



CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

Press conference

23 January 2009



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1. President foreword

As I did it last year, I want to present you with the action plan of the Public Establishment of the Museum and National Estate of Versailles (EPV) for the year 2009 that has just begun. The following document details the density and richness of the programme.

It still seems important to me to draw your attention, in this programme of activities, to the scale of refurbishment work undertaken as part of the first phase of the master plan, even though the time has come to decide with the Ministry of Culture on the content of the second phase that will schedule the work until 2020.

During the renovations, Versailles' cultural programme remains as busy as ever. 2009 will be marked by two historical exhibitions, *Court Pomp* and *Louis XIV*, which I think will both be major cultural events. The exhibition *War Without Frills*¹ and, at the end of the year, a new permanent display on the history of the Palace will emphasise Versailles' role as a Museum of History and a museum of its own history. Discussions on the Museum of the History of France are going well. In 2008 they enabled the EPV to refine its choices for a more visible, more comprehensible and more normal positioning of this key element of its cultural offer.

Improving visitor reception facilities remains a priority for me. 2009 will see the conversion of the North and South Ministers Wings into reception areas for individual visitors (South) and groups, including school parties (North). The improvement of the Palace's toilet facilities will make spectacular progress during the year thanks to the installation of new toilets in the Gabriel Pavilion.

On-line ticket purchase is now available. This is a sign of the EPV's choice to consider the Internet as a key tool in its public relations and cultural communication policy. For this reason, the Digital Greater Versailles project² continues and is being enriched by several impressive initiatives detailed in this document. Enjoy your read.

Jean-Jacques Aillagon

Chairman of the Public Establishment of the Museum and National Estate of Versailles

¹ *War Without Frills*

² to integrate new technologies in the Palace of Versailles

2. 2009, a decisive year

Refurbishments in 2009

- **Rehabilitating Place d'Armes (the former parade ground) and re-erecting the statue of Louis XIV on horseback**

Completion date: June 2009, budget: €0.5m, Architect-in-Chief of Historic Monuments: Frédéric Didier

Pending the implementation of a larger-scale project, the EPV is concentrating on modifying the central avenue and re-erecting the equestrian statue.

The restoration of the sculptural group by Cartellier and Petitot is being carried out by the Coubertin foundry, which specialises in monumental bronzes. It has involved mending the corroded internal and external armatures, cleaning the deteriorated skin, repairing and replacing certain pieces, restoring the general bronze patina and applying a final protective coating of micro-crystalline wax polish. The stone pedestal, streaked in bronze from the equestrian statue, has also been removed and restored. Following an on-site simulation using a life-size model, it was decided to re-erect the statue in the lower third of the main axis of Place d'Armes. The immediate area around the plinth will also be temporarily redeveloped.

With the patronage of La Française des Jeux

- **Converting the North and South Ministers Wings**

*Completion date: October 2009, budget: €3m
Architect-in-Chief of Historic Monuments: Frédéric Didier
Architect: Frédéric Druot*

From spring 2009, the following will be installed in the South Ministers Wing: a new sales system for individual visitors (ticket desks and ticket machines), an information desk, toilets and a comfortable area for young children. The size of this space (over 600 m²) means a vast waiting area will also be provided for visitors.

The work will take place in two stages: – a first phase in the east section to install the definitive ticket desks while letting the existing sales system continue to function (April to July 2009) – a second phase, after switching over to the new ticket desks, of creating the waiting area, information desk and toilets (August to October 2009).

In the north ministers wing, also over an area of around 600 m², the conversion work to create reception areas for school parties (information, checkroom, waiting area and toilets) will be undertaken virtually simultaneously. The west and east sections will group together the reception facilities for guided tours, whether for individual

visitors or groups (information, ticket desks, audioguide desk, toilets and waiting and meeting areas). The work should be completed in autumn 2009. Specific work will be carried out to make both Wings accessible to visitors with limited mobility.



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- **Refurbishing the Great Commons**

First phase until October 2009, budget €25m

Architect-in-Chief of Historic Monuments: Frédéric Didier

Project manager: Bernard Desmoulin

The great commons is to house two separate units: – in the buildings, the EPV's administrative, scientific and technical services, library and documentation, as well as some storerooms and workshops; – underneath the courtyard, a primary plant centre and storerooms for large works of art. The operation includes a substantial amount of restoration work on the facades and roofs, as well as on interior spaces of historical interest (vaulted areas in stone and brick), monumental staircases and beamed ceilings.

The interior conversion led by architect Bernard Desmoulin covers all the other work (installation of lifts, some floors, fluid distribution, equipment, fixtures and fittings etc). This operation should be completed in autumn 2009, allowing the services to move in at the end of the year. The EPV is nevertheless deliberating bringing forward the second phase of work that involves converting the eastern section of the building to accommodate the services currently located in the Main Stables, which would delay the first group of services moving in by a few months.

