



BESANÇON

L'AIR(E)
DU TEMPS

BESANÇON IT'S TIME TO B

Let the City of Time take you on a journey of extraordinary times...



› Pasteur Square

› Statue of Jouffroy d'Abbans



› Velocité



› The Citadel



› The Imasonic Company



› Sparkling Bisontine Water



› La Rodia



Besançon: A Time Teller and a Storyteller

Besançon is the City of Time, a bona fide teller of time and she has a thousand stories to tell. Time, as told by all the clocks and watches that have been made since the 18th century, has forged Besançon's reputation.

And time : what you are invited to take to discover and explore Besançon.

And so, we must take a journey: a journey through time, but also through space and landscapes.

Besançon's story began in the loop in the Doubs River, where greens of every hue abound. Vauban's presence, of course, is at every street corner; the lines of 16th- and 17th-century mansions proudly display their singular beige-blue stone facades, and there are her courtyards and secret staircases. Her festivals and events throughout the year lend vibrancy to the air. There is her fabulous history of watchmaking and micro- and nanotechnologies that connects the halls of time and science. And then, there are the best places to go, the leading figures of yesterday and today...

Besançon invites you to explore her great classics, her bold innovations and recent discoveries.

This is a journey, and all journeys have stages. Here in this book and just for you, Besançon will tell you her story in stages.

She will make some thematic stops, some stops for stories and snapshots; she will take you down the paths of the periods and trends that have marked her past, have organised her present, and which point to her bright future.



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MARKERS OF HISTORY: HERITAGE IN ALL ITS DIFFERENT SHAPES AND FORMS

Because of its geographical location, Vesontio (as Besançon was called then) became a city of considerable importance as early as ancient Roman times. The remains of the Triumphal Arch at the Black Gate and the Corinthian columns in Castan Square bear witness to this.

FROM REBEL TO CAPITAL

Invincible, proud, rebellious: Besançon had everything it needed to resist the King of France and remain the **old Spanish town** that it had been since 1519, Charles V and the Hapsburgs. Encircled by the Doubs River, which to the northeast enclosed it in a perfect omega shape, and a steep and rocky hill at its back forming both a natural fortress and a defensive line to the southeast, Besançon exemplified the character of the whole Franche-Comté Province: impregnable. (It was not yet the capital of the province: the administrative, judicial, political and even academic honours belonged to Dole.)

The 17th century had only just begun when Louis XIII finally decided to annex this indomitable and strategically-located province to his kingdom. Richelieu began his attacks in 1635. And after ten years of war and devastation, the Franche-Comté people still resisted.

Louis XIV carried on the war campaigns of his father, launching a second offensive in 1668, then a third in 1674.

Besançon surrendered for the first time in 1668, was given back to Spain by a territorial exchange between the kingdoms, and was finally defeated by Louis XIV in May 1674.

At the Treaties of Nijmegen, 17 September 1678, Spain finally ceded Franche-Comté to Louis XIV and thus nearly 160 years of Spanish domination ended. (Unfortunately, there are no architectural remains from that time in Besançon.)

The Sun King finally shone his light on this beautiful province, embellishing it even more.

Besançon gradually assumed the position of capital of Franche-Comté, and it became a prefecture in 1800.

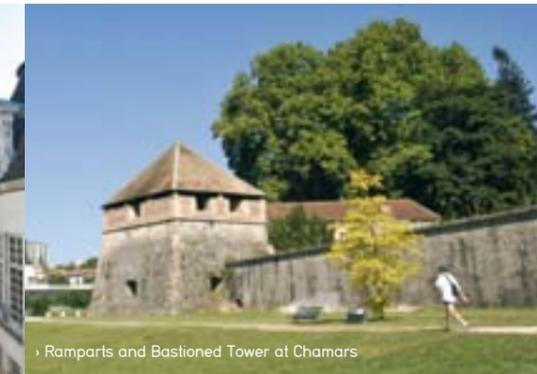
Louis XIV owed much to Sébastien Le Prestre Vauban. It was he who provided the brilliant strategic and military advice that was largely responsible for the destruction of the Besançon (and Franche-Comté) forces. And this astonishing theorist of fortifications was also one of the fathers of the reconstruction of Franche-Comté. Under his leadership, strong defensive bastions were built, which for over four centuries have reflected the intrinsic identity of the city.

Just as the Loop of the Doubs has done, so the Citadel has given Besançon its distinctively unique character. Water below and stone above, are the two visual markers, both geographical and historical, that define the contours of the old town. They are the signatures of the city.

Let's go to the old town now. Here, the streets and squares are lined with the 16th- and 17th-century proud mansions of blue-beige stone. And here, in the St. Jacques Hospital complex, you can see the dome of the Refuge Chapel, the apothecary and the finely-worked black and gold gates. Just a few steps away, Revolution Square shows more of the elegant harmony of that delicately tinted blue-beige stone from the quarries in Chailluz Forest. And now, we are at the fortified embankments along the Doubs. Battant Bridge connects us to Battant, a picturesque quarter that is a maze of narrow streets whose half-timbered houses go right up to Fort Griffon.



› The Black Gate



› Ramparts and Bastioned Tower at Chamars



› The Saint Jacques Hospital Gates



› Half-timbered House on Rue Thiémonté

OUR LADY OF REFUGE CHAPEL

Built between 1739 and 1745, the Bon Pasteur Convent Chapel took in young girls in difficulty. In 1802, it was annexed to the St. Jacques Hospital that it abuts. This Louis XV sanctuary is reputed to be the most elegant in the region. Its dome, glistening with glazed tiles, is a jewel of gilt and polychrome.

UTINAM

This was, apparently, the favourite expression of Charles V, and is a Latin phrase that can be translated as “God Willing”. The Holy Roman Emperor passed it on to the Besançon people, the “Bisontins”, who made it their motto. It is engraved on several monuments, two of which are the pediment of the Courthouse and the fountain in Jean Cornet Square.

RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

The interior design of Saint John’s Cathedral, rue de la Convention, is Baroque-inspired (see La Vierge aux Saints, a remarkable masterpiece of the Italian Renaissance by Fra Bartolomeo). The cathedral itself was built mainly in the 12th and 13th centuries. The apse housed the Holy Shroud of Besançon, a relic venerated throughout the region, from the late 17th century until the French Revolution.

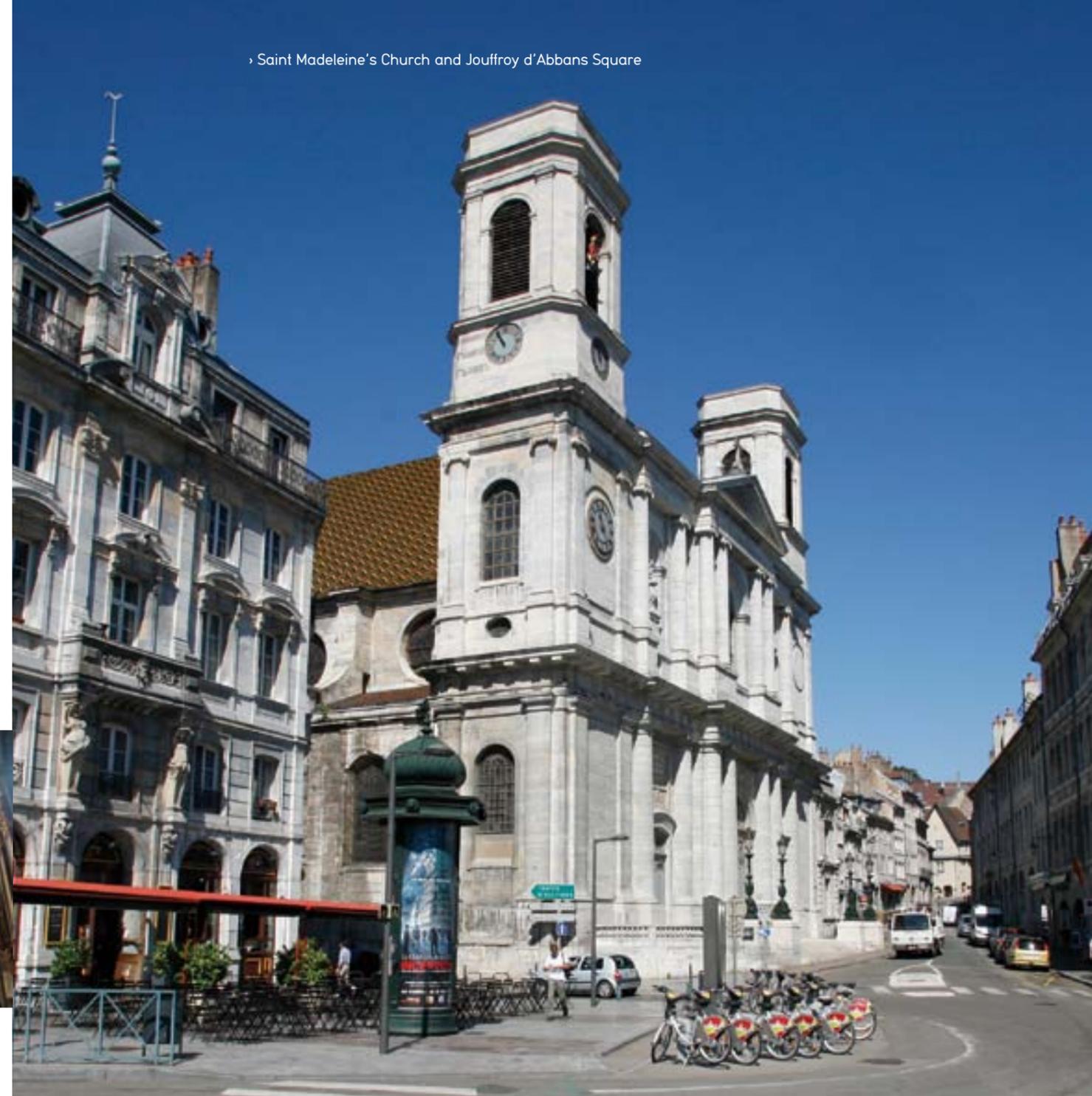
The discreet Holy Spirit Gallery is close to the Museum of Fine Arts. The Order of the Holy Spirit built the chapel and hospital buildings in the early 13th century, and the complex underwent extensive modifications over the centuries. These can be seen in the decoration of the Gallery, which includes medieval and Renaissance styles.

Saint Madeleine’s Church dominates the entrance to the Battant Quarter because of its massive, but very elegant, presence. It is one of Nicolas Nicole’s major works; construction was begun in 1746 and more than a century passed before it was completed.

Other must-sees are the synagogue on Strasbourg Embankment, with its decidedly Middle-Eastern look, and Saint Peter’s Church at the heart of the Loop. The church has a tall bell tower; its bells sounded the alarm, and its height provided a lookout point for soldiers for the Town Hall, just across the square.



› Saint Madeleine’s Church and Jouffroy d’Abbans Square



COURTYARD AND INNER-COURTYARD SECRETS...

It’s good to yield to curiosity where Besançon’s courtyards are concerned. You’ll find hidden treasures: spiral stairs, straight and double flights, intricacies of stone, wood and iron. Because of the confining Loop of the Doubs, building space in the old town was limited. The mansions and rentals were built deep in the courtyards, in several separate buildings. To gain space, the stairs were built outside, affixed to the party walls. All the courtyards of the old town charm the eye upward in a dizzying way: up to the upper floors. Ornate wrought iron railings decorate the lower floors, where the noble owners lived; the upper floors were for rentals and merited only balusters of wood: but lovely just the same! And besides the stairs, these courtyards hold turrets, stained glass and totally unexpected gardens. Dare to push open the gate and go in...



› Inner Courtyards and Staircases in the Loop



› The Citadel at Night

SNAPSHOT: VAUBAN AND THE FORTIFICATIONS

Imagine a loop, a perfect omega-shape drawn by a river. And then, closing the open portion of the loop, imagine a hill, steep and rocky enough to make climbing it difficult, but of a height and accessibility that make it possible to develop. This is the natural configuration of Besançon: one which Vauban knew how to exploit so he could build his fortifications while at the same time strengthening the identity of the town. The impregnable town...

