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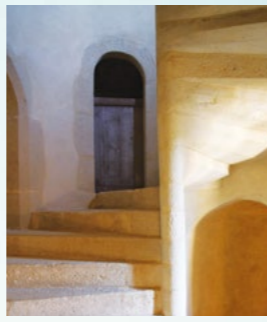
A card allowing you to come back as many times as you like... for free !

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Château
St Mesmin

Plan of the castle



RECIPE FOR HYPOCRAS WINE

To consume in moderation, the alcohol abuse is dangerous for the health.

- 25 g powdered cinnamon
- 6 cloves
- 10 cardamom pods
- 20 g powdered ginger
- 100 g of caster sugar (or honey)
- 5 liters of red wine (13°C)
- 1 small teaspoon of rose water

Mix the spices, once ground in the coffee grinder
Put them in a tissue that you will close firmly.
Mix the red wine, sugar (or honey) and the rose water.

Soak the tissue of spices in this preparation for at least 12 hours or more, if you prefer very spicy. Taste and add sugar to suit you.

Bottle and serve very cool.

Can be kept for a few months.



SAINT ANDRÉ SUR SÈVRE - 79

The Castle with a wealth of activities

www.chateau-saintmesmin.fr

Number contractor licenses spectacle 1-1061182 / 2-1061183 / 3-10611184



The Proust family bought it with its estate in 1818. It was used as a military hospital during the First World War. Although it was registered as a Historic Monument in 1943, it slowly deteriorated. The creation of the Saint-Mesmin Château Association injected new life into it. In fact in 1990, Mr Paul Proust, the owner, reassigned the chateau and its outbuildings to the association, which was then in charge of its preservation (it was a listed building in 1993), restoration and the running of it. Situated in Saint-André-sur-Sèvre, department of Deux-Sèvres, the chateau has belonged to the Syndicat Mixte du château de Saint-Mesmin (public authority) since 2003.

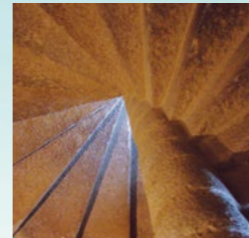
Saint-Mesmin chateau was never subject to acts of war in the Middle Ages. The only siege known resulted from the War in the Vendée. In February 1796, forty or so royalists from the Vendée region took refuge in the chateau. They withstood the republican army for four days, but had to surrender through lack of supplies. The chateau was sold as a national asset in 1798.



THE WAR IN THE VENDEE



Four families would succeed the Montaucous. During the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, the Duplessis, Vaudrey de Saint Phal, Petit de la Guierche and Vasselot families would live in the chateau. It was moreover in the 17th century that it would undergo its biggest architectural remodelling with work on the windows, doors, fireplaces, tiling and roofs. Then the moats dried out in the 18th century. The Vasselot family, last owner of the chateau, abandoned it in 1766.



Pierre de Montaucou, lord of this chateau, had it built in around 1370. At the time the lord's territory was dependent on Guillaume Larcheveque, lord of Parthenay. In those days the chateau was surrounded by moats, supplied by the river (still in existence) the "Sevrau". The Montaucou family fortified the chateau by adding the imposing 28 metre dungeon in the 15th century. The chateau was mainly a place of residence.

FORTIFICATIONS IN THE MIDDLE AGES



THE CASTLE FROM THE 19TH CENTURY TO TODAY



1 - RECEPTION/SHOP

Welcome to the castle of Saint-Mesmin, we wish you a pleasant visit.

2 - THE OUTER YARD

opens up onto a huge barnyard opposite the fortress's inner upper courtyard. On three sides, this spacious courtyard is surrounded by farm buildings including cowsheds, barns, stables and dwellings used for farming in the past. Opposite these outbuildings the medieval fortress stands on a slightly granite soil.

3 - THE GATE HOUSE

main entrance door built in the 14th century, formed by two horseshoe-shaped towers. Its access suggests that there was a drawbridge straddling the moats. Missing in 1796 during the War in the Vendée, it was restored in 2009. This door's defence was provided by a portcullis of which only the groove and the gun houses both sides of the entrance remain.

4 - THE INNER YARD

is a little roofless inner courtyard formerly with flagstones, from where you could access the different rooms in the castle.

5 - THE PANTRY

is a room just below the inner courtyard. The original volume no longer exists, because in the beginning three levels of rooms were on top of one another. The current temporary roof rests on the second level. A 17th century door is the only way to access the cellar today.