- **Renovating the technical systems and building a primary plant centre**

budget €41m

The technical equipment, such as lighting and heating, is today in bad condition and represents a serious fire hazard. The project involves upgrading this equipment and bringing it into compliance. The primary plant centre, to be completed in summer 2009, will house the primary technical systems, thereby locating all the high-risk equipment (boiler rooms, electricity distribution stations, generators and cooling units) away from the Palace.

Work will begin in 2009 to build underground galleries between the Great Commons and the Palace. The principal work sites will be the galleries under Rue de l'Indépendance Américaine, under the South Wing and under the Princes Courtyard. Given that the passage under the Princes Courtyard is a key route between town and the Park, the work will be carried out in two phases from February 2009 in order to keep a passage for pedestrians. In that way, at the end of the first phase, the galleries will be operational from the Great Commons to the basement of the Gabriel Wing. Finally, from the end of 2009, the cooling towers will be installed in the restored water tower in the old reservoir.

With the patronage of Nexans for the supply of cables

- **Next stage of roof renovations on the central part of the Palace**

*Renovation work until the end of 2009,
specific budget €2m*

Architect-in-Chief of Historic Monuments: Frédéric Didier

A second phase is starting now on the roofs, from the Queen's Staircase to South Wood Passage, following on from those completed in 2008.

With the patronage of the Monnoyeur group

- **Making the Palace safe and improving security**

*Work scheduled spring 2009 to spring 2010,
budget €5m*

The key objective of the master plan to modernise the Palace of Versailles is to improve safety conditions. However, this objective will not be fully reached until all phases of the master plan have been completed and all the equipment renovated (heating, ventilation, electricity etc).

Pending this completion, and in order to manage this intermediate period in the best conditions, a comprehensive, Palace-wide programme of light work will be carried out in 2009: – making the old electrical cabinets and heating equipment safe – installing a fire detection system – improving emergency equipment (dry risers and fire protection system) – introducing a management system for emergency exits, videosurveillance and an access control system – reconfiguring the two PCs installed in 2000 to cope with this increase in functions.

- **Making the Royal Opera House safe**

*Completion date: mid-2009,
budget €10m*

Architect-in-Chief of Historic Monuments: Frédéric Didier

A priority of the master plan is the work to make the Royal Opera House safe. This includes: – moving the technical plants currently housed below the auditorium to premises underneath the Opera House courtyard – demolishing the existing technical plants – bringing all the electrical wiring into compliance – bringing fire safety into compliance with standards: smoke detection, installing additional fire safety equipment and repairing fire protection equipment – repairing heating, ventilation, air-conditioning and toilet plumbing – improving the safety of the scenery lift – opening up and rebuilding the two openwork staircases – providing disabled access – putting right the fireproof separation in the below-stage areas (demolishing the concrete firewall, reinstating the first two scenery backdrops from the below-stage area etc) – demolishing the dressing rooms and workshops located in the below-stage area – creating an integrated stage/auditorium space by removing the fire curtain – installing toilets in accordance with the EPV's fit-out guide for the ground floor of the North Wing.

This work will be accompanied by the installation of additional stage equipment. Major conversion work will also be carried out in the section of the North Wing that runs along Place Gambetta in order to move the Opera House services there (administration, workshops and storerooms).
With a contribution from Unibail



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- **Gabriel Pavilion toilets**

*Two phases: June and October 2009,
budget around €1m*

The EPV is continuing to install new toilet facilities, which on completion will take the Palace's provision from 13 to 27 men's urinals, from 4 to 42 men's toilets and from 17 to 69 women's toilets. In 2009, the existing toilet area in the Gabriel Pavilion will be extended, increasing the men's urinals from 6 to 8 and toilets from 2 to 17, and the women's toilets from 8 to 28. In all these areas, an appropriate number of toilets will of course be allocated to disabled visitors. In order to bring consistency across these new facilities, a fit-out guide has been drawn up by the architect Frédéric Druot. It specifies design elements like floor, wall and ceiling coverings, sanitary ware, lighting and accessories, all of which meet standards of ergonomics, durability, hygiene, easy maintenance and cleaning, and resistance to vandalism.

With the support of Ideal Standard

- **Real Tennis Court**

*Work mid-January to April 2009,
budget €65,000*

Having analysed historical documents, the project involves:

– reinstating the old secondary door leading out to Rue du Jeu de Paume as it offers the double advantage of making access easier for visitors with limited mobility and acting as an additional emergency exit – bringing the building's fire safety system installations into compliance, and connecting this system to the Palace's security control station.

- **Restoring Apollo's Baths Grove**

*Work scheduled until September 2009,
budget nearly €1m*

Architect-in-Chief of Historic Monuments: Pierre-André Lablaude

Restoring Apollo's baths to the condition they were in during the Ancien Régime is an important page in the history of the Gardens of Versailles.

Thanks to the patronage of the Versailles Foundation for the sum of €700,000, the restoration of the sculptural groups has begun, as have their resin and marble powder copies (*Apollo Tended by the Nymphs* by Girardon and Regnaudin and the two horse groups by Guerin and the Marsy brothers). The restoration of the sculptures and the copies will be completed during summer 2009. They will be reinstalled after the monumental rock has been restored, for which the EPV is still seeking funding.