WHEN VAUBAN LAID OUT THE CITY

The Citadel (along with the city walls and Fort Griffon) was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Site List on 7 July 2008. It is one of Vauban's finest fortified citadels. It has a total of 10 kilometres of walls with half-bastions, tenailles, sentry boxes, curtain walls, towers and other demi-lunes...

The architecture of the Citadel and its natural layout and landscape make it one of Vauban's masterpieces. This fortress covers 11 hectares and is perched 100 metres high on an anticline that looks down upon the city. Vauban, who was both a military strategist and an architect, did not stop with the Citadel, but provided the whole city with a defensive structure.

Because the town was encircled by the Loop of the Doubs, Vauban built city walls to protect the left bank of the river, reinforcing it with six bastions. He also planned the construction of a prestigious embankment, the Quai Vauban, and a second citadel on Battant Hill, Fort Griffon.

In all, and including the Citadel, there are 18 key fortification sites in existence, and they reinforce the stunning architectural identity of the city. From the Stone-cut Gate on the left bank, upstream of the Loop, to the Notre Dame Tower on the same bank at the other end of the river's curve, and passing through Battant Gate and its fortifications on the other bank, rising above the city: it all makes for a wonderful walk through Besançon and its history.



› Vauban Embankment



› The Stone-cut Gate and its Tower



› The Gare d'Eau Bastioned Tower

THE CITADEL IS INHABITED

The Citadel is a major cultural and tourist site in Franche-Comté and it has something interesting for everyone, adult or child. It houses the Vauban Museum, the Resistance and Deportation Museum, an ethnographic museum called the Museum of Franche-Comté, and a zoological garden with an insectarium, an aquarium, a noctarium and a climatorium.

www.citadelle.com • Tel +33 (0)1 81 87 33 33

Réseau
des sites majeurs
Vauban



WHAT IS WORLD HERITAGE?

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) encourages the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. In 1972, UNESCO adopted an international treaty called the Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage to that effect. To date, 35 French properties are on the World Heritage List: 31 are cultural, 3 natural and 1 is mixed. Three are located in Franche-Comté: the Citadel and the fortifications of Besançon, the Royal Saltworks of Arc-et-Senans (25) and the Saltworks of Salins-les-Bains (39). Our Lady of the Heights Chapel by Le Corbusier in Ronchamp (70) is currently in the running for the prestigious label.

For the complete list: whc.unesco.org/fr/list

NETWORK HEAD

In 2005, Besançon launched the "Network of Major Vauban Sites" which today includes 12 French cities that, through their architectural heritage, demonstrate the genius of Vauban's skill and engineering.

www.sites-vauban.org/

› Rivotte Gate



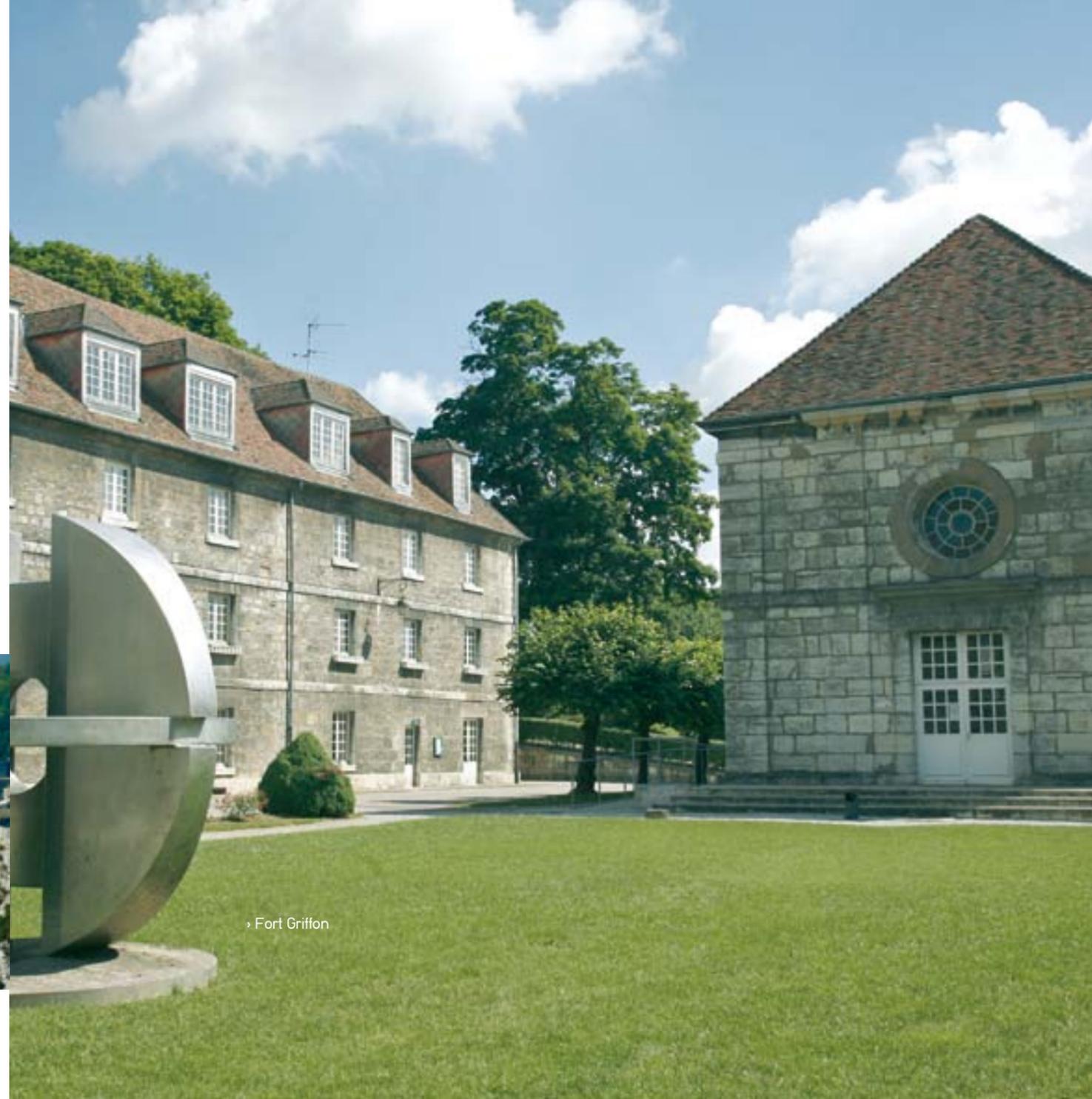
› The Citadel



› The Citadel



› View of the Citadel © E. Emé



› Fort Griffon

SÉBASTIEN LE PRESTRE VAUBAN



Sébastien Le Prestre Vauban was born in May 1633 in Saint-Léger-de-Fouchères (Yonne), in Burgundy, into a family of minor nobility. At 17 he became a cadet in the Prince of Condé's regiment; the prince led the Fronde against Cardinal Mazarin and the regent, Anne of Austria. In 1653, Vauban was taken prisoner and entered the service of Louis XIV, whom he served for 53 years.

When he was 22, Vauban became a commissioned engineer to the king. Vauban had experienced war first-hand and he carefully studied the process of attacking fortresses. He developed and codified a siege method, breaking it down into a logical sequence of 12 phases. This work was published 30 years after his death in his Treatise on the Attack of Fortresses. He focused his engineering skills on improving fortifications by emphasising a bastioned line to fit the terrain and the phasing of deep defence.

Vauban knew very well that no stronghold is truly impregnable: its main role was to serve as a deterrent and sieges were to be avoided as much as possible.

On 14 January 1703, Louis XIV appointed him Marshal of France for his service to the kingdom. Vauban died on 30 March 1707 in Paris, at the age of 74.

From 1653 to 1703, Vauban was involved in 48 sieges, reworked 130 fortresses and built 30 from the ground up. He left behind him around 30 plans, which were put into practice after his death.

At the Citadel there is an exhibition dedicated entirely to its engineer.

Source : www.sites-vauban.org/

MUSEUM BYWAYS

Besançon is the political and economic capital of Franche-Comté, and it is also a cultural capital! Besides the museums at the Citadel and the bucolic Museum of Franche-Comté Houses in Nancray, there are two Besançon museums that are among the finest in France. The Museum of Fine Arts and Archaeology is one, and the Museum of Time, which is housed in the sumptuous setting of Granvelle Palace, is the other. Let's go on a guided tour...



› The Museum of Time

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS: A PRECURSOR

Here we are, at Revolution Square: it's been recently renovated. We're standing in a vast, bright plaza surrounded by elegant facades in the blue-beige stone so characteristic of Besançon. Across from the fountain, you can see a long, imposing building of unique architecture: this is the Museum of Fine Arts and Archaeology.

Its first collection is a story in itself. Towards the end of the 17th century, Jean-Baptiste Boisot, abbot of Saint Vincent's Monastery, purchased the art collections and library assembled in the 16th century by the Lord Chancellor of Charles V, Nicolas de Granvelle, and his son Antoine. In 1694, Boisot left his collections to the Benedictines of St. Vincent's, on the condition that they be made available to the public. A century before the creation of museums in France, Besançon had the first public art collection!

That first collection was enriched through a number of donations and legacies and in 1843 it was moved into the old Corn Exchange Building.

In the 1960s, Louis Miquel, a disciple of Le Corbusier, renovated the museum: he installed a concrete spiral walkway. The building is a timeless structure of raw concrete carcass and natural colour, and within it, you follow a chronological path from prehistory to the present.

Bellini, Goya, Fragonard, Courbet, Bronzino, representing the major European movements from the 14th to the 20th century, are part of the permanent collection of the museum. There are other treasures, too: sculptures by Clésinger, Rodin and Morelet, and a collection of 5,500 drawings by artists such as Carracci, Jordaens, and Géricault. And there are always fascinating temporary exhibits.

The Museum will be renovated soon.

www.musee-arts-besancon.org/

THE OUTSIDE-OF-TIME MUSEUMS OF THE CITADEL

The Citadel is a vibrant place, full of culture, exchanges, events and learnings. Once you pass within its walls, time falls away and its museum exhibitions and your explorations become all the more vivid and memorable.

- **The Museum** is comprised of the zoo that is home to many endangered species, the aquarium, the insectarium and noctarium.
- **The Franche-Comté Museum** presents its extensive collection through the eyes of an ethnographer.
- **The Resistance and Deportation Museum** is a place of remembrance and vivid memories of a tragic time that is in our not-so-distant past. Painful episodes of the war, the Vichy regime, deportation... and then liberation: this exhibit is both educational and very moving.
- **The Vauban Area**, not exactly a museum since it only displays reproductions of famous paintings, explores the genius of Vauban and his works in Besançon.





› Victor Hugo's house



› The Museum of Time



› The Franche-Comté Museum



› The Museum of Franche-Comté Houses in Nancray

THE MUSEUM OF TIME: UNPRECEDENTED

A Renaissance palace, both exquisite and sumptuous: such is the setting of this extraordinary museum. This museum is unique in that it brings together a fine arts collection, and a scientific collection focused on the measurement of time. In the fine arts, you will find the beautiful furniture, paintings and tapestries that describe the prestigious destiny of Nicolas and Antoine de Granvelle, staunch servants of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, and leading politicians on the 16th-century European stage. And as for time and its measurement, all the expertise of Franche-Comté watchmakers is to be seen here.

Besançon's unique relationship with time began in 1793 thanks to the vision of a watch dealer, Laurent Mégevand. And by the Second Empire, 700 Swiss watchmakers exercised their trade in nearly 400 workshops in Besançon. The School of Horology and the Observatory, built at the end of the 19th century, made the city the capital of French watchmaking.

The Museum takes you from the first mechanical clocks with escapement mechanisms and the foliot oscillator to Pierre Curie's research on the piezoelectricity of quartz, and then from quartz to the atom: measuring goes from the infinitely large to the infinitely small.

