

EN  
GLISH

le château de Couches,  
dit de Marguerite de Bourgogne

## Visits

### • History

Built on a perch of hard rock, the castle of Couches has been continually transformed from the end of the eleventh century to the nineteenth century. It carries in its walls the history of all its previous proprietors. It is a witness to the evolution of architectural techniques, different ways of life, and ways of defending oneself through the centuries. Finally, various legends attached to the site give it a special sense of mystery.

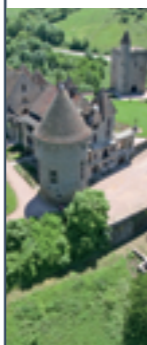
### • The donjon

The main tower from the twelfth century, part of the original castle, otherwise known as the donjon, reveals its original stairway hidden in the wall and replaced in the fifteenth century by the more comfortable spiral staircase in the adjoining tower. The first level contained contemporary wine vats but now features medieval arrow slits widened for firearms and an old vitrified wine vat from the nineteenth century. The different floors provide a medieval ambience as in the time of the Lords, each room with its function, appropriate furniture and white sandstone fireplaces. On each side of the donjon the curtain walls are still visible.

### • The chapel

The fifteenth century gothic chapel is dedicated to Saint Ruf, a fourth century Christian from the Auvergne. The entrance has a decorated archivolt surmounted by a flamboyant tracery window of three quatrefoils and two trilobes. The two engaged pinnacles frame two storied carvings comprising the traces of coats of arms.

The apse, decorated by a window representing St Vincent, is an invitation to follow the visit in colour. The gothic vaulting occasionally shows traces of polychrome painting on each side of the chapel choir. Two limestone oratories embellished by fireplaces witness the wealth and status of the Lord.



**CHATEAU**  
de **COUCHES**  
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### • The underground galleries

These galleries or passageways were later storerooms. They allow us today to link all the buildings together regardless of their date of construction. The galleries lead to the underground caves and their underground staircase whose singular architecture includes a flat inclined roof, with successively spaced arches.

### • The justice tower

The justice tower of the fourteenth century adjoins the chapel and displays a collection of weapons in the guard room. The level below gives access to an underground cavern which may have served as a prison-for who? The staircase gives access to the curtain walls, currently under restoration, which formed the principal fortifications of the original castle.

### • The old drawbridge

Situated between the chapel and the residence, the original entrance is traditionally placed near the chapel in the curtain wall. It separates the higher courtyard from the lower one. The drawbridge, consisting of a pedestrian entrance and a carriage entrance, moved in the seventeenth century, replaced the original drawbridge by the chapel.

### • The park and topiaires gardens

The park offers the charm of a nineteenth century garden, a small lake and a washhouse bordering the vines. The park, on the site of the medieval lower court, proposes the jardin topiaire project, on the subject of animals also visible on the surrounding wall. To continue your historic visit you can take the trails that lead to the Celtic, Roman and medieval heritage trails of the Town of Couches.

### • The outside of the residence

The residence from the nineteenth century, built with re-used stone from the site, on older foundations, is a great example of the "troubadour" style of architecture.

### • The lovers pavillion

Initially destined for winemakers, it will offer after its restoration a place for young married couples fond of the site. The restoration is funded by donations from recently married couples who have been photographed at the castle as part of their celebrations.



We thank the first donators and wish them much happiness.

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