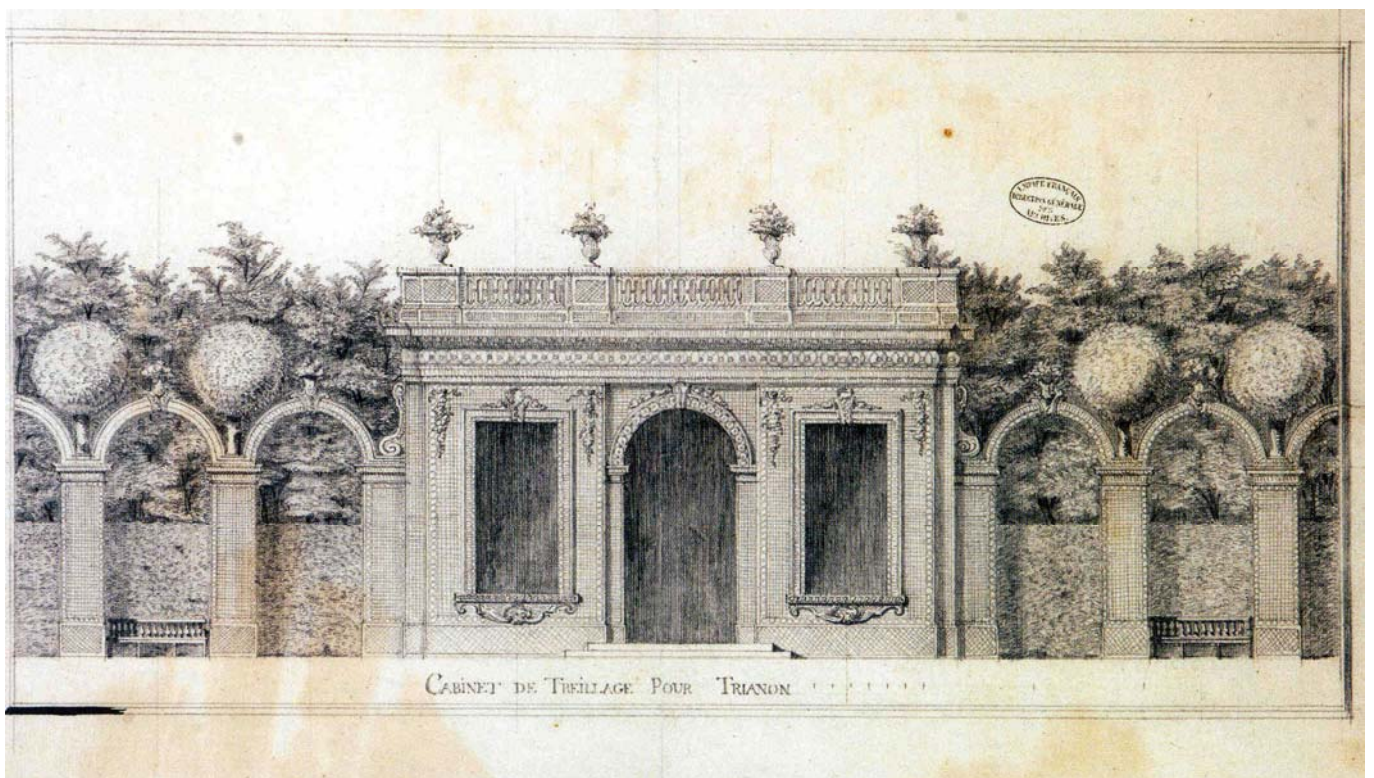
- **Restoring the cool pavilion**

Work scheduled for 2009,

budget €2m

Architect-in-Chief of Historic Monuments: Pierre-André Lablaude

Restoring the cool pavilion its trelliswork gallery and small pools involves the following work: – recreating the original decor: marble fireplace and wall panelling (the latter from an antique example) – restoring the Pavilion trelliswork – restoring a first section of the exterior trelliswork gallery – restoring the small ornamental pools. *Thanks to the patronage of The American Friends of Versailles and with the help of the Friends of Versailles Society*



© Cabinet Lablaude

- **Bench restoration campaign**

Architect-in-Chief of Historic Monuments: Pierre-André Lablaude

The Palace of Versailles is now starting a major bench restoration campaign in the Gardens of Versailles on the 200 historical marble and stone benches (170 currently in place in the Gardens and 30 in the Palace's storerooms). Renovation, cleaning and surface treatment work is planned for the benches in situ. The benches in storage will be repaired and re-sited around the Gardens. The EPV wished to launch this programme with the support of the French départements. Around a dozen of them have already shown great interest in taking part in this initiative, including the Ardennes, Charente-Maritime, Orne, Cantal, Meuse, Meurthe-Moselle, Moselle, Nord, Rhône, Vendée, Yvelines and Alpes-Maritimes départements.