Among its treasures, the Museum of Time has a unique collection: valuable 16th-century table clocks, 19th-century pocket watches, the first jewellery watches of great technological and aesthetic refinement, the famous Leroy 01 and its 24 complications (the watch which was for nearly a century the most «complicated in the world»)... In all, there is a total of 200 rare pieces on display for you to explore time and the watchmaking history of Besançon.



› An L. Leroy Gold Watch

A DAY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AT THE OPEN-AIR MUSEUM OF FRANCHE-COMTÉ HOUSES

Just minutes from the town centre, come visit a place where you can see Franche-Comté heritage: homes and old rural traditions. From the farmhouses in the Saône Plain at the foothills of the Vosge Mountains to farmhouses in the Jura Mountains, from the half-timbered houses of the Jura's Bresse to those of Sundgau, not to mention the smokehouses of Haut-Doubs, your walk is a rich educational experience and a refreshing change of scenery. The Museum is teeming with events, workshops and exhibitions for the whole family. What better way to spend a day than in the wide-open Franche-Comté countryside, just a hop, skip and a jump from the city centre!

VICTOR HUGO'S HOUSE

The birthplace of Victor Hugo opened its doors in September 2013. It was here that this great man was born on 26 February 1802, and it is here that his commitments and major battles are celebrated.

The home of Victor Hugo is designed to be a living space, with educational and appealing exhibits that are accessible to all. It is a place which encourages reflection, by celebrating all the themes dear to the poet and which are still at the heart of today's major social, ideological and political issues. The themes of freedom of expression, poverty, equality and justice, children's education, and freedom of the people of the Republic: all these are presented on the first floor. The ground floor highlights Hugo and his hometown, and the vaulted "cellar" or basement has been transformed into a versatile venue for special events.



› The Centre of the Arts

THE CENTRE OF THE ARTS

The Centre of the Arts, open to the public, is located on the left bank of the Doubs at the old river port of Besançon.

This imposing cultural centre houses the CRR (Regional Conservatory of Greater Besançon) and the FRAC (Regional Collection of Contemporary Art of Franche-Comté). It was designed by the Japanese architect Kengo Kuma and is the symbol of "the place where nature and the city meet, where inhabitants and river banks meet and where people meet with culture in its multiple forms".

The Conservatory houses about 80 classrooms and a brand-new 290-seat auditorium built with perfectly-adapted acoustics and set design facilities.

The FRAC has more than 4,600 square metres for its two exhibition halls (400 and 100 square metres), a conference hall and several storerooms for its collections.

The Conservatory and the FRAC work together on the ground floor, which is open to the public. From the Arts Passage, you have access to two reception areas, a 290-metre-square resource centre containing the combined collections of the CRR and the FRAC, a café-brasserie and a bookshop.



› The Centre of the Arts



› Music Festival

BESANÇON ON STAGE: FROM FESTIVALS TO PLAYS AND SHOWS

Besançon delights and thrills in celebrating art in all its forms. Classical music, theatre, dance, street performances, jazz, world music, discoveries, young talent and established artists: Besançon offers a cornucopia of events and moments to share, to remember, to thrill to. There are events for everyone all year round: Besançon is, indeed, the capital of Franche-Comté culture!

THE MUSIC THEATRE

The mission of this 1,100-seat municipal theatre, over two centuries old and located in the heart of the old town, is to provide 'Bisontins' with a season of eclectic, quality shows.

The building was designed by Claude Nicolas Ledoux, architect of the famous Royal Saltworks at Arc-et-Senans, and finished in 1784. Ledoux had his audiences' acoustic and visual experiences in mind as well as their physical comfort and his theatre design was unprecedented for his time. Innovative design and a refined decor made the Music Theatre a centre for cultural exchange. In 1958 it was completely destroyed by fire, and was soon rebuilt in the same spirit; it was renovated in 1995. Comfort for its performers and audiences alike is still its hallmark and its reputation continues to grow throughout the region.

www.leteatre-besancon.fr/

LA RODIA

The latest arrival on the cultural scene in Besançon! La Rodia, technically state-of-the-art and architecturally audacious, opened in January 2011, and it's the place for artists of modern music of all kinds, providing stage, residency, creation, and rehearsal facilities. The building is on the right bank of the Doubs, across from the Citadel; it has filled a huge cultural void and has at the same time injected new life into the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood is centuries old and was an area for industrial development for some time. Today, it is shaking up the status quo, moving smoothly from the industrial to the cultural. Created on the drawing board of architects Denu and Paradon, La Rodia stands on stilts; it has a closed-in, 600 m² esplanade which is sound-proofed and equipped with giant screens, two concert halls (standing capacity of 900 and 320), a lobby bar, an information-resources area, 2 work studios, 3 dressing rooms, a café/bar and an administrative centre.

www.larodia.com/



› The Music Theatre



› The Accrorap Company at the Music Theatre



› La Rodia

BESANÇON MICROPOLIS

The Besançon Micropolis Exhibition Centre is a major feature of the cultural and entertainment landscape of Besançon. It hosts concerts, shows, fairs, exhibitions, conventions and major special events. There are two exhibition/convention halls, and one has a large auditorium: seating capacity of 2,200 or standing capacity of 6,000.

THE BESANÇON-MONTBÉLIARD FRANCHE-COMTÉ ORCHESTRA

The Besançon-Montbéliard Franche-Comté Orchestra was created in 1994 by the City of Besançon, and was directed by Peter Csaba until September 2010. Then, Jean-François Verdier became director, and the Besançon-Montbéliard Franche-Comté Orchestra was created.

The orchestra offers the region a rich and varied lyrical and symphonic season and invites many renowned soloists and artists. Under its new name and its broadened dual-city base, the orchestra has established itself as a key player in the cultural landscape of Besançon and Franche-Comté. It continues to attract new audiences and is venturing out beyond regional boundaries...

The Besançon-Montbéliard Franche-Comté Orchestra is supported by the Ministry of Culture (Franche-Comté DRAC), the Doubs General Council and the Regional Council of Franche-Comté.

THE INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL OF BESANÇON-FRANCHE-COMTÉ

This must-see-and-hear event in the symphonic and lyrical world takes place every autumn in Besançon. The list of performers continues to meet the expectations of audiences whose support is becoming stronger and stronger with every passing year. Since 1948, prestigious orchestras, renowned soloists and famous conductors have performed on the Besançon stage. The Festival took on even more significance in 1951, when the International Competition for Young Conductors was created. This exceptional event brings together competitors from around the world, and for the winners, access to the world's greatest stages is guaranteed. Since the beginnings of the Festival, there has also always been room for creation and contemporary music. For two weeks a year, Besançon, with this exceptional programme, occupies centre stage of the international music world.

www.festival-besancon.com/

› Aldebert at the Micropolis



› Besançon-Montbéliard
Franche-Comté Orchestra

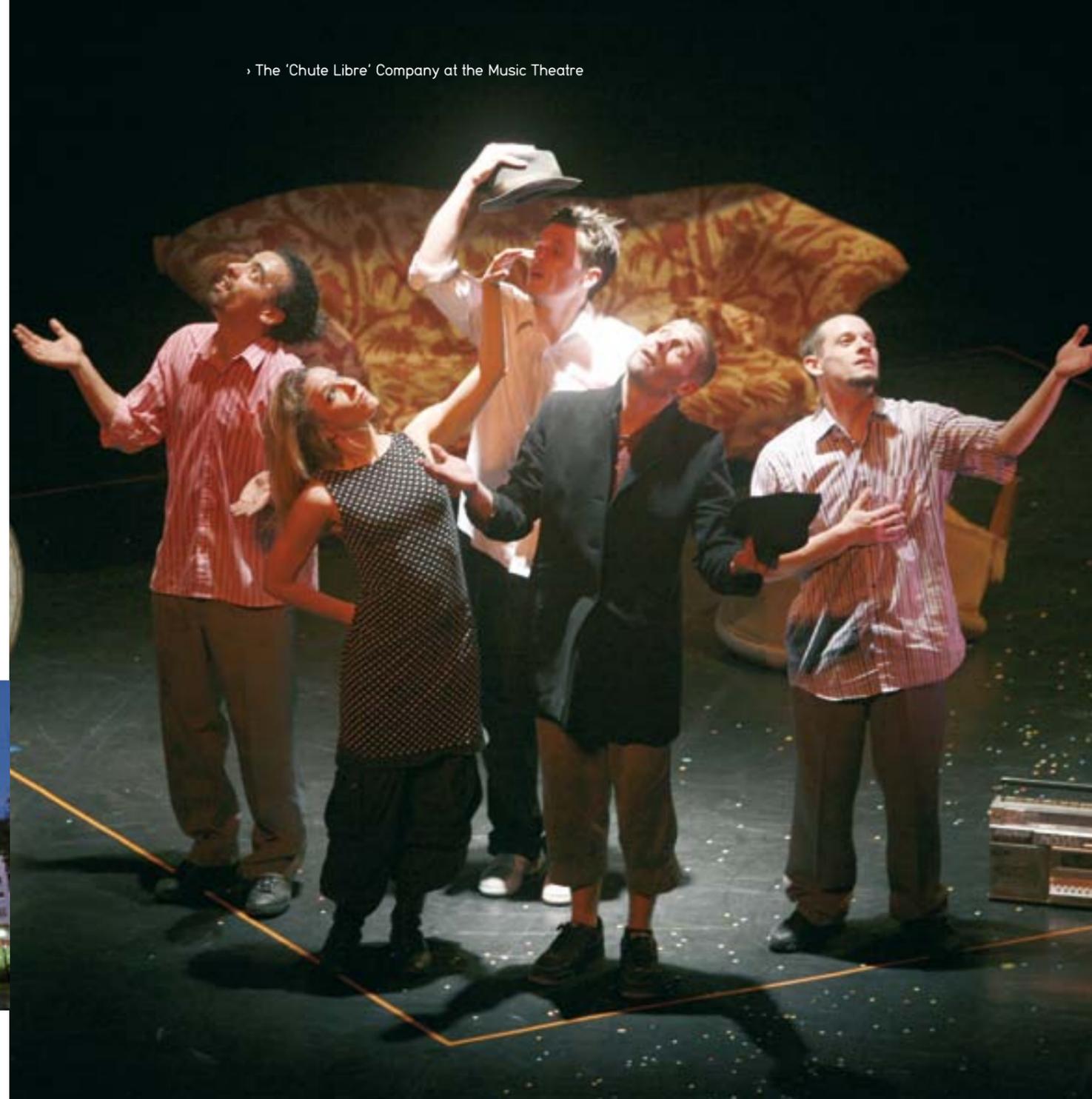


› The Music Theatre



› The National Drama Centre

› The 'Chute Libre' Company at the Music Theatre



GOING OUT... OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

The New Theatre
National Drama Centre

The New Theatre is the only organisation in the region whose primary mission is to encourage theatrical creation. This includes making the theatre accessible to everyone, with affordable prices in halls and on stage, and providing workshops, training and support for local companies.

www.nouveautheatre.fr

The Espace Theatre

The Espace Theatre is a small national theatre, located since 1982 in the populous suburb of Planoise. It is more than a theatre because it offers more than plays both beyond and inside its 4 walls, it keeps close contact with its public and steadily maintains its high level of artistic quality and attention to emerging forms.

The Bacchus Theatre

In a picturesque neighbourhood near the Faculty of Letters, there is a "pocket theatre" born from the boldness and passion of an independent company. Fiercely independent! They provide performances, workshops and creations in a programme that takes you from Feydau to Beckett before you get totally caught up in the ambiance of a zany cabaret.

www.theatre-bacchus.fr

The Franche-Comte Jazz
and Improvised Music Festival

This festival, organised by ASPRO-IMPRO, has been happening in late June or early July since 1981. And the Wide-open Music Festival has been happening in autumn since 2000.

<http://aspro-impro.tumblr.com/jfc>

TGV GéNéRiQ

The new Rhine-Rhone metropolis (about a dozen cities connected by the Rhine-Rhone TGV) now has a festival that matches its geographical size. In December, some of today's stars make a stop in Besançon. You see them, of course, in concert halls, but not only there. TGV GéNéRiQ is in cafés, libraries...