6 - THE KITCHEN

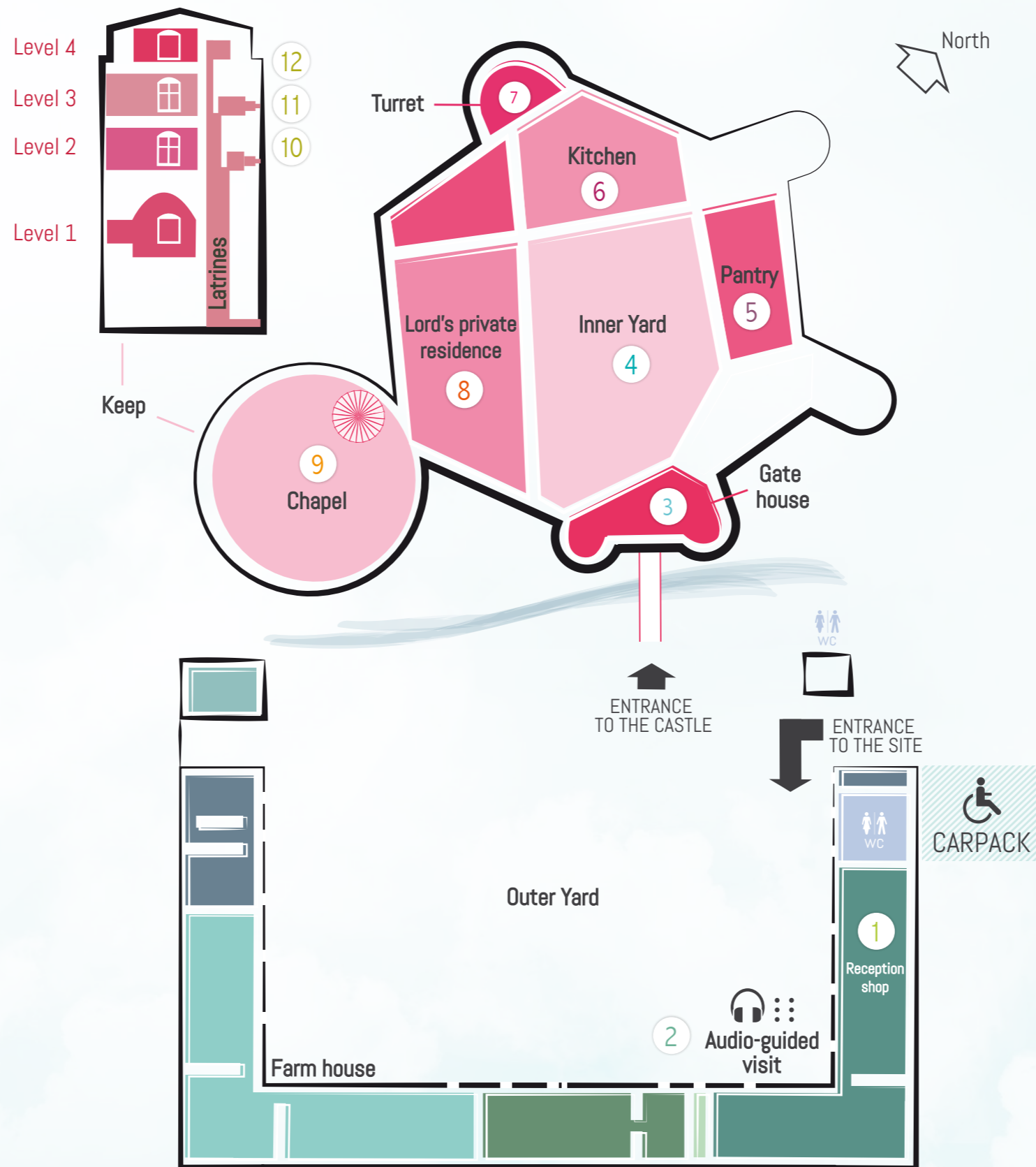
is a modest room because it was only used to prepare meals in. Two granite fireplaces are placed at opposite ends. The most monumental dates back to the 15th century. The other from the 17th century is recognisable by the former opening of the bread oven.

In the recess of the window, on the moat side, a door and then a staircase gives you the chance to go outside: this exit is usually called the potern.

The terracotta tiles and the windows on the courtyard side are remodellings from the 17th century.

Castle of St Mesmin

XIV-XV^e centuries
XVII^e century



7 - THE TURRET

Is situated south west of the fortress, between the kitchen and the noble living quarters. In the 14th century it was made up of three levels. Only the first floor was heated via a fireplace where some remains of the circular duct inside the brickwork remain.

8 - THE LORD'S PRIVATE RESIDENCE

A large noble room, rebuilt in the 15th century, was a stateroom, a courtroom and a banquet room. On the moat side on the ground floor, the room is lit by a very beautiful 15th century window, delicately decorated with small columns adorned with human heads. The floor is still paved in places by large stones called "Pelochère stone" from the name of the quarry in Saint-Pierre-du-Chemin in the Vendée region. This paving dates back to the 18th century.

9 - THE CHAPEL

On the ground floor is the chateau's only arched room (on a cupola). In the 15th century, this room was for military use, hence the three little blockhouses (gun houses) below the room. Each blockhouse was thus defended by an arrow slit and a gunboat. In the 17th century, this room took on a more religious aspect hence the name of chapel with its adjacent sacristy. The little niche, near the entrance of the sacristy, holds the liturgical basin.

10 11 12 - THE KEEP

A monumental spiral staircase allows access to the upper floors with their three vast rooms and antechambers. Each floor is lit by huge mullioned windows equipped with window seats. Some were symbolically defended by gunboats. In each adjoining antechamber you can find a fireplace, a window but above all a door to access the household latrines. In fact, a huge latrine duct (2x6m) is incorporated into the thickness of the wall of the keep and serves all of the floors of the tower. A discharge pipe in the moats is visible at the bottom of the keep. On the last level, the rampart walk which was originally covered opens up. It rests on machicolations (murder holes). The keep which at its highest was 28m high is shorter today. A watch keeping tower (the turret) which would overhang the current roof of the keep is missing.

Photos taken with the kind participation of : Fauconnerie.net, Machina Silente, Pascal Cagnet, Alliance des lions d'Anjou, Yan Klima, Armutan, Lez Nominoë