- **Projects awaiting complete funding**

Numerous essential projects at Versailles are awaiting complete funding. This is the case with major heritage operations like restoring the Latona Fountain, one of the Park's gems, and the King's and Queen's State Apartments in the Palace, as well as operations in the Gardens such as restoring the Estate gates and Star Grove and upkeeping the pathways.

IN 2009, the Palace is counting on partnerships with enthusiasts to preserve and bring its heritage alive.

The Museum of the History of France

The project

The law of 26 July 2005 providing for handing the areas of the South Wing occupied by the French Parliamentary Assemblies back to the EPV enables us to plan the rehanging of the collections that King Louis-Philippe had assembled to turn the Palace into a museum (opened in 1837) dedicated to “all France’s glories”. Since then, the collection has evolved in two different directions: the Museum was significantly taken apart to restore the original decor to the royal apartments, yet the collections have continued to grow with new acquisitions.

What are these collections today?

Unsuspectedly rich, they comprise 6,000 paintings, portraits and history scenes and 1,500 sculptures. Half are contemporary with the people and facts portrayed, while the other half are the result of the Citizen King’s extensive commissions and are therefore often romantic reconstructions of the most ancient periods. Many are the work of France’s greatest artists, such as Clouet, Champaigne, Le Brun, Rigaud, Largillière, Nattier, Drouais, Vigée Le Brun, David, Gros, Girodet, Gérard, Delacroix, H. Vernet, Winterhalter, Bonnat and Rafaelli. They are all wonderfully colourful and form a sort of extraordinary comic book.

What do they depict?

Like a family photograph album that only reminds us of the happy moments, this album of France recalls the glorious episodes and illustrious figures of the past: from Pharamond, the legendary forebear of the Merovingians, right up to the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, it gives an overview of the epic of the French Nation and its highlights involving Louis XIV, Napoleon and, of course, Louis-Philippe. In spite of unexpected sequences for Versailles – one on the Second Republic depicting the declaration of the abolition of slavery and another on the birth of the Third Republic with effigies of Thiers, Clémenceau, Pasteur and others – the collection has a monarchical bias, portraying ruling sovereigns, princes and princesses, war leaders, battles, dynastic ceremonies and court scenes in which the people (except armed) and France’s other regions are absent.

The issue

This is a history of France that is therefore very dated, very biased and very incomplete and we must ask ourselves how it is received by an early 20th-century and moreover largely international audience. These collections remain an important element of the French collective imagination and historiography is showing a real return to events and to the history of battles and great figures, as the current success of television documentaries and biographies demonstrates.

With this in mind, Jean-Jacques Aillagon has brought together a committee of historians, curators and journalists who have defined the broad lines of the project to develop the Museum of the History of France and are going to pursue their critical work in each period.

The course of action adopted is ambitious because it aims to:

- give a complete picture of the collection, which means taking numerous works out of storage; – make the whole museum accessible to different audiences (non-guided visits alternating with guided visits); – develop a generally chronological visit circuit, working around the untouchable decorative collections such as the Crusades Rooms and the Battles Gallery; – within this circuit, bring out themed focuses based on the collection highlights; – provide a critical interpretation of the works; – reposition these historical galleries throughout the residence.

The following is an outline of how the museum of the history of France will be distributed among the rooms of the Palace:

In the central parks

– the works illustrating the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI will remain in place in the royal and princes' apartments; – for the French Revolution, the two key pieces in the collection (*The Tennis Court Oath* and *The Death of Marat*) will be moved closer to the Coronation Room and the other David masterpieces.

In the north wing, near the chapel and the crusade rooms

– a gallery dedicated to The Legend of History, with a strongly educational introduction and a specific display highlighting the special nature of this collection of “reconstructed memory” and featuring symbolic figures from French history, in the style of historian Jules Michelet’s benchmark work, *History of France* (1833-67): Clovis, Charlemagne, Saint Louis, Joan of Arc, Francis I, the last of the Valois and Henry IV; – the Louis XIV rooms: court life, war and diplomacy, art and society.