› Aldebert

MEET THE PEOPLE FROM BESANÇON: THE 'BISONTINS'

They say the Franche-Comté lot are rebellious, anti-establishment, daring, utopians, creative... And it also has to be said that 'Bisontins' do their region proud. From one century to another, from science to the stage, from literature to politics, from architecture to stadiums, Bisontins of birth and adoption have left their mark on history. Our hall of fame contains famous and perhaps not-as-famous people, all of strong character.

Charles FOURIER (1772-1837)

After working in trade and banking, Charles Fourier, philosopher and utopian economist, designed plans for a harmoniously built city, a Phalanstère (Phalanstery), whose citizens would find personal and professional fulfilment in their work. This economic, social and human reform project aimed at ensuring an ideal life for mankind, but attempts to bring this to fruition failed. Fourier was born in a 16th-century house, Nos. 81 and 83, Grande Rue. It was partially demolished during the construction of what is today rue Moncey.

Jean-Charles-Emmanuel NODIER (1780-1844)

Charles Nodier, journalist, writer and leader of the Romantics, moved to Paris in 1813, and in 1833, he was elected to the Académie Française. He frequently mentioned the charms of his native province in his writings. He was born 29 April 1780, most likely in a house - no longer extant - on Victor Hugo Square (site of the current No. 7), and spent his childhood in the house of his grandfather, the contractor Joseph Nodier, rue Neuve (now No. 11, rue Charles Nodier). He and Victor Hugo met on several occasions at reviews and critiques and while travelling; the two Bisontins developed a sincere and loyal friendship.

Victor HUGO (1802-1885)

Due to one of the military postings of his father, then General of the Empire, the Hugo family settled in the Doubs for a time. Victor was thus born in Besançon, the youngest of three children, at 140 Grande Rue. His godmother, with whom he remained in contact after the family left Besançon, lived at No. 14, rue des Granges.

*This century was but two years old! Rome replaced Sparta,
Already Napoleon was emerging from within Bonaparte,
(...)*

*In Besançon, that ancient town of Spain,
Tossed to the ever-flowing breeze like grain,
Was born a child both Breton and Lorraine,
A child with neither hue nor sight nor sound,
(...)*

*This child whom life was wiping from its page
(Not one day would be added to his age)
Was myself.*

(Les feuilles d'automne, Autumn Leaves, 1831. With thanks to translators E.H. and A.M. Blackmore)

Pierre-Joseph PROUDHON (1809-1865)

Born 15 January 1809 in Besançon at No.22, rue du Petit Battant, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was a polemicist, journalist, economist and sociologist all at the same time.

He became famous because of his quote "Owning property is thieving!" in his memoir (his first major work), *What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government*, published in 1840.



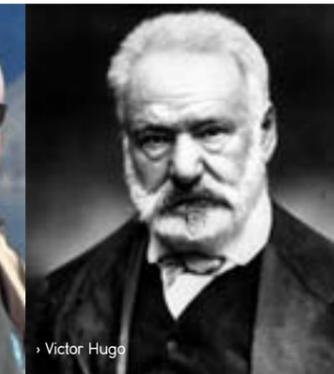
› Charles Fourier



› Jean Charles Emmanuel Nodier



› Claude Loris



› Victor Hugo



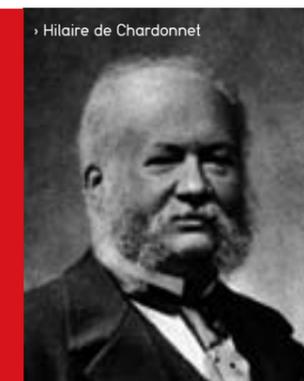
› Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

Hilaire DE CHARDONNET (1839-1924)

Hilaire de Chardonnet, manufacturer and chemist, invented a method of manufacturing artificial silk in 1884, thus creating a new industry. The material was called Rayon. To put the method into operation, the Chardonnet Silkworks was set up in Prés-de-Vaux, along the Doubs, which provided the quantities of water needed for industrial production. The factory went into production on 1 June 1892. It was bought in 1954 by Rhone Poulenc Textile. The name was changed to Rhodia and it specialised in the manufacture of Nylon and Tergal thread. The factory closed down in 1981. A monument was erected in memory of the Count of Chardonnet on Avenue d'Helvetie. The bust is an enlargement of a sculpture made by his daughter Anne. The birthplace of Hilaire de Chardonnet, the Hôtel Petit-de-Marivat (built in 1732 to the plans of the Parisian architect Jean-François Blondel), is at No. 2 Place Jean-Cornet.

Auguste (1862-1954) and Louis LUMIÈRE (1864-1948)

Although they did not invent the word "cinematographer" (it was created by Léon Bouly in 1892), the two brothers were still the inventors of the technology and the commercial exploitation of cinematography in 1895. They also made significant improvements to photography. They were born at No. 1, Saint Quentin Square (now Victor Hugo Square); their father, Antoine, was a photographer and his studio was in the courtyard of No. 59, rue des Granges (formerly the Dames de Battant Convent). The Lumière family moved to Lyon in 1870.



› Hilaire de Chardonnet



› Auguste et Louis Lumière



› Raphaël Jacoulot



› Sidonie Gabrielle Colette



› Khedafi Djelkhir

Sidonie Gabrielle COLETTE (1873-1954)

"In Sentimental Retirement, there are only two non-fiction portraits: one of my birthplace in Saint-Sauveur-en-Puisaye, and one of the romantic little Bisontin estate that was mine. The hand that penned the word-pictures on the pages of this book did so well, that just glancing over them takes me right there, and I'm climbing the hill, slamming the gate, twisting a tendril on the arbour as I pass through, breathing in the wisteria with the shadow of the cat against my skirt, I cross the threshold, I open one by one the rooms that saw me young and happy, I still live in them..."

The Casamène estate, described in *La Retraite Sentimentale*, takes its inspiration directly from the house in which the novel was partly written. The house "with the small carved marble pediment (...), simple but not without grace", was a haven of calm and relaxation for Colette. She spent the summers of 1902-1905 there: no doubt her presence can still be felt there. She was a novelist, journalist and music hall artist: a free woman, who was fantastical, willful and sometimes even scandalous.

Raphaël JACOULOT

Raphaël Jacoulot was born in Besançon in 1971; he is a Fine Arts graduate from Fémis, his hometown. He is a director and screenwriter and one of his latest films, "Avant l'Aube" (Before the Dawn), was released in March 2011 featuring Jean-Pierre Bacri and Ludmila Mickaël in the lead roles.

Reina-Flor OKORI

Reina-Flor Okori was born 2 May, 1980 in Libreville, Gabon, but it was under the colours of Besançon's athletic clubs that she won her French and European championship titles. Her speciality is the 100m hurdles event.



› Reina-Flor Okori

AND THERE ARE MORE!!!...

Nicolas PERRENOT DE GRANVELLE (1486-1550)
Lord Chancellor and First Advisor to Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor

ANTOINE PERRENOT DE GRANVELLE (1517-1586)
Son of Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle, Cardinal of Granvelle, minister and viceroy of Naples, diplomat, state advisor to Charles V and then to Philip II of Spain.

Louis Jean RÉSAL
Designer of the Alexandre III and Mirabeau bridges in Paris, born in 1854 on rue Renan.

Tristan BERNARD
Playwright and novelist, born in 1866 at 23, Grande Rue.

Claude LORIUS
A glaciologist renowned for his studies of the composition of air bubbles trapped in polar ice: climate variation can be traced as far back as a million years! Born 25 February 1932 in Besançon.

Ghani YALOUZ
Greco-Roman wrestler, born in 1968. Runner-up in 1989 and 1994, European Champion and Champion of France several times, he won a silver medal at the Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996. He has been a Besançon resident for a long time.

Khedafi DJELKHIR
Born 26 October 1983 in Besançon, boxer, runner-up in the European Championship in 2004 and silver medalist at the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008.

Damien JOUILLEROT
Born 23 September 1985 in Besançon. Actor with an ever-youthful look, he has starred in *Mr. Batignole*, *Rrrrr*, *Malabar Princess*, *The Girl and the Wolves*, *Pink and Black* and has appeared in many TV films.

Guillaume ALDEBERT
Singer-songwriter born in Paris on 7 July 1973, he arrived in Besançon at a very young age and lives here full time when not on tour!



THE CITY OF TIME: A HIGH-PRECISION STOP FOR MICRO- AND NANOTECHNOLOGIES

Crowned capital of French watches at the 1860 World Fair, Besançon saw it all and experienced everything during the French and international watchmaking era: from phenomenal success to the virtual extinction of its major trade. But the expertise and passion for high precision have remained intact. Besançon is now shifting to micro- and nanotechnologies. As for the watchmakers, they never really all left Besançon. Some have even moved back. Listen... the heart of Besançon is ticking once again...

FROM THE FIRST WATCH FACTORY...

It all began with the vision of a clock and watch dealer from Geneva, Laurent Mégevand. He began his career with watches as a master watch case builder. He married Marianne Breguet (of the Breguet family of clock/watchmakers, internationally renowned), daughter of the pastor from Le Locle, Switzerland; he settled there as a watch dealer. In 1793, at age 39, he crossed the border into France with 80 Swiss watchmakers, all in their country's disgrace because they supported the French Revolution. They went to Besançon, where Mégevand, with his knowledge and experience, ambition and innovative ideas, established a French clock/watchmaking factory. He was supported by his fellow pro-revolutionaries: Count Mirabeau, the Marquis Nicolas de Condorcet and Pierre-Joseph Briot (founder of the Jacobin Club in Besançon). Manufacturing led to subcontracting, and at one point there were 700 Swiss watchmakers and 400 workshops in Besançon. Though Mégevand was financially ruined and quickly went bankrupt, the clock/watchmaking industry itself was solidly established in Besançon and the Doubs. Production increased by 70% in ten years and reached its peak in 1883 with a production of 500,000 parts. In 1880, the Besançon Chamber of Commerce announced that 90% of French clock/watchmaking took place in Besançon. The city hosted a world fair in 1860 and was crowned the capital of French watchmaking.

... TO THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

Mechanisation began to develop as of 1889 with the creation of factories that produced mechanical driving parts. Abbot Faivre founded his first school in the Petites Carmes Convent in the Battant Quarter in 1844. The Municipal School of Clock/Watchmaking was opened in Revolution Square in 1862, and its student/staff creations received many awards during the 1867, 1878 and 1889 world fairs. Besançon's success and reputation were solidified further with the opening of a new facility on Avenue Villarceau, which included a school, the Chronometer Institute, and a jewellers section. The Besançon National School of Clock/Watchmaking was inaugurated on 2 July 1933 by President Lebrun.

› An Antide Janvier Clock



› The Old Municipal School of Clock/Watchmaking , Revolution Square



› The National School of Clock/Watchmaking/ Jules-Haag Lycée © Anne Chauveau

THE LIP STORY

Three letters: a unique name and a symbol of social conflict, representative of the atmosphere of the 70s. The Lipmann Brothers Clock Factory had its beginnings in 1807 when Emmanuel Lipmann was made famous because of a pocket watch that he gave to Napoleon Bonaparte. In time, the company became known as LIP, making watchmaking history around the world. Electric watches, quartz watches, design watches: LIP was always on the cutting edge. Yet in 1973, a victim of competition from Asia, the company filed for bankruptcy. There followed nine months of social unrest and support from across France for the 180 employees in Besançon; they finally left the factory after a long, difficult conflict.

THE TICK-TOCK COMEBACK

The clock/watchmakers never really all left Besançon. Some have even come back. From some big names to more local ones, factories and workshops are reconnecting with the fine tradition of watchmaking in Besançon. Companies such as Utinam, L. Leroy and Breitling & Cie have all stamped their creations and repairs with a proud and legitimate “Made in Besançon”.

