

Glossary

Bossage: a large stone sticking out from the wall; the joints between two stones of this type form cavities known as indentures.

Chinoiserie: at Bouges, sheets of cut wallpaper creating an impression of raised relief, imitating Chinese prints.

Directory: the regime under which France was governed between 1795 and 1799.

Indian cotton: painted or printed cotton fabric which was originally imported from India.

Regency (1715-1723): the period corresponding to Louis XV's childhood, when the country was governed by Philippe of Orleans.

Trictrac: dice game in which counters are moved forward on a backgammon-like board with two sections, each with six triangular spaces.

Undergear: wheels and suspension of a carriage.

Versailles-style parquet: parquet made from panels, bounded by a frame and filled with criss-cross strips of wood.

Practical information

Average length of full visit: 2 hours

Guided tours in French and English.

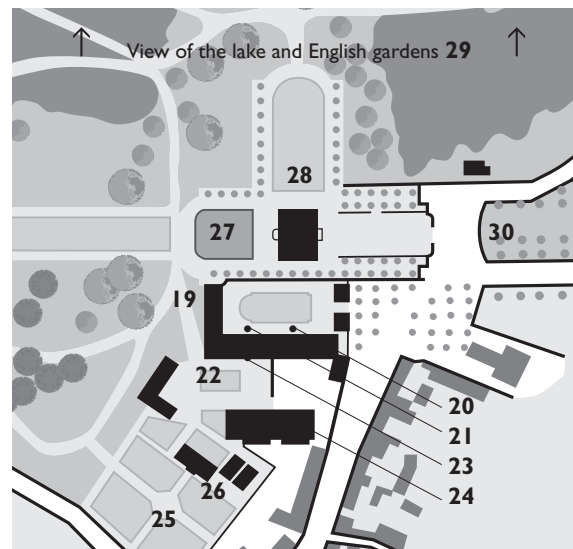
Tours suitable for disabled visitors.



The Centre des monuments nationaux publishes a collection of guidebooks about French monuments, translated into several languages. Éditions du patrimoine publications are on sale in the bookshop-giftshop.

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The estate

The formal gardens, formed by flower beds bounded by box hedges and sandy footpaths, adorn the area round the château.

- 27 The pond**, to the west, has a water fountain and lies before a long lawn called the 'greensward'.
- 28 The decorative box hedges**, to the north, stand around a sculpture which is thought to be the work of Jean de Bologne: *The Battle between Hercules and Cacus*.
- 29** The early twentieth-century **English gardens**, designed by landscape gardener Achille Duchêne, extend northwards: the many different coloured leaves from the numerous species of tree in the forest are reflected in the lake.
- 30** The 1.5km-long **bridleway** marks the main axis of this composition, the central point of which is the entrance to the château.

Horse-drawn carriages

A man with a passion for horses

When he bought Bouges, Henry Viguier was able to devote himself to his love of horses, which he placed at the heart of all his genteel leisurely pursuits: hunting, walking, picnics, journeys and supplying the château. He owned racing stables and was particularly fond of beautiful carriages. The preserved carriages are an expression of his taste for impeccably finished vehicles which were made by the finest Parisian coachbuilders. The carriages were originally painted in Henry Viguier's colours, but over time the dark blue bodywork has turned black and the daffodil-yellow undergear* has lost some of its sparkle.

14 luxury carriages

Each carriage was destined for a particular kind of use: the shooting brake was used for hunting, the omnibus for taking guests to the station, the four-horse road coach (which the master of the house was particularly fond of) for riding down the paths at Bouges.

Bouges château

A gem in a beautiful natural setting

The builder



The château in 1882

Bouges was originally a fortified castle and has belonged to many different owners. When

Claude Leblanc de Marnaval bought the estate in 1765, the old building was demolished to make room for an Italian-style stately home. This new building, built in the style of the day, testifies to the ambition of the rich, recently ennobled smithy owner, who had successfully climbed the social ladder in the Parisian world of finance. His château was repossessed and sold 12 years later, when he went bankrupt.

The rebirth of a charming site

There were several successive owners in the 19th century, including the Prince de Talleyrand and Henri Dufour, who restored the château and planted the English gardens. The château's transformation is largely the work of the Viguier family: Henry, manager of a Parisian department store, and his wife, Renée. They gave it a new lease of life, buying outstanding furniture in keeping with the setting. Childless, they bequeathed the château to the State in 1967.

* Explanations overleaf.

