissance palaces, national museum and large magnificent chateaux, but also medieval castles and fortresses, small fairy tale manors, private chateaux, medieval cities, churches, abbeys, and cathedrals. Many chateaux and stately homes are open to the public: some are state owned, such as Chambord and Blois; others are private, and still lived in. A large proportion of them run son-et-lumiere (sound and light)shows during the tourist season.

The Chateau Royal de Blois is a veritable French architectural treasure. The Royal Residence in Blois was the home to French Kings and Queens for more than four centuries. Chateau Blois is almost like four separate chateaux rolled into one - so diverse are the architectural styles at play here. The Medieval heart is centred on the Salle des Etats Generaux that is where the court and council were based. Flamboyant Gothic flair is evident in the Louis XII wing whereas Renaissance architecture is the dominant style in the Francois 1 wing. It is in the Francois 1 wing that you'll find Catherine de Medici's private rooms complete with her array of poisons.

This was also the spot where the Duc de Guise was brutally murdered in 1588 after he was thought to be planning a Catholic uprising against Henri III. Apparently, it was Henri who carried out the deed himself only to be murdered himself a year later by a monk.

Lastly, the Gaston d'Orleans wing will satisfy any cravings for Classical architecture. Evenings are a particularly good time to visit Blois especially if you book to see the 'son et lumiere' shows that recount the chateau's turbulent past.

Here are some famous quotes on Chateau Blois.

-"Blois, birthplace of my lady, sojourn of kings and of my own desire", Ronsard.

-"It appeared very beautiful to me and I think it would be difficult to find a more pleasant and joyful sight for the eyes.", La Fontaine.

..-"I saw a thousand windows at once, a regular yet confused piling up of houses, of steeples, a chateau ... With each step, a souvenir.", Victor Hugo.

Chateau Blois is open all year round except on Christmas and New Year's Day. You can visit the Chateau on your own or with a free guide. Your ticket gives you access to the royal apartments, the Fine Arts Museum, to the Gaston D'Orleans Cupola, to the chapelle Saint-Calais, the Lapidary Museum, the Archaeology Rooms and to the cloister of Saint-saturnine.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Corina Clemence runs Chateau du Guerinet, near Blois a luxury chateau for up to 15 people set in the middle of a 4000 acre forest perfect for a holiday visiting Loire Valley's best chateaux and vineyards. Rent a castle in France <http://www.loirechateau.com> Rent a french chateau