TIME IN FIGURES

For the national turnover in the clock/watchmaking sector, Franche-Comté’s accounts for 67 %, which in 2009 amounted to 157 million euros, according to the French Chamber of Clock/Watchmaking of Franche-Comté. With 89 clock/watchmaking establishments and a total of 2,120 employees (70 % of the national sector), Franche-Comté has a skilled and highly reputed workforce. Besançon has reclaimed its status as the capital of French clock/watchmaking.

THE EMERGENCE OF NEW SECTORS OF EXCELLENCE

The infinitely small and high-precision technologies have reoriented Besançon’s identity towards an expertise that, in the end, is very close to that of watchmaking. At a time when miniaturisation is required in all industrial sectors, micro- and nanotechnologies are a perfect fit for Greater Besançon. Many high-performance companies and research centres have established themselves here. Some examples: A microtechnology cluster, the leading French centre for micromechanical cutting, a biomedical engineering centre, ticketing, electronic banking, plastics processing, automation, robotics firms... More than ever, Besançon expertise is setting the standard. In the field of time-frequency analysis, NASA recognises that the measuring devices designed by Besançon researchers are the world’s most reliable.

The microtechnology cluster is located at the Temis Business Park, and promotes business competitiveness through R&D and innovation.

www.polemicrotechniques.fr/

MICRONORA

The International Microtechnology Trade Fair is held in Besançon at the Micropolis in September of each even-numbered year.

www.micronora.com

ENSM

The National School of Mechanics and Microtechnology: this is where the creative minds of young engineers and researchers obsessed with high precision and the infinitely small brainstorm away. Since 1902, Besançon has offered an exceptional scientific, technical and industrial environment that has forged the reputation of this school which today trains over 900 students. It is the only school in France that places such a strong emphasis on micro- and nanotechnologies.

THE ASTRONOMICAL CLOCK

This incredible clock, built by Auguste-Lucien Vêrité in the late 19th century in Saint John’s Cathedral, is considered a masterpiece of the genre. It has 30,000 moving parts and shows 122 indications that are all interdependent (times, dates, seasons, lengths of day and night, the time of day at 20 locations around the world, number of lunar and solar eclipses, signs of the zodiac, date of Easter (epact: age of the moon on 1 January of each year, indicated by the number of days to be added to the lunar year to make it consistent with the solar year), dates and times of tides, solar time, solstices...)

It took two years to build and three years of adjustments and improvements before it was “set into motion”.



› A Quartz LIP Watch: The Museum of Time Collection. Besançon

› The Micronora Expo

› IMASONIC Company

› A Utinam Watch

› Temis Innovation

› The ENSMM

› The Astronomical Clock

› Breitling Company

THE MUSEUM OF TIME

This museum, housed in a remarkable Renaissance palace, is unique. On display is an in-depth view of the clock/watchmaking expertise of Besançon and Franche-Comté. Clocks... from the astronomical ones to the frequency ones, from the quartz piezoelectric-effect ones to the atomic ones, from the incredibly large ones to the incredibly tiny ones of microtechnology: everything here is in moderation.

SUNDIALS

“The sun lies, the clock tells the truth”. There is a time-telling device on every street corner, or almost. There are dozens of sundials on the walls of the old town, and most of them add some philosophical reflection to time-telling by the quotes they display.

THE *GNOMON OF SAINT MADELEINE'S CHURCH

In the 18th century, Mr. Bizot made a sundial using a small hole in the centre of an opaque pane of stained glass at the back of the church. Sunlight passed through this hole connecting hour lines and hour numbers in Roman numerals engraved in a fan shape on the flagstones of the church.

*(the part of the sundial that casts a shadow)

THE OBSERVATORY

At the request of Besançon watchmakers who wanted to match the accuracy of their fierce Swiss competitors, the city built an astronomical, meteorological and chronometrical observatory; it was finished between 1883 and 1884. In addition to producing the exact time, the observatory provides watchmakers with an independent certification organisation, which offers a wide range of services that includes the inspection of watches.

THE AWAKENING OF THE VIPER

As of the 19th century, the viper's head stamp awarded by the Observatory of Besançon was a world reference. In 1970, given the surge of quartz, the certifying body in Besançon suspended its timepiece certification activities. From then on it was the COSC (Swiss Official Chronometer Inspection) that set the standards and certified watchmakers' mechanisms. As the only French body authorised to judge the stability of a watch over time, the Observatory has recently resumed this function. The prestigious L. Leroy Company has recently relocated to Besançon, and it leads the way, proudly displaying the viper's head seal on their watches, attesting to the ultra precision of Besançon. For here, at the Observatory, atomic time is measured to the billionth of a second.



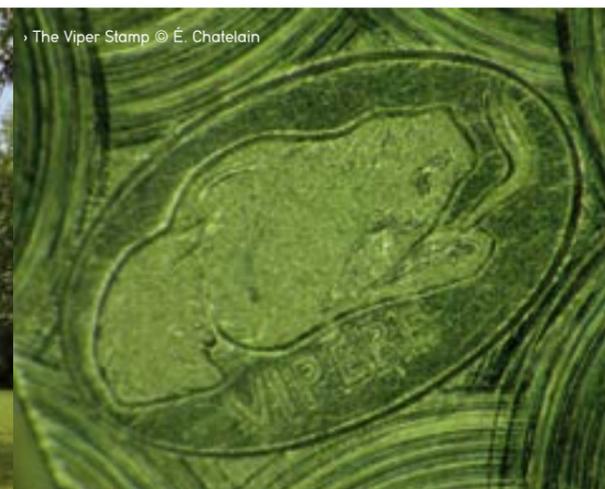
› The Gnomon of Saint Madeleine's Church



› The Museum of Time



› The Observatory © A. Chauveau



› The Viper Stamp © É. Chatelain



› Micropolis © Micronora

BESANÇON, A DESTINATION FOR BUSINESS TOURISM!

Besançon, repeatedly awarded for its quality of life, its parks and its rich heritage, has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2008!

Besançon is an ideal city for business tourism.

It is a university city, the City of Time, the world centre for time-frequency analysis and it is recognised as a centre of excellence for its innovations in the fields of nanotechnology, automation and robotics, biomedical engineering...

In addition to all these technological developments, Besançon has still more assets to attract a business clientele. It has an exceptional natural and historical heritage, a large choice of accommodation to meet the needs and requirements of clients, extensive and expanding meeting and reception facilities, as well as entertainment and cultural events that are as varied as they are renowned.

The Micropolis, just ten minutes from the town centre, offers both a convention centre and exhibition grounds. A surface area of more than 110,000 m² is available for businesses and professionals, perfect for large events of up to 2,200 people.

Committed to sustainable development, Besançon-Congrès (Besançon-Conventions) has signed a charter for Quality and Sustainable Development with France-Congrès.

The Visitor and Convention Information Centre, part of Besançon-Congrès, is at your service for making all your business events a success.



› Micropolis



› Sparkling Bisontine Water

BESANÇON: OUT-OF-THE-ORDINARY!

They have called her proud, rebellious, resistant and resilient, as are her famous citizens; she is also bold and has always stood out from the rest. To experience Besançon for yourself, you may have to push open doors, take a good look around, sometimes climb tortuous stairs, dare to go back into those rear courtyards: be on the qui vive to discover their treasures. And what unique treasures!... Elements of architecture and decor, places and objects of daily life; they are an integral part of Besançon and reveal her identity in their own special way.

Out-of-the-ordinary and 100 % Bisontine!

EXCEPTIONAL NIGHTS

Spend a night of your dreams in an exceptional place: Besançon's irresistible invitation! Step out of time into a delightfully romantic 18th-century atmosphere at the foot of the Citadel and just across from the Astronomical Clock, or into the luminous, light decor of the contemporary guesthouse on rue Bersot, or be rocked gently by the Doubs River on a houseboat, or walk into this mansion, set between front and rear courtyards in the city centre (a historic property, beautifully renovated, where Colette, Georges Sand and even Prosper Merimée stayed). There is so much to choose from!

BISONTO-BYZANTINE

There is only one basilica in Besançon: the St. Ferjeux Basilica. It is dedicated to St. Ferjeux and his brother St. Ferréol, the patron saints of the city, who came in the 2nd century CE from their native Greece to evangelise Vesontio and the Gallo-Roman Sequani (the first people to inhabit the Loop). The basilica was built over the grotto where the two saints are entombed. Their reliquaries can be seen from the crypt under the church. The first basilica was demolished and the remarkable Romano-Byzantine style basilica that you see today was built in its place. Construction lasted from 1884 to 1901.

WALL OF IMAGES

Louis Pasteur, the Lumière brothers, Victor Hugo and even Gustave Courbet: you just need to glance up in Besançon to see famous people from Franche-Comté. Discover this series of trompe l'oeils as you walk around the city.

BESANÇON'S WATER

Would you like another glass of Sparkling Bisontine? Besançon bottles its own municipal water, and you will see its distinctive bottle on tables in bars and restaurants: still or sparkling!
To be consumed without moderation...

THE BELL-RINGER

The Jacquemart (an old-time automaton) at Saint Madeleine's Church, in the Battant Quarter: the legendary bell-ringer for the Bousbots (as the inhabitants of Battant are called) smokes a pipe and rings in the hours.

In the olden days, his ringing alerted the neighbourhood to dangers.

› A Charming Hotel in the City Centre



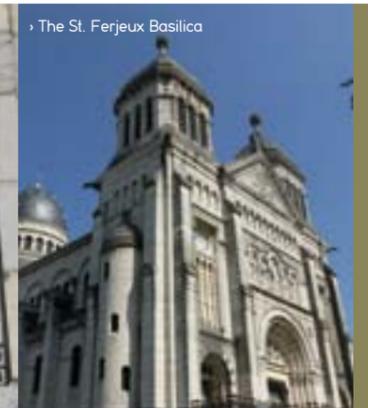
› Like in a Cocoon: Bed and Breakfast on a Barge



› A Contemporary Guesthouse in the City Centre



› The Victor Hugo Trompe-l'oeil



› The St. Ferjeux Basilica

LINGUISTICS

The CLA, Centre for Applied Linguistics, is a modern Tower of Babel. And not just for its unique architecture! Since 1958, the CLA has been recognised as the best centre for learning French as a foreign language. Four thousand students a year come to learn French and also English, Russian, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese, Portuguese, Chinese, German...

STEAMBOATS...

The Marquis Jouffroy d'Abbans, a naval engineer, stands on the Veil Picard Embankment, surveying the Doubs. He is life-size and cuts a very elegant figure, cast in bronze in 1998 by Pascal Coupot.

