

# Château de Prangins.

## **Noblesse oblige! Life at a Château in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

### **Mediakit**

The exhibition is housed in eleven rooms on the ground floor of the château. It is introduced by a short film. Amid a mysterious atmosphere of light and shade, visitors encounter Baron Louis-François Guiguer, played by Jean-Luc Borgeat. An entertaining and informative audioguide featuring the voices of the château's inhabitants – its governor, the baroness or one of the servants – then takes them from room to room, allowing them to share the joys and sorrows of the château's inhabitants and their thoughts on the society of their time: the baron's pride as he speaks of his ancestors or his books, the excitement of his wife Matilda putting on a play, the hectic comings and goings of servants preparing for a big party.

### **Antechamber**

A map on the floor reveals the full extent of the Prangins estate, while visitors find out about the thousand and one tasks that occupy the lord of such a vast property. There are encounters with the governor, the baron's right-hand man, who illuminates the historical context of the era: at the time, the Vaud is a province of the Republic of Bern and the lord of Prangins is accountable to the bailiff of Nyon, a Bernese magistrate charged with overseeing the region.

### **Large staircase**

At the foot of the staircase leading to the winter apartments, an interactive model teaches visitors about the organisation of activities inside the château. There are a range of devices for children to learn what the eight doors are for and drive a carriage around the courtyard. The French-style architecture of the château is discussed and compared with other examples in the region.

### **Butler's pantry**

In this strategic location, with access to the kitchens, cellars and the two dining rooms, visitors meet the fifteen-or-so servants employed at the château to help the baron maintain his grand lifestyle. There is also a memory game in which visitors young and old can link various objects to the different types of servant.

### **Small dining room**

Reserved for family meals, this small room marks the start of the suite of reception rooms. Here visitors meet Matilda, Baron Louis-François Guiguer's English wife, and find out about family life in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There's also a look at the Grand

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Tour, a journey of education and initiation for the elites; and tea – the exotic drink par excellence.

## Large dining room

A magnificently laid table introduces visitors to the art of dining in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, while a dresser filled with China porcelain evokes the astonishing commercial success of the East India Companies. Silhouettes of dancers and a small theatre recall that this room was not merely a place for parties but also a venue for balls, concerts and stage productions.

## Salon

The perfect reception room, the salon is home to a large number of precious objects: silk damasks on the wall, a sparkling chandelier, precious furniture, gilded frames and large mirrors reflect the distinction that the rank of baron confers. Brought together for the first time since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the portraits of three generations of Guiguer de Prangins barons serve as a family tree. The room can also be darkened to illustrate the various ways of producing light at the time.

## Marble hallway

Acting as a thoroughfare, the hallway provides access to the terrace, with its incomparable view of Lake Geneva and the Alps. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Switzerland and its picturesque landscapes attract ever-increasing numbers of tourists, as the engravings by masters such as Aberli and Mechel confirm. Using multimedia terminals, visitors can follow the various stages in the recreation of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century décor.

## Study

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, writing is the only way for people who are separated to keep in touch, as attested by the beautiful letters sent from Russia to Château de Prangins. The upper classes often spend several hours a day dealing with their correspondence. Over a fifteen-year period, Louis-François Guiguer also keeps a journal for those around him. A facsimile is on display in the room, while the audioguide contains selected extracts from this exceptional historical document, which runs to over a thousand pages.

## Library

The exclusive preserve of the elite, libraries are prestigious places, and this is reflected in their furnishings and decoration. The majority of the books housed here were read by Louis-François Guiguer; we know about his reading habits from his journal. Bestsellers of 18<sup>th</sup>-century literature such as the *Encyclopédie* of

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Diderot and d'Alembert and Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* take pride of place, alongside works of science and history, plays and collections of poems.

The exhibition ends with a film recounting events following the death of Louis-François Guiguer in 1786, three years before the French Revolution. His widow, who outlives him by many years, tells of the fall of the Ancien Régime and the emergence of a new form of society.

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## Visiting the exhibition

Thanks to specially produced films, audioguides, booklets and animations, visitors become, for an hour or two, guests of the baron and his family for a charming and fascinating exploration of life at a château in days gone by. The various media are available free of charge in four languages: French, English, German and Italian.

## Films

The exhibition is introduced by a short film featuring Louis-François Guiguer, played by the actor Jean-Luc Borgeat. The baron discovers his château transformed into a museum, offering visitors a poetic introduction to the exhibition. By way of conclusion, the baron returns at the end of the exhibition in a film recalling the events that followed his death: the French Revolution, the sale of the château to Joseph Bonaparte in 1814, etc.

## Audioguide

At the entrance to the exhibition, a lively and entertaining audioguide written by Eugène invites visitors to explore the rooms and immerse themselves in life at a château in the 18th century.

## Audioguide for children aged 7 to 12

Eugène has also written an audioguide specifically for younger audiences. As they proceed through the rooms, either on their own or accompanied by an adult, the children will encounter objects that come to life and speak – a fun way of finding out about their history and purpose.

## Booklets

Complementing the audioguide tour and introductory texts, booklets on various topics are also available. Copiously illustrated, the texts examine the various topics addressed in each room and analyse in greater depth issues related to the 18th century and the history of the château.

## Booklet for families

A booklet for children aged 6 and over is the perfect accompaniment to a visit with the family. It encourages children to observe and discover the exhibition while enjoying themselves at the same time.

## Inclusion

The exhibition is fully accessible to people with reduced mobility.

An easy-to-read and understand French booklet is available at the museum reception, offering an adapted tour for people with intellectual disabilities. This

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booklet was developed in collaboration with the organization [1001feuilles.org](https://www.1001feuilles.org).

Guided tours in French Sign Language are regularly offered by a deaf guide.

The château offers specially adapted tours for people with Alzheimer's disease or cognitive disorders. The tour follows the *pARTage method*, developed by *Alzheimer Vaud* in collaboration with the *Collection de l'Art Brut*.

## Guided tours and events

Throughout the year, Château de Prangins and its cultural education service offer a wide variety of activities for adults and children, mainly in French, but also in German and English.

All information can be found on <https://www.chateaudeprangins.ch/en>

## Publication

The lavishly illustrated, 136-page colour catalogue published by *5 Continents* is available in French, English, German and Italian.

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