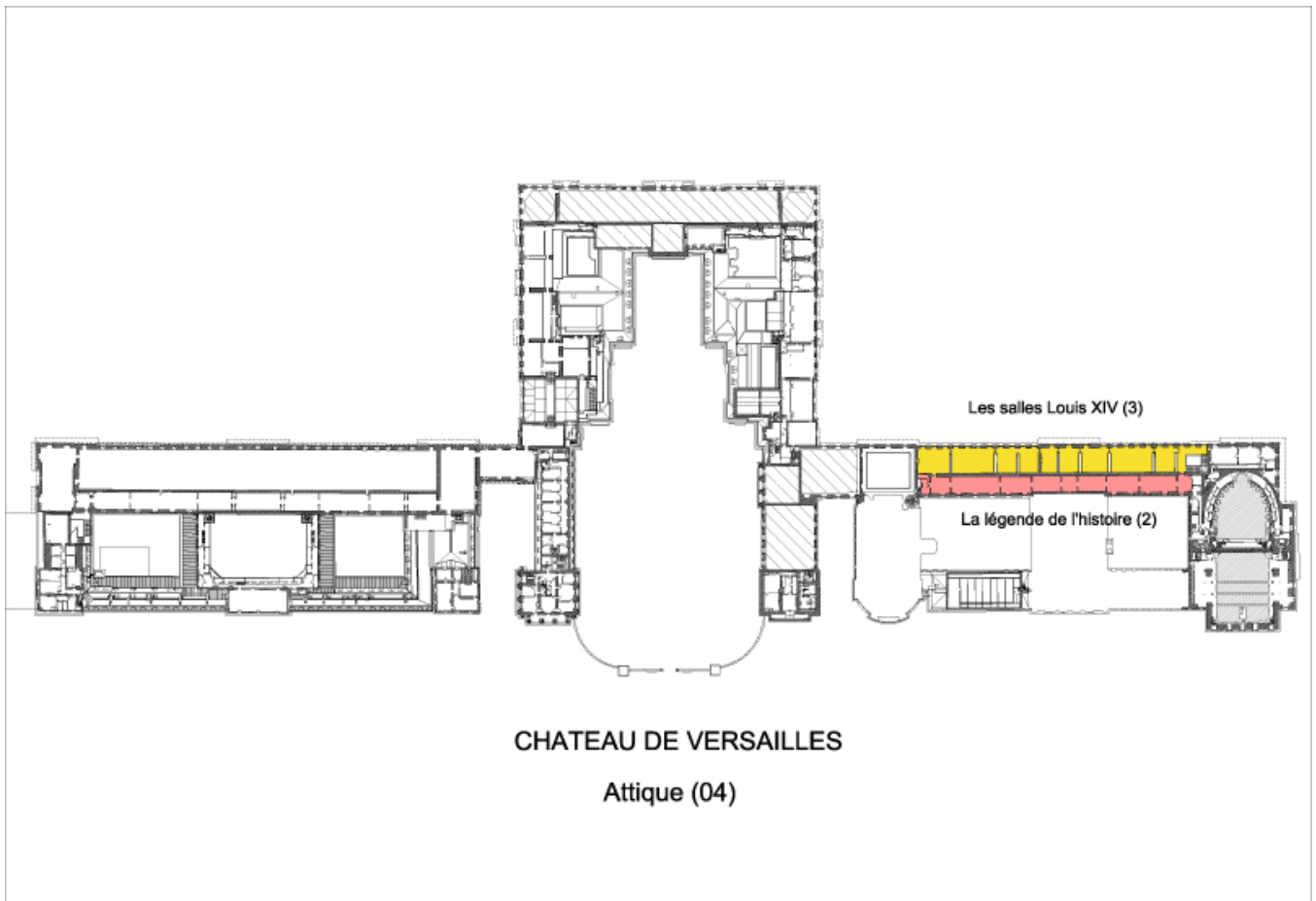
In the south wing, the 19th century

– or more precisely the period from the Directoire (1795) to the 1919 Treaty – was the only choice because of the untouchable areas there: – the series of rooms portraying the Napoleonic epic (with recessed works), at garden level; – the Battles Gallery leading to the 1830 Room, on the first floor; – the French Congress Room, at the centre of the arrangement; – finally, the President of the Republic’s Investiture Apartment.