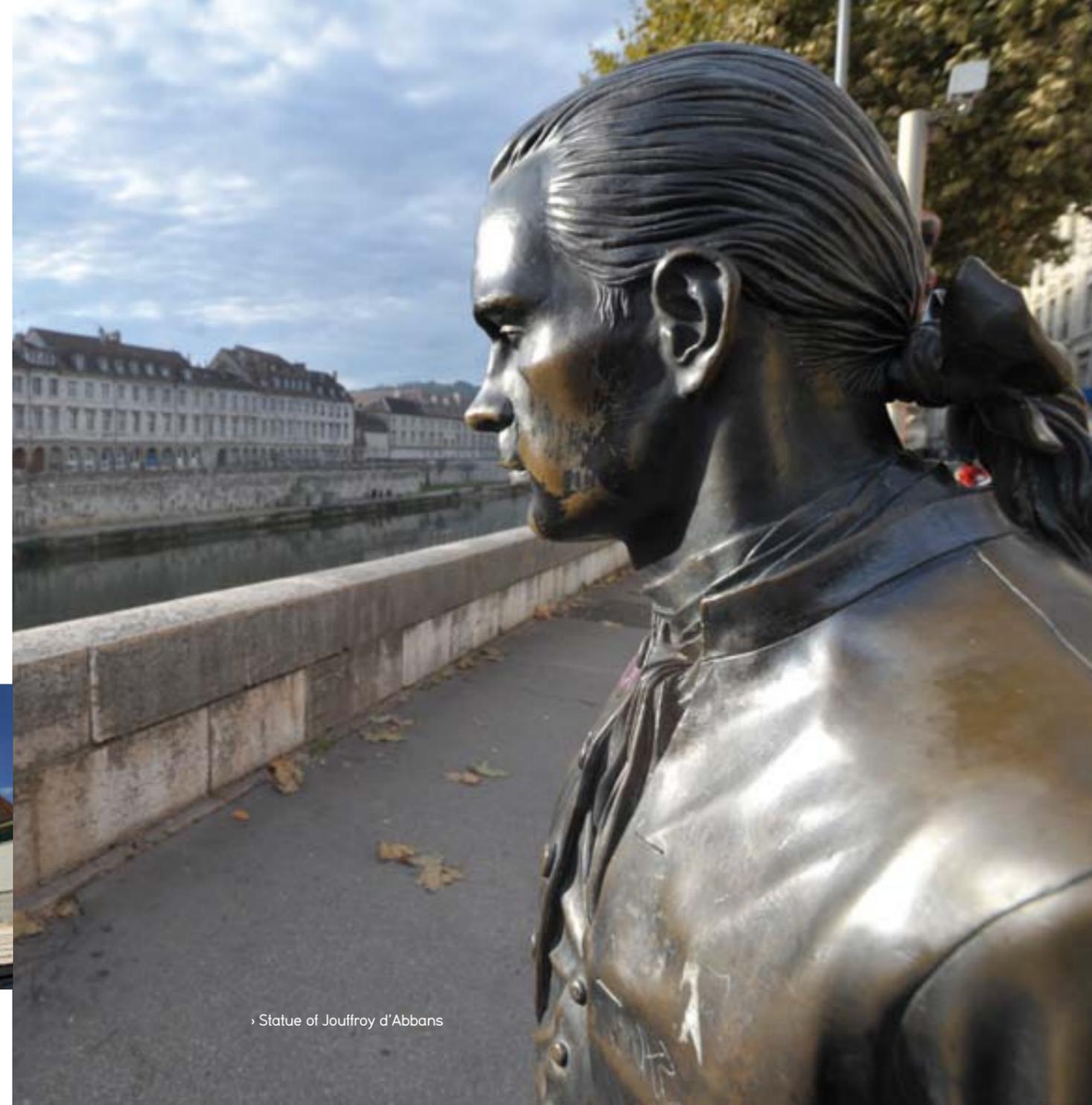
The sculptor pays tribute to the inventor of the paddle-wheel steamboat. Far from the Mississippi where these famous boats sailed, it was on the Doubs in 1778 that Jouffroy d'Abbans carried out the first navigation tests with his boat, the Palmipède.

SECRET PASSAGES

The courtyards and inner courtyards of Besançon contain all kinds of treasures: let's go to the courtyard of the Hôtel Champagney (a mansion belonging to the de Champagney family) on rue Battant. Here, there are half-timbered houses, with stairways and passageways that make (almost) secret passages. The tiny, narrow passageways and the steep streets and stairs are reminders of a city that lives with hills.

A CONTEMPORARY COURTHOUSE

The architect Henri Gaudin designed the new Courthouse, which opened in 2003. A vast interior esplanade is surrounded by a decidedly contemporary building that is connected to the Court of Appeals in the rear, which was designed by Hugues Sambin in 1585. It was originally the Besançon Parliament.



› Statue of Jouffroy d'Abbans

EVEN MORE HIDDEN TREASURES!

The Holy Spirit Gallery

A frieze of carved wood adorns the gallery of the former Holy Spirit Hospice, which is now a Protestant church (Fine-Arts Covered Market, at No. 5, rue Goudimel). While some of the sculpture (especially the figures of monsters swallowing the ends of beams) is reminiscent of the Middle Ages, the work dates from the Renaissance, demonstrated by the cherubs, scroll-work and garlands which ribbon around the frieze of the passageway.



› The Holy Spirit Gallery

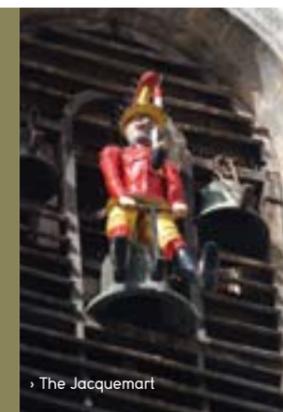
The Bregille Funicular

The funicular, now listed as a Historic Monument, was designed in 1899 by Emile Picard. It was built so that the clients at the spa, called Besançon-les-Bains at the bottom of Bregille Hill, would have access to the woods and city parks. The line operated until 1987. The lower station and a carriage have been restored.

The Path of the Senses

Take a journey through the city centre from one artisanal workshop to another. Lute-makers, jewellers, bookbinders: discover the secrets of how they work...

Please ask the Visitor and Convention Information Centre for information.



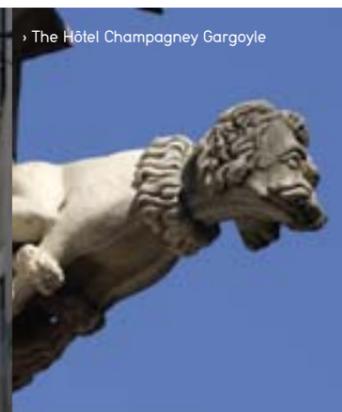
› The Jacquemart



› The CLA



› Champagney Passage



› The Hôtel Champagney Gargoyle



› The Courthouse



GREEN, GREEN, GREEN

With 2,408 hectares of green, including 2,000 hectares of forests, Besançon asserts its rightful status as the first green city in France, with 204 m² of green space per capita. While Chailluz Forest alone accounts for one quarter of the total area of the town, green is all around and is displayed in every possible hue right into the heart of the city, even in its narrowest of tiny lanes. Gardens, parks, promenades, tree-lined embankments ... so many invitations to leave the car keys in your pocket and walk headed into the wind, straight for the greenery.



› The Gare d'Eau Park

GARDEN DETOURS...

Clos Barbizier: created in 1988 in the protection afforded by the ramparts of Fort Griffon in picturesque Battant Quarter, it has a large variety of roses.

Gare d'Eau Park: between the Doubs and fortified bastions, this 2-hectare park was landscaped around the basins of an old port that was converted into inland waterways in 1833, but then abandoned for a long time.

Chamars Promenade: this space inherits its name from a contraction of the Champs de Mars (Field of Mars). First fortified by Vauban, it was at one time landscaped with waterfalls, an aviary, a café and public baths. From that flamboyant era we have today a public garden, two guard-houses, huge stone vases by sculptor Jean-Baptiste Boutry and hundred-year-old trees with lush foliage.



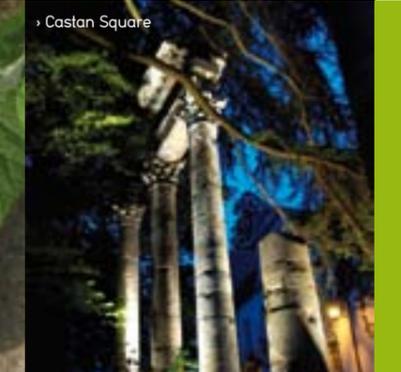
› Botanical Gardens



› Micaud Park © E. Eme



› Garden of the Senses and Scents



› Castan Square

Glacis Promenade: created in the mid-19th century and landscaped by Brice Michel and architect Maurice Bouterin, the Promenade offers a panoramic view over the city.

The Botanical Garden: the first botanical garden was created in 1580; proof, if proof were needed, that the Bisontins did not wait for green to be popular before acting! Over time, a dozen different sites were chosen and then abandoned, when finally, in 1957, Leclerc Square became THE place to plant and stay put. The Garden's aims are cultural, scientific and conservational; it is jointly owned by the City and the University.

Granvelle Promenade: the gazebo, Wallace Fountain, the statues, colonnades and the distinguished buildings that surround it lend undeniable charm to this vast square in the city centre. It was part of the private grounds of Granvelle Palace (16th century); the city bought it in 1712 and opened it to the public.

The Casino gardens, Micaud Park and Helvétie Promenade: on the right bank of the Doubs, these public gardens, landscaped with lawns and flowering leafy lanes are very 1900's in atmosphere. Micaud Park, 3 hectares, has over 400 trees including a large-flowered magnolia and a lacinated beech. In 1987, the Garden of the Senses and Scents was added to Helvétie Promenade. The Garden is especially dedicated to the visually impaired; plants were selected for their specific smells, or touch, and signs are in both Braille and print.

Observatory Park: created in 1904 at the request of Auguste Lebeuf, director of the astronomical observatory. Here, you will see a copper beech, a weeping beech, sweet chestnut and pine trees.

Castan Square: a handkerchief garden at the foot of the Citadel containing ancient ruins, shrouded in mystery: such is the setting of this little emerald gem in the heart of the city.

FORESTS AT THE GATES OF THE CITY

Chailluz Forest: the city owns this 1,625-hectare, mainly hardwood forest. The Forest is just ten minutes from the centre and it has an animal park, a fitness trail and many footpaths.

Bregille Forest graces a hill across from the Citadel. Its 90 hectares overlook the right bank of the Doubs Loop; there are 8 km of walkways and a fitness trail.



› Glacis Promenade



› Granvelle Square



› The Nancray Museum of Franche-Comté Houses



› Lizard Orchid © E. Eme

GREAT ESCAPES

Besançon has over **200 km of hiking trails:** GR 59 (a national hiking trail in Franche-Comté and the Jura) and the local GR, which includes the Malate, the Mazagran path, and the hills, cliffs and forts that surround the city. They are all excuses to put on your walking shoes.

At the 15-hectare **open-air Museum of Franche-Comté Houses in Nancray** there are about 30 traditional Franche-Comté buildings reassembled stone by stone. It is a living museum that conserves the architectural heritage of Franche-Comté... and it does even more. There are reconstructed biotopes of each micro-region, and themed gardens: kitchen gardens in the mountains, gardens of almost-forgotten vegetables, of fibre and dye plants...

The Saône Wetlands: on the first Jura plateau, above Besançon, there is a large polje (a large flat plain found in karst regions), with a singular water ecosystem. The Wetlands covers about 800 hectares with an average altitude of 380 metres. This wetland is key for the drinking water supply of 51, 500 inhabitants of Besançon (nearly half the population).

Explore amazing and mysterious karst forms, shapes, columns, holes.....at the gates of Besançon: descend into **the Osselle Caves** or **the Poudrey Chasm** or wander along **the Mérey-sous-Montrond hiking trail**.



› View of the Doubs

THE FRENCH CAPITAL OF BIODIVERSITY

Besançon has been awarded the French Capital of Biodiversity in recognition of its green spaces and natural forest that cover 37 % of its surface area. The city has been acclaimed for its active environmental policy, which privileges ecological corridors, the certification of community forests, and the "zero pesticide" policy for its parks and gardens.

The Citadel: Guardian of Biodiversity

One of the (lesser-known) missions of the Natural History Museum of Besançon is to illustrate and preserve biodiversity. And so the species around Franche-Comté (the crayfish, the Rhône Zingel Asper, and the Great Alsace Hamster) receive a lot of attention at the Citadel. Thanks to the Besançon preservation programme, the Citadel is home to more exotic creatures, such as the Hercules Beetle from the Lesser Antilles (a king-size rhinoceros beetle with distinctive behaviour), the rock wallaby, and the bald ibis. You will even find the Madagascan "Panda" and the Sifaka (Crowned Sifaka), extremely rare lemurs who are particularly pampered here. These animals are ex situ ambassadors for their wild fellow creatures, and their precious (even unique) presence helps to ensure the preservation of their species.



› Hercules Beetle © J-Y Robert



› Crowned Sifaka

OH! THE BEAUTIFUL LOOP!

The Doubs Loop deserves a capital letter because it encapsulates Besançon's identity. It is precisely because of this bend in the river, which contours the foot of a hill, that Besançon was born. The first people, who came before the arrival of Julius Caesar, settled this square kilometre, protected both by the river and the steep slopes of Mount Saint Stephen. Today's historical centre is the area that is within the famous Loop and also that which extends to the Battant Quarter, just across the river. First because of a ford, and then because of the first bridge the Romans built, Battant stretched out along the right bank and then up, in perfect counterpoint to the Citadel which has stood for four centuries atop Mount Saint Stephen.