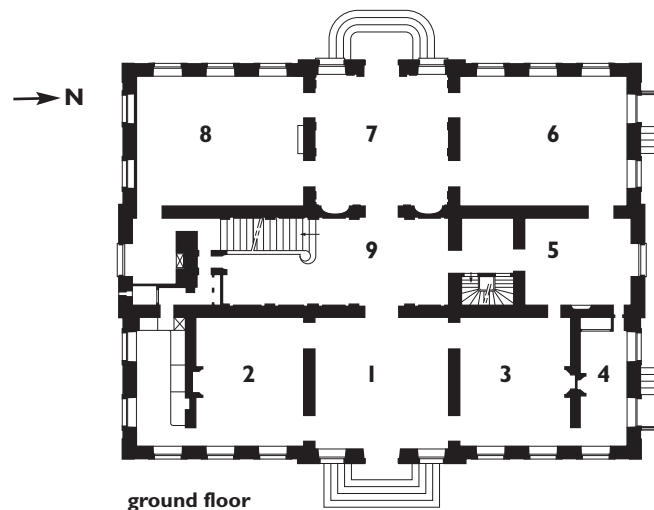
The château

The facade

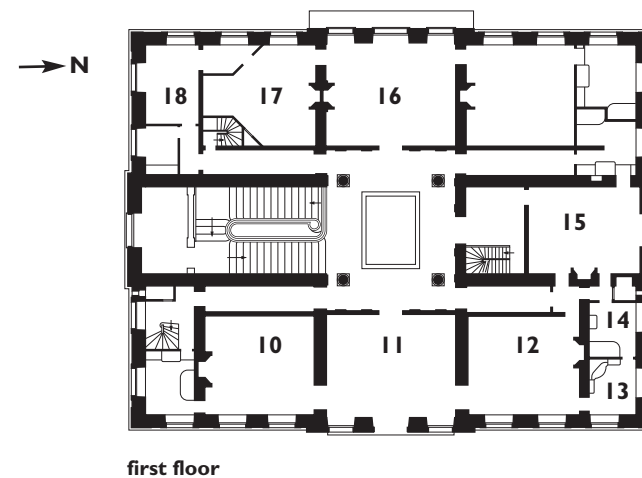
The minimalist, Italian-style form of the château can be glimpsed at the end of a long, shaded ride. The western facade has a row of large windows at regular intervals. The middle windows form the prominent central part of the building topped with a triangular pediment, which frames the steps and the front door. The corners are treated with bossages* with indentures. The other facades are similarly laid out. The building is crowned with balustrading surrounding the terraced roof. Its elegance derives from its strict simplicity. The carved decoration is found only on the balcony consoles and pediments, featuring the Marnaval family's arms.

Inside

- 1 **The stately hall** opens onto the vestibule from which all the rooms lead off. The painted decorations are imitation marble dating from the 20th century.
- 2 **The stately bedchamber** still has its original Versailles-style* parquet. As in most of the other rooms, the floor is covered by a floral Aubusson carpet.
- 3 **Monsieur Viguiet's study** is a good example of Regency* style with its wood wall panels (although these have been stripped), the card table and chairs.
- 4 **The boudoir** was decorated with floral percale - a cotton fabric woven tightly to make it stiff and shiny - by Madame Viguiet. She was a draper's daughter and had the most beautiful eighteenth-century Indian cotton* materials reproduced in her father's factory for the decorations at Bouges.



- 5 **The library-cum-drawing room** was decorated in blues inspired by the small painted chest-of-drawers standing in front of the window. There are "Chinoiseries"* hanging on the walls.
- 6 **The great hall** is very light due to the arrangement of windows and mirrors, pendant chandeliers, yellow wall-hangings and green panelling with golden mouldings.
- 7 **In the games room**, there is a reversible-top card table and a travel trictrac* alongside the château's finest examples of Louis XVI chairs, upholstered in blue silk.
- 8 **The dining room** has a marvellous twelve-legged table: it can seat up to thirty people, when its sixteen extensions are used.
- 9 **The staircase hall** benefits from natural daylight thanks to the skylight fitted in the 19th century where a lantern tower formerly stood.
- 10 **The Mariotti room** was used by the Viguiet's guests, and is named after one of them. The Louis XVI writing desk and chest-of-drawers are amongst the rare inlaid furniture in the château, reflecting Madame Viguiet's preference for simplicity to express a country house atmosphere.



Madame Viguiet's apartments

- 11 **The "studio"** was the Viguiet's living room, with the red carpet and mahogany furniture contributing to a warm atmosphere. The collection of furniture is reminiscent of the owners' presence and pastimes: a wheel for spinning wool, desk, watercolourist's chair, folding tea table, etc.
- 12 **Madame Viguiet's bedchamber:** the feminine touch is evident on the walls and around the windows, decorated with the same Indian cotton* fabrics, and a small dressing table.
- 13 **The boudoir** opens out onto the best views of the garden.
- 14 **The bathroom** has simple, luxury fittings in marble, crystal and silver metal.
- 15 **Monsieur Viguiet's bedchamber**, by contrast, with its low ceiling, has a more masculine feel, with sober mahogany furniture and brown-coloured curtains.
- 16 **The Directory* room**, as its name suggests, has a collection of sober furniture from this period.
- 17 **The parrot room** is the only room with wallpaper which has the same patterns as the curtains.
- 18 **The small blue room** was for Madame Viguiet's godson.

The service quarters

These surround the courtyard beneath the château.

- 19 **The Orangery** closes off the far side of the courtyard.
- 20 **The stables** still have the same indoor fittings: each stall still bears the name of the last horse to have occupied it.
- 21 **In the grand saddlery** there are boots and tackle: saddles, bridles and harnesses, most of which were made by prestigious companies. The covered passageway leads to the farm yard.
- 22 **The foot basin** was used to clean the horses' hooves before taking them back to the stables.
- 23 **The saddlery** has a large number of instruments used for looking after horse-riding equipment and taking care of horses, including a set of mechanical shears. In the corner, behind the door, stands an oven used to prepare their feed.
- 24 **The shed**, which was originally a cow shed, houses Monsieur Viguiet's many horse-drawn vehicles.

The flower garden

- 25 **The former vegetable garden** is now used for growing flowers, particularly many different varieties of dahlia. They are used all year round to make the floral compositions decorating the rooms in the château.
- 26 **The heated greenhouses** protect young and exotic plants.

* Explanations overleaf.