

Famous Castles In France Chateau de Chantilly

Contributed by Martyn Davis
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When going on holiday in France why not try visiting one of the famous castles in France, like Chateau de Chantilly which is a beautiful palace in one of the largest forests that covers an area of approximately 7,800 hectares and is only an hour away from Paris making this place very popular with tourists.
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There are actually quite a few castles and chateaux situated around Paris and of course the most well known of these is the Chateau de Versailles, but we thought we would take a look at one of the lesser known palaces called the Chateau de Chantilly, which is also on a grand scale with phenomenal history and remarkable museums.
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Not sure if you realized, but this was one of the settings for the James Bond film called A View to a Kill starring Roger Moore, along with other places in Paris that were in the film such as the Jules Verne restaurant at the Eiffel Tower and being only an hour away from Paris it has made this place popular with tourists.

But getting back to the chateau itself, it is a beautiful castle that is situated in one of the largest forests, with the estate covering an area of approximately 7,800 hectare, plus it has a park of around 155 hectares.

From the Middle ages when construction started on this chateau, it passed via inheritance from person to person through different branches of the same family and each heir had improvements and new structures built. That is, until it came to the Conde family who eventually bequeathed the estate to the Duc d'Aumale, but this is where the legacy came to an end, as both his Son's had died in battle.

Because of this, the Duc d'Aumale bequeathed the entire estate of Chantilly to the Institut de France on the condition that it was opened to the public as a museum, which happened a year after his death and it is home to one of the finest museums of historical paintings in France called the Conde Museum. In fact, not including the famous Paris museum called The Louvre, it is the only museum in France to have three Raphael paintings.

Within the Chateau de Chantilly there are numerous rooms housing a wonderful collection of antiques, not just paintings, such as the Salon d'Orléans, which holds a rare collection of Chantilly porcelain, plus there are the private rooms from the Duc and Duchesse d'Aumale, known as the Petits Appartements, that you can view just as they were. You can also visit the Cabinet des Livres or book room, which is a magnificent library that contains around 30,000 volumes and also includes about 1,500 manuscripts including around 200 medieval manuscripts and the oldest one, which is the prized possession, actually dates from the 11th century.

Within the grounds of Chateau Chantilly that were designed by Andre le Notre there are the Grand Stables, which is where you will find the Musee Vivant du Cheval also known as The Living Horse Museum. The 31 rooms of the Musee Vivant du Cheval, spanning over a surface of 4,000 square metres and having an 800 metre track, this museum is one of the most visited equestrian places in the world, plus, they hold equestrian shows and demonstrations every day of the week except for Tuesday, which is when the whole of the Chantilly estate is closed.

You can admire the beautiful fountains and the canal, and the grounds are a great place for a stroll to watch the swans, birds nesting and lots of other wildlife. But also in the grounds there are other buildings such as a chapel and you can see the Jeu de Paume, which was a real tennis court and one of the last to be built in France when construction began in 1756, but this is now a museum room holding some very large paintings that would not fit anywhere else!

As previously mentioned Chateau de Chantilly is open every day except for a Tuesday, yet opens later in the evening during the summer months and to fully appreciate this incredible castle, you really need to make a point of spending a whole day out with all the family.

About the Author:

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For all your French holiday needs and travel guide to France, with tourist information, landmarks and attractions -
Chateau de Chantilly