› River Marina



THE DOUBS

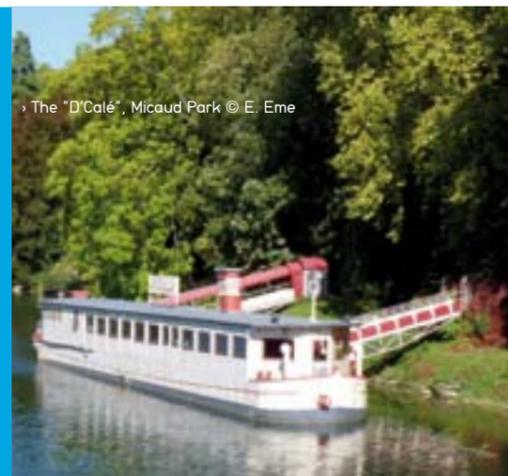
This is an undecided river, which wanders for a while, gets lost, makes an about-face and changes course altogether. From its source at Mouthe on the plateau of the Haut-Doubs to Verdun-sur-le-Doubs where it joins the Saône, it travels 458 km (as the crow flies it is only 90 km). From its point of departure, the Doubs travels to the northeast, leaps down from a height of 27 metres and even goes off on a brief jaunt into Switzerland before it runs to the west. It next heads a few degrees north to Montbeliard, then plots its course towards the southwest. It finally settles down, and drops into a soft green valley. This is where it follows the contours of the hills on which Besançon and its surrounding communities grew before it slips on to Dole and the Saône Plain.

THE RIVER TUNNEL UNDER THE CITADEL

Construction of the river tunnel under the Citadel was begun in 1878 under the direction of an Italian builder based in Lausanne, and it was opened in 1882. The canal connects the Rivotte and Tarragnoz Quarters, sparing barges from going around the whole town via the bend in the Doubs. The canal has a pedestrian walkway. It is a picturesque place, popular with recreational boaters and sightseeing boats.

MARINAS

Greater Besançon has three marinas and over 70 moorings for recreational boating in the heart of the city or on its outskirts. The Deluz Marina is upstream from Besançon and Saint Paul's Mill River Port and Marina is in the town centre. The Centre of the Arts Marina, the most recent, is across from the Citadel, and has moorings for boats of up to 15 metres long. It is a full-service marina for boat maintenance and navigation assistance. For you and your boat, Besançon is a must-stop destination.



› The "D'Calé", Micaud Park © E. Erme



› "Vélocité"



› Vauban Embankment



› Reading on the Vauban Embankment



› Véloroute/Bikeway

TAKING TO THE RIVER...

Whether you take a sightseeing boat or an electric boat, whether you go with a group, with family or solo, taking to the river is a great way to discover Besançon from a different angle and at a different pace.

Electric boats are quiet, easy to handle, stable and accessible to all. They are ecologically respectful to the river and its banks and as you glide along, you have stunning panoramic views of Besançon and its fortifications.

The boats have a maximum capacity of 7, and you can rent them on the half hour at St. Paul's Mill River Port and Marina. Doubs Plaisance: +33 (0)6 71 17 91 29

And for those who would rather leave the rudder to a captain, sightseeing cruises are available from Besançon.

www.vedettesdebesancon.com/ and www.vedettes-panoramiques.com/

EATING AND SLEEPING ON THE DOUBS

After a respectable shipping career begun in 1907, a barge, now called the "D'Calé", is moored along the beautiful promenade of Micaud Park, on the right bank of the Doubs. In 1966 it became clear that the boat had not really taken its retirement. It became a restaurant. It features tapas and traditional cuisine. And then, just crossing the bridge will take you to the left bank and another barge, also retired from the river trade, but this one has become a Bed and Breakfast!

www.ledcale.com/ and bathotel.free.fr/

STROLLING ALONG...

The river has imprinted the city with its presence and contours. It gives Besançon embankments, parks and gardens, all of which call out to you for walks and strolls.

WATER POWER AND THE ZUBER-RIEDER PAPER MILL

In 1881 a site at Boussières, downstream from Besançon, was bought to set up a paper mill. The driving force of the Doubs was the determiner. The first paper machine began operating in 1883. Since then, production has continued and grown. The company produces high-quality fine paper, selected for the luxury market. They now have a new line from an eco-design procedure: a tree-free paper (the Bagasse®)! They have guided group tours.



› Roulélec

THE CITY BY BIKE

The Eurovélo 6 Bikeway

Eurovélo 6 takes you from Nantes to Budapest along the banks of the big rivers and canals of Europe... and passes through Franche-Comté and Besançon! So, there is yet another way to see Besançon: go from the Malate weir to the Velotte Bridge, via the river tunnel! Maps and guidebooks indicate the signposted sections of the bikeway, tourist attractions and service areas.

www.eurovelo6.org/

Vélocité

Vélocité offers 200 self-service bicycles at over 30 bike parks in the city centre with passes for a few hours or for several months; this is an initiative that is appreciated as much by Bisontins as it is by tourists!

Tel +33 (0)820 20 25 29

Roulélec

From Beijing to Besançon in a few turns of the wheel! These new generation bicycle taxis offer alternative transportation that is both relaxing and green. The driver uses an electrically-assisted tricycle to take you on an errand or a discovery trip through Besançon and its environs. You just need to give the driver a quick wave to hear, "Montez, je vous emmène où?"... or: "Hop in, where to?"

www.roulelec.fr

Sun City

Ecological, folding electric bikes: this is the invention of the Besançon-based company Sun City! The design is equalled only by its performance and the pleasure of an (almost) effortless ride into the sunset.

www.veloelectrique-suncity.com

Le relais vélo

This bike stop is located on the Casamène towpath (and on Eurovélo 6), and they rent mountain bikes, hybrid bikes, electric bikes, tandems, rollerblades and roller skis.

Chemin de Casamène • Tel +33 (0)6 31 37 58 42

Vélosphère

Rental of mountain and hybrid bikes, and also the repair and maintenance of your bike.

4 rue des Chalets • Tel +33 (0)3 81 47 03 04

www.velosphere.fr

EXPERIENCE BESANÇON!

Strolling into the wind, pushing open a museum door, taking a seat at a table on the terrace, going to the market, learning, being amazed, delighting in meeting someone or discovering something in a square or on the embankments... We invite you to discover Besançon and experience the city and its surroundings whether you are with your family, on a romantic weekend or in a group... In the form of a travel diary, here are some ideas, itineraries, addresses and tips to fully experience the vibrancy of Besançon... from the inside. For a day, a weekend or a week, let yourself slip into Bisontine life.

› Family Picnic at the Citadel



› Breakfast just below the Citadel © Jack Varlet



› Saint Amour Square



› Inner Courtyard



› Castan Square

AS A COUPLE

DAY 1

- 5.00 pm:** You arrive in one of the charming hotels in the city centre. A magic place caught mid-way between the murmur of the city and the tranquillity of the gardens and inner courtyards.
- 6.00 pm:** A trip to the Saint Amour Square is a must, of course. Pretty boutiques, a shady, welcoming square, elegant facades of buildings... Make a wish, and Saint Amour can make it come true!
- 7.30 pm:** From courtyard to inner courtyard where some amazing stairways rise above your heads: your walk has led you to Granvelle Square where you choose to dine.
- 10.00 pm:** Enjoy the night and the lights of the city; wander around in Castan Square. The ruins of ancient columns and the lush vegetation create a magic moment.
- 10.30 pm:** Return to your hotel.

DAY 2

- 10.00 am:** Breakfast for a king because you have decided to explore Besançon and its environs by bike. A Vélodrome bike park is within easy walking distance! You are off pedalling along the towpaths and Eurovélo 6 (for the less athletically-inclined, there are electric bikes for rent!).
- 12.30 pm:** At La Malate, Roche-lez-Beaupré or Avanne-Aveney, upstream or downstream, there's no shortage of charming restaurants where you can take a break. Depending on your route (and the pace of your trip), you'll find a restaurant you like as easily in the villages as in the city.
- 2.30 pm:** You are back on the bike and heading back towards the city, still riding along the lovely banks of the Doubs.
- 4.30 pm:** You take time to relax at the hotel.
- 5.30 pm:** A stroll and tea in town. You savour the Besançon atmosphere, and check out restaurants.
- 7.30 pm:** The Embankments, Marulaz Square, Battant Quarter, Rivotte, rue Bersot, the Fine Arts Market Quarter or the Theatre Quarter: where will you dine tonight?
- 10.30 pm:** Cross the Doubs, and experience the exciting atmosphere of the Casino; then walk back to the hotel through Micaud Park in the soft, leafy night.

AS A FAMILY

DAY 1

- 5.00 pm:** You drop your bags and settle into a guesthouse in the old centre. You are below the Citadel, near the shops, with a view of the city's roofs, and you can hear the chiming of the Astronomical Clock. The children have chosen their rooms and are already getting impatient to get out and explore.
- 6.00 pm:** You stroll around in the Loop. Between the tempting shops and discovering the architectural heritage, there's something interesting for everyone here. From Saint John's Cathedral to Revolution Square (Fine Arts Market Quarter), Besançon gradually reveals its delights to you.
- 7.30 pm:** A drink on the Vauban Embankment. From either side of the café terrace you have chosen, the Loop of the Doubs is there and invites you to cross Battant Bridge. The Battant Quarter, picturesque and colourful, is where you will dine tonight.
- 8.15 pm:** Dinner's ready! Outside on the terrace? Indoors? Downstairs in the "cellar"? In Battant, you have a wide choice of places to feed your hungry teen-agers. What a delicious way to begin your stay in Besançon!
- 10.30 pm:** Back "home". You can hear, here and there in the streets, the happy sounds of student life.



DAY 2

- 9.00 am:** A hearty breakfast, just right to start this completely Bisontine day.
- 10.00 am:** The Museum of Time. A fun exploration of what made Besançon's reputation, and why it is called the City of Time. The children get caught up in the games...
- 11.30 am:** A drink at the nearby Granvelle Square before storming the Citadel.
- 12.30 pm:** Lunch up there, followed by tours of the museums and gardens of this must-see UNESCO World Heritage Site. Again, between the zoos and the museums, there is something for everyone!
- 5.30 pm:** Back down into town. Shopping for the girls, a break at "home" for the boys. You'll catch up with each other at 7.30 in the Bersot Quarter where restaurants abound.
- 10 pm:** A last walk, through the Rivotte Quarter, for a look at the Citadel, all lit up.

DAY 3

- 9.00 am:** Wake up to a delicious breakfast and then you head over to the market to get picnic food and to fill up on regional products.
- 10.00 am:** Set out for the Museum of Franche-Comté Houses in Nancray. Living Heritage has never been so aptly named! Special events, interactive tours, animals: everything is there!
- 1.00 pm:** Picnic at the Museum and then depart for Osselle Caves.
- 2:30 pm:** Tour of the Caves and... sadly, that's all folks for this time!

Please contact the Besançon Visitor and Convention Centre for help with designing your own Besançon exploration.