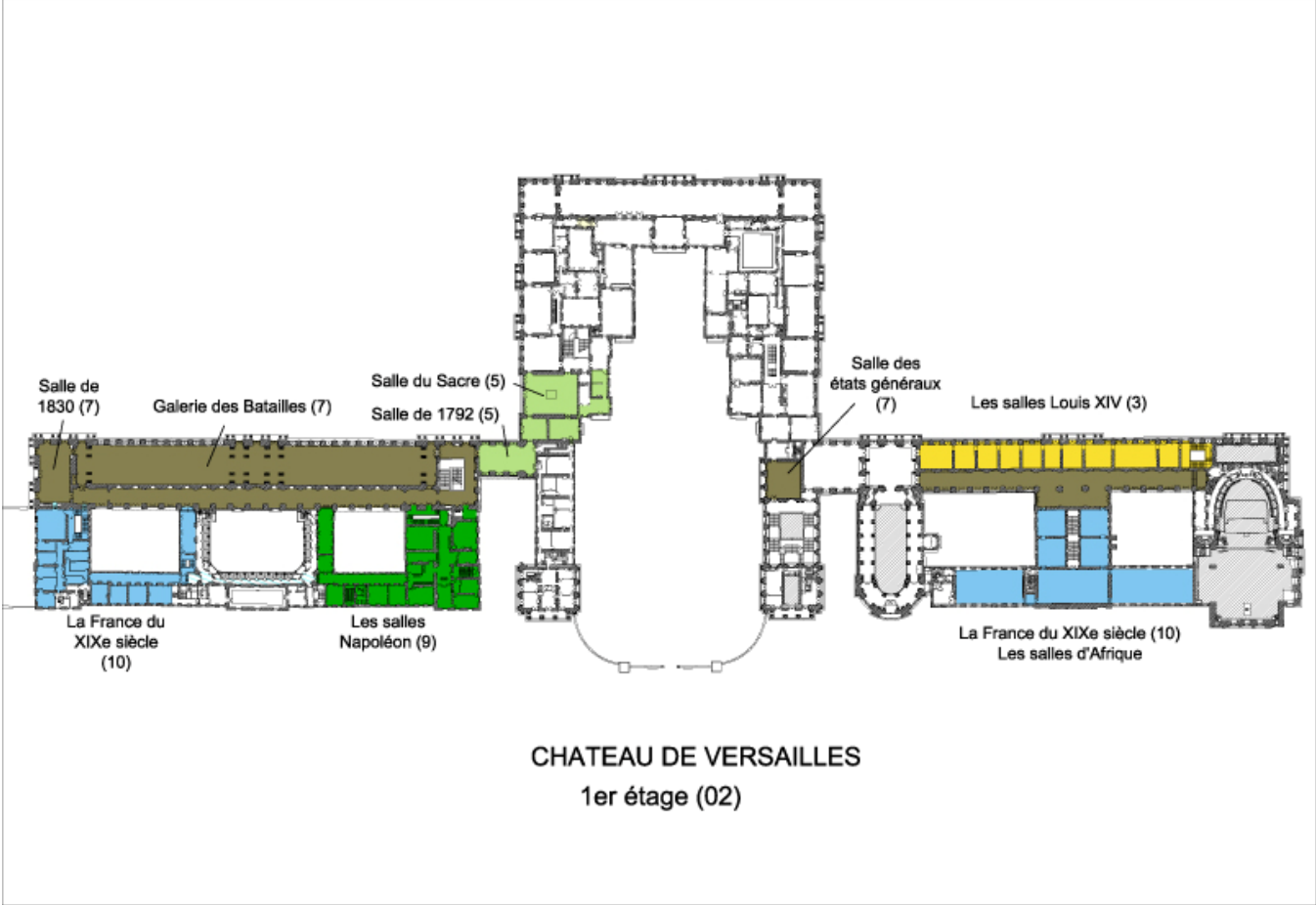
The exercise therefore consists of distributing the works with consideration for these historical influences.