› The City Centre from Fort Griffon



› Granvelle Square



› Children's Tour at the Citadel



› The Nancray Museum of Franche-Comté Houses



› Outside on the Terrace in Town

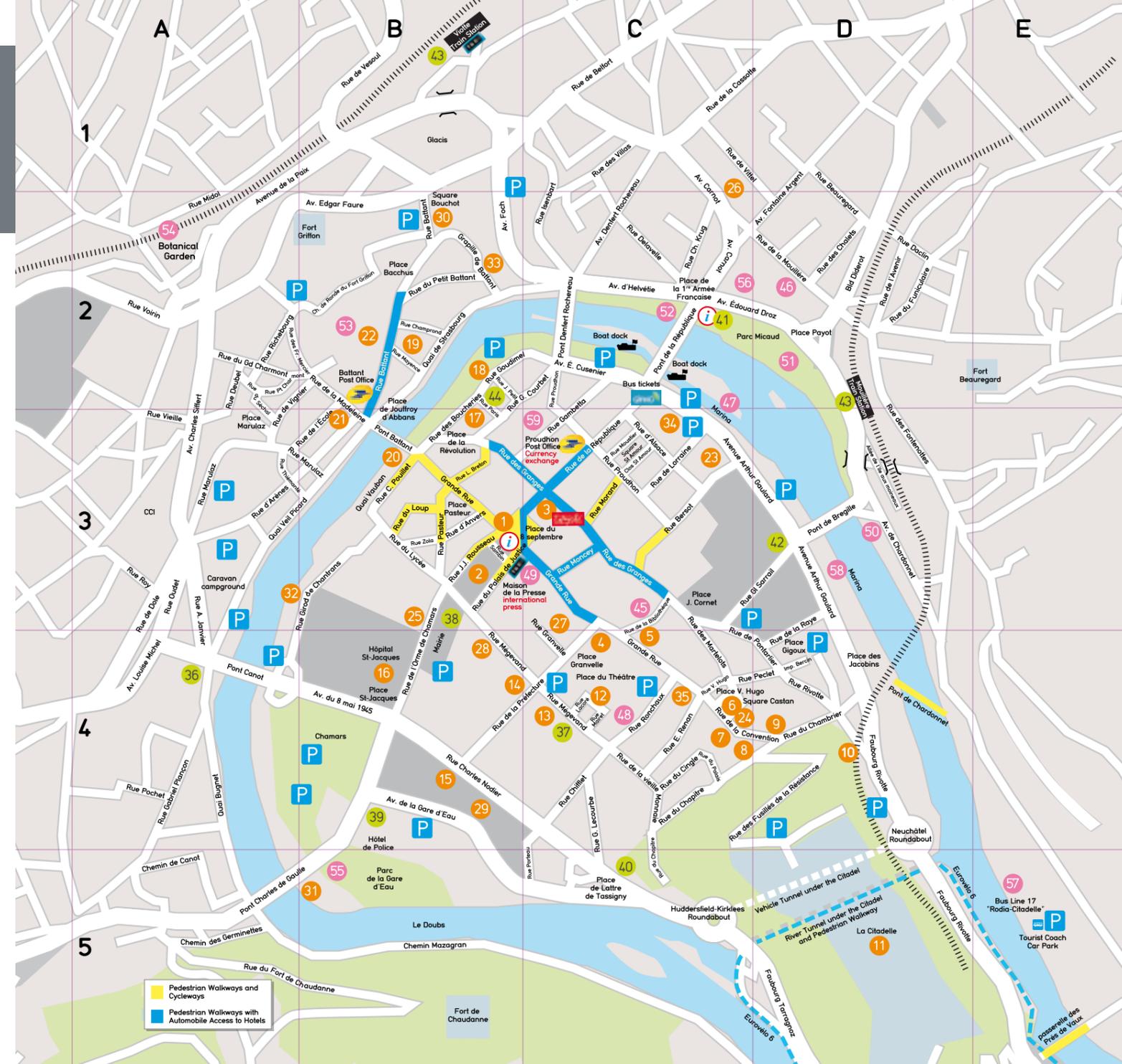
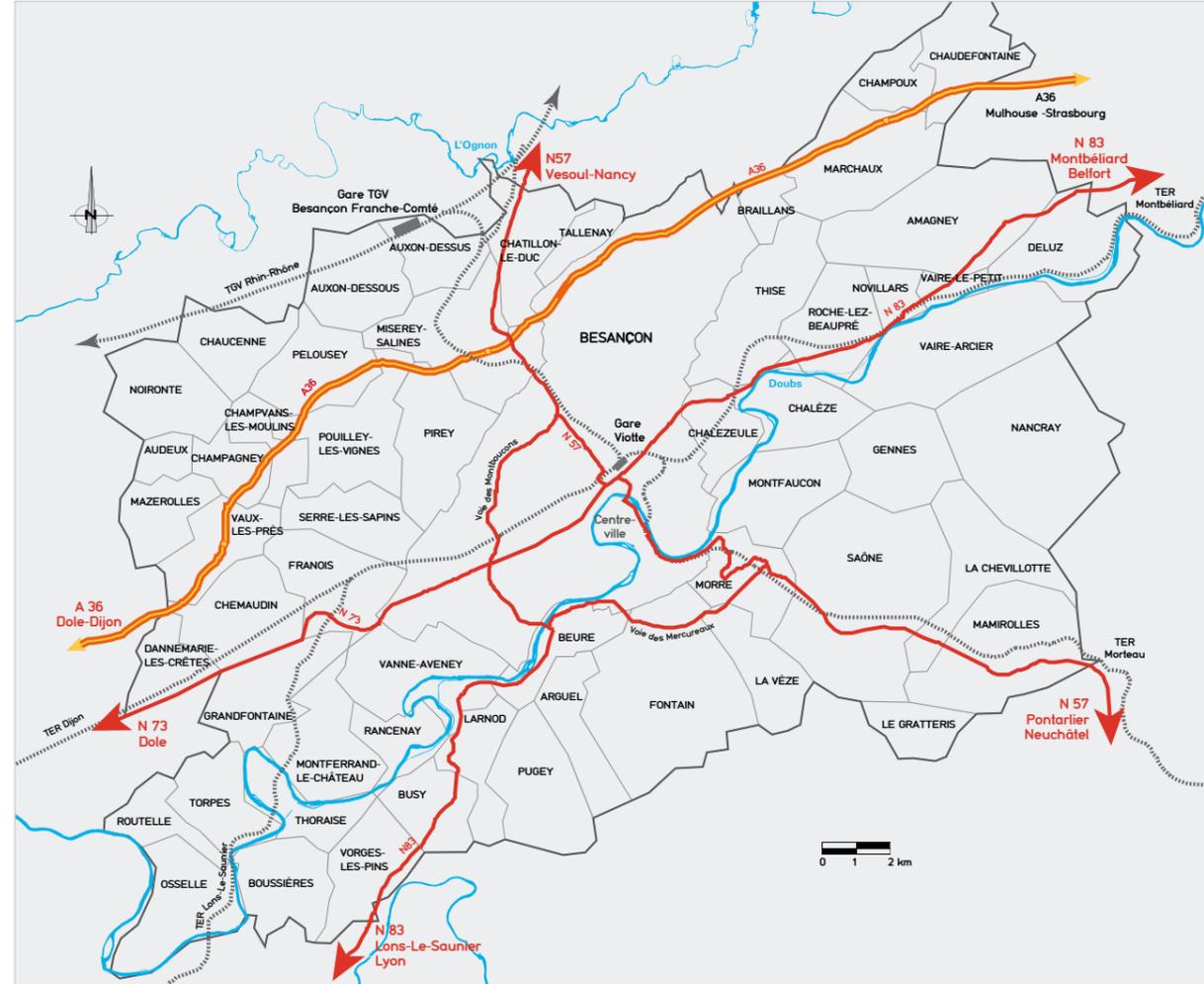
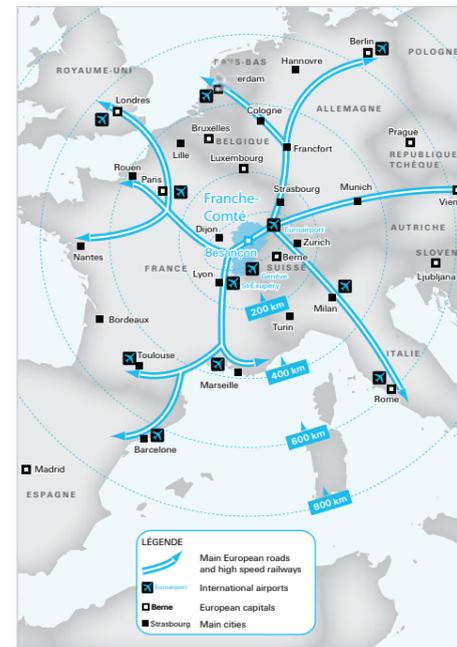


IN AND AROUND BESANÇON / USEFUL ADDRESSES...

Besançon and its environs make up Greater Besançon, which is composed of 59 municipalities and has a population of 170,000. Besançon alone, the capital of Franche-Comté, covers over 65 km².

With the Rhine-Rhone TGV connections, Besançon is closer than ever to major French cities:

- Paris: 2 hrs 5 min
- Strasbourg: 1 hr 40 min
- Lyon: 1 hr 55 min
- Marseille: 3 hrs 35 min
- Montpellier: 3 hrs 45 min
- Zurich: 2 hrs 10 min
- Frankfurt: 3 hrs 35 min



HERITAGE

- 1 • Town Hall • B3
- 2 • Courthouse • B3
- 3 • Saint Peter's Church • C3
- 4 • Granvelle Palace / Museum Of Time • C4
- 5 • Saint Maurice's Church • C4
- 6 • Castan Square • D2
- 7 • The Black Gate • C4
- 8 • Saint John's Cathedral / Astronomical Clock • C4
- 9 • Grammont Mansion • D2
- 10 • Rivotte Gate • D2
- 11 • Vauban's Citadel and Museums • D2
- 12 • Theatre • C3
- 13 • Church of Our Lady • C4
- 14 • Seminary • B4
- 15 • Prefecture • B4
- 16 • Saint Jacques' Hospital • B4
- 17 • Museum Of Fine Arts and Archaeology • B3
- 18 • Protestant Church and Holy Spirit Gallery • B2
- 19 • Synagogue • B2
- 20 • Battant Bridge and Vauban Embankment • B3
- 21 • Saint Madeleine's Church • B3
- 22 • Champagney Mansion • B2
- 23 • Saint Paul's Abbey-Church • C3
- 24 • Archdiocese • D4
- 25 • Our Lady of Refuge Chapel • C1
- 26 • Sacred Heart Church • A4
- 27 • Carmel Fountain • C3
- 28 • Poor Clares' Fountain • B4
- 29 • Fountain of The Ladies • B4
- 30 • Square Tower • B2
- 31 • Chamars Tower • B5
- 32 • Cordeliers Tower • A3
- 33 • Pelote Tower • B2
- 34 • Mosaic at Lumière Middle School • C3
- 35 • Victor Hugo's Birthplace • C4

USEFUL ADDRESSES

- 36 • CLA / Centre for Applied Linguistics • A4
- 37 • University of Franche-Comté, Department of Letters • C4
- 38 • City Administrative Centre • B3
- 39 • City Police Station • B4
- 40 • Rural Police Station • C5
- 41 • Besançon Visitor and Convention Information Centre
 - ↳ Parc Micaut • C2
 - ↳ Town Hall • B3
- 42 • Ruty Army Barracks • D3
- 43 • Train Stations
 - ↳ Mouillière • D2
 - ↳ Viotte • B1
- 44 • Covered Market • B2

LEISURE & CULTURE

- 44 • Pathé Beaux-Arts Cinema • B2
- 45 • City Public Library • C3
- 46 • New Theatre • D2
- 47 • Saint Paul's Marina • C2
- 48 • Kursaal • C4
- 49 • Maison de la presse (International Press) • C3
- 50 • SNB Pool • D3
- 51 • Micaut Promenade • D2
- 52 • Garden of the Senses • C2
- 53 • Clos Barbizier Rose Garden • B2
- 54 • Botanical Garden • A2
- 55 • Old Water Station (Gare'eau) Park • B5
- 56 • Casino • C2
- 57 • La Rodia • E5
- 58 • Centre of the Arts, Music Conservatory and Exhibition Hall and Centre of the Arts Marina • D3
- 59 • Victor Hugo Cinema • C3



BESANÇON
TOURISME
ET CONGRÈS

HÔTEL DE VILLE

Place du 8 Septembre

PARC MICAUD

2 place de la 1^{re} Armée française

BP 297 - 25016 Besançon cedex

Tél. + 33 (0)3 81 80 92 55

Fax + 33 (0)3 81 80 58 30

info@besancon-tourisme.com

www.besancon-tourisme.com



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