Project to rehang the collections

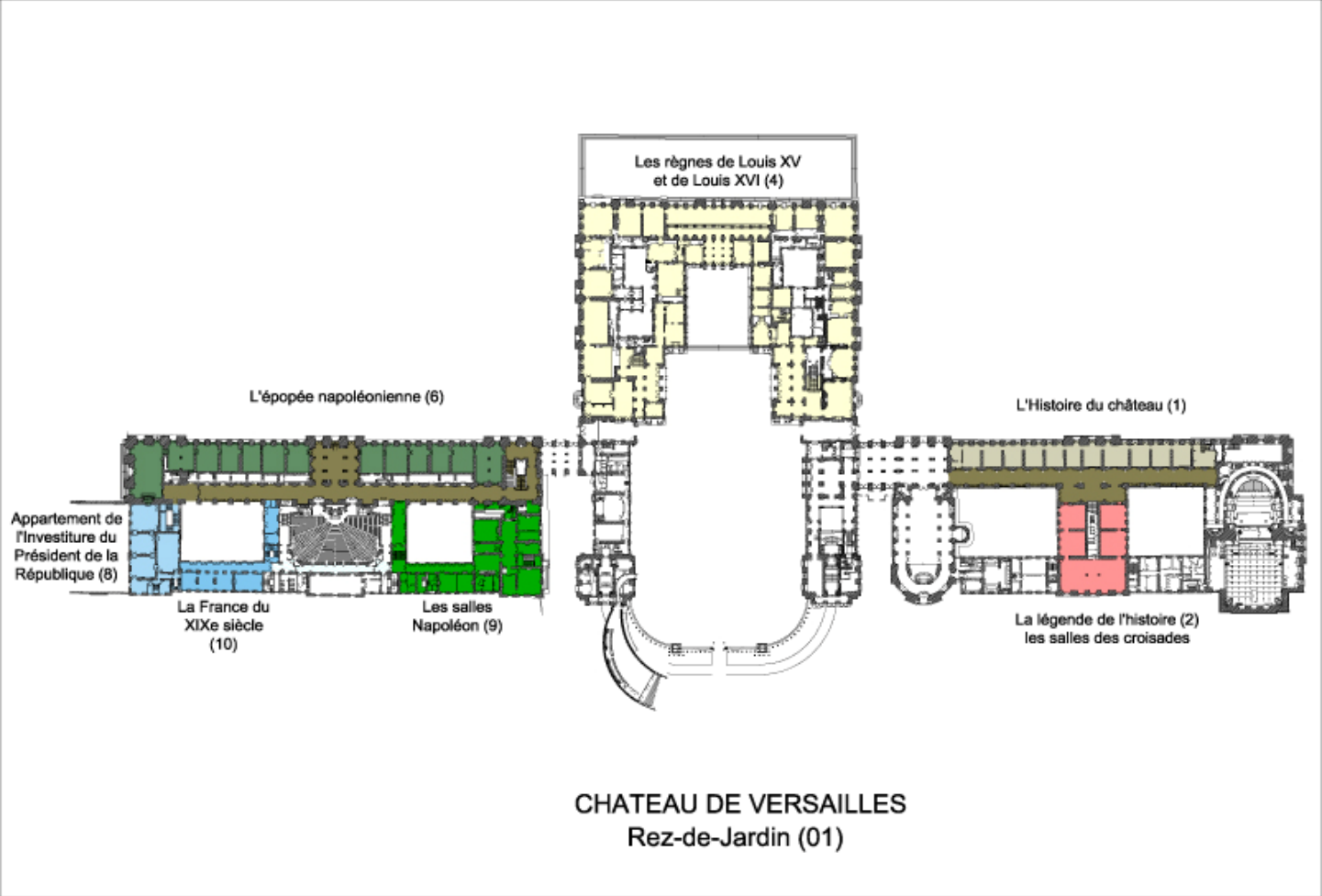
PALACE OF VERSAILLES Attic



PALACE OF VERSAILLES
First floor



PALACE OF VERSAILLES
Garden level



A part from a few wood-panelled rooms, the areas that have been handed back are neutral and sufficiently large to display the 19th-century collections, by far the richest and most unequalled. So they will be arranged as follows: – the Napoleon Rooms (on two levels): the Directoire and the Consulate (15 rooms), the First Empire (13 rooms); – 19th-century France (1815-1919) (on two levels): the Restorations, the July Monarchy, the French Revolution of 1848 and the Second Republic (17 rooms), the Second Empire and the Third Republic (11 rooms, including 4 in the President of the Republic's Investiture Apartment and opening on to the Congress Room).

The years to come will therefore see the implementation of this project, an enormous but exciting task that will be accompanied by a programme of exhibitions portraying major themes and great moments in history, up to and including today. The phasing of the operations should be fixed in 2009 with the curators on the project, the architects for the museological work and the administrators for the funding. The latter can only be envisaged through major state patronage. But with patronage, isn't the first condition of success to have a great project and to believe in it?

▪ **Putting the collections of the museum of the history of France online : www.museehistoiredefrance.fr**

A real glimpse of the Museum of the future, the website provides a complete view of the collections and thereby assists its development. It presents the public with a database of the painting and sculpture collections whose unity is unsuspected, despite their fame. Each work is presented by two texts – the first explaining the event, subject or figure(s) portrayed and the second putting the work, the artist and the context into perspective.

It makes a clear distinction between the different statuses of the works and provides inspiration for critical studies on the choices made in the 19th century (rejection of dark events, the history of the monarchy etc).

It draws attention to the architectural decisions taken at Versailles for the creation of the Museum in 1837: destroying the court apartments in both wings and creating the galleries. The website gives special emphasis to the spectacular architectural achievements: the Battles Gallery, the Crusades Rooms, the Coronation Room and the 1792 Room.

The website also offers a dialogue with online visitors through interactive modules allowing them to complete, make a critical study of and update this memory of France by making it their own. Analysing these contributions could enrich the Scientific Committee's reflections on the new Museum of the History of France in Versailles.

Thanks to the patronage of the Fondation Gaz de France

- **First introductory exhibition: *Four centuries of Palace of Versailles history***

This permanent exhibition dedicated to the history of the Palace will be presented right at the start of 2010 on the garden level of the North Wing. The exhibition will form the opening section of the Palace visit circuit. It will enable visitors to understand the successive stages in the construction of the Palace more clearly, from Louis XIII to the 20th century via Louis XIV, Louis XV, Louis XVI, Napoleon, Louis-Philippe and the Third Republic.

3. The cultural programme

Exhibitions

- **Court Pomp and Royal Ceremony – Court Dress in Europe 1650-1800**

Africa Rooms, 31 March to 28 June 2009

This exhibition traces the history of court dress in Europe, revealing the major influence France had in this sphere from the mid-17th to early 19th centuries. Over 200 exhibits (costumes, jewels and pictures) associated with the prestigious European monarchies will be brought together for the first time. This event is part of the cycle of exhibitions evoking court life in the 17th and 18th centuries, alongside *Versailles and the Royal Tables in Europe* in 1993-94.

Curators: Pierre Arizzoli-Clémentel, Managing Director of the Palace of Versailles, and Pascale Gorguet Ballesteros, Head Curator at the Musée Galliera, City of Paris Fashion Museum.

This exhibition is organised thanks to the patronage of Chanel and support of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux



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- **War Without Frills**

Battles Gallery, 4 May to 7 September 2009

Intended to offer new insights into the museum of the History of France, *War Without Frills*, on show in the Battles Gallery, will juxtapose representative war photography and photojournalism shots taken all over the world with the 33 battle scenes in the Gallery. This juxtaposition invites the visitor to reflect on the power and status of the

image. Each painting will have a companion photograph. The photographs chosen cover the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, from the oldest image taken in 1863 by Timothy O'Sullivan of the Battle of Gettysburg during the American Civil War, to the most recent one taken in 2006 in the Central African Republic by Frédéric Sautereau. The diversity of periods, places and supports is matched by the diversity of the photographers – anonymous, artists and great names in photojournalism, such as Robert Capa, Marc Riboud, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Don McCullin.

Curator: Laurent Gervereau, art historian and Chairman of the Institut des Images.

- **Versailles Off**

The EPV is presenting another edition of this contemporary art event. This year, Xavier Veilhan will be the Palace's guest from September to December.

- **Louis XIV: the Man and the King**

North Wing, Palace of Versailles, 19 October 2009 to 7 February 2010

The first major exhibition dedicated to King Louis XIV's public image and personal taste. The richness of Louis XIV's image is without precedent in history: he was the Sun King, in the guise of Apollo, the sun god, but his image was also associated with other historical and mythological figures at different moments of his reign, including Alexander, Hercules, Augustus and Saint Louis. The aim of the exhibition is to show and explain the metamorphoses of the royal image. The King became identified by his public image, but if we want to see the man behind the sovereign's mask, one of the best approaches is to study his personal taste. Indeed, Louis XIV was a man of taste and a passionate art lover. By bringing together the works he was fond of – gemstones, medals, miniatures, objets d'art, paintings and sculptures, as well as gardens, music and dance – the portrait of a collector is painted. The whole collection testifies to the exceptional quality of Louis XIV's artists.

Curators: N. Milovanovic and A. Maral, Curators at the Palace of Versailles



Hyacinthe Rigaud©JM Manāi - château de Versailles

- **Four Centuries of Palace of Versailles History**

Permanent exhibition (garden level, North Wing), early 2010

Through works of art and models, this exhibition will describe the four centuries (17th to 20th) leading up to the Palace's current configuration through its successive extensions, additions, demolitions and alterations. It will also reveal the figures behind all these works, in particular Louis XIV, as well as Versailles' designers, architects, gardeners and artists etc. This exhibition that opens the tour of the State Apartments will give visitors a better understanding of the history of the Palace.

- **Cultural and educational activities**

The following will be organised in 2009:

– numerous guided tours of the exhibitions and on themes like arts and techniques and “From Louis-Philippe to our days”; – access activities for specific target audiences: guided tours in French sign language and/or with lip reading for the deaf and hearing-impaired; new touch tours, particularly during exhibitions, for the visually-impaired; and for visitors who do not normally have access to museums; – visits of The Talking Museum for individuals and adult groups, including specific target audiences, with the support of the Conseil Général of the Yvelines département; – workshops for young audiences run by professionals and linked to the exhibitions, and art and culture classes on a contemporary art theme in the Gardens, with the support of the Academy of Versailles.

Shows

- **Evening Shows at the Neptune Fountain**

Snow White

30 June and 1 July 2009, 9pm

Choreography Angelin Preljocaj

Angelin Preljocaj is enjoying international success with his ballet based closely on the original Brothers Grimm fairytale. On stage, 26 dancers bring costumes designed by Jean-Paul Gaultier alive to the symphonies of Gustav Mahler. The skilful combination of universal symbols and contemporary dance in this romantic and enchanting ballet will delight all audiences, as one of the most beautiful love stories is told against the backdrop of the Palace of Versailles' exceptional architecture and a dazzling fireworks display.

Roberto Alagna sings a century of French operas

Thursday 9 July 2009, 9pm

Roberto Alagna (tenor), Orchestre de Paris, Michel Plasson (conductor)

Works by Gluck, Berlioz, Méhul, Grétry, Cherubini, Boieldieu, Offenbach. The most famous French tenor pays passionate tribute to French opera during this "patriotic" recital and his first major open-air performance.

Christophe

15 July 2009, 9pm

This year, the Neptune Fountain is echoing with the voice of the most timeless of all crooners. Christophe has sung it all: rock 'n' roll, electro and French chanson. He now lives within a nocturnal electro, revered by today's musicians, coveted by all and elusive. His work is a treasure of French heritage that appeals to every generation.

Cyrano de Bergerac and the Empires of the Moon

Fireworks show by Groupe F (premiere)

29 August, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12 September 2009, 9.30pm

Famous since their dazzling illumination of the Eiffel Tower in 2000, Groupe F designs and produces monumental fireworks shows all over the world. This year, Groupe F is presenting a new take on Cyrano de Bergerac's 17th-century science fiction novel *The Empires of the Moon and the Sun* in the form of a modern extravaganza.

- **Versailles Grand Musical Fountain Displays**

Grandes Eaux Musicales

From 4 April to 25 October: Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays from 9am to 6.30pm; fountain displays from 11am to 12noon and 3.30pm and 5.30pm. From 12 May to 23 June: Tuesdays from 9am to 5pm; fountain displays from 11am to 12noon and 2.30pm to 4pm.

A musical walk around the legendary fountains and groves in the Palace of Versailles Gardens.

Grandes Eaux Nocturnes

Saturday 20 and Friday 26 June, Saturdays 4, 11, 18 and 25 July, Saturdays 1, 8, 15 and 22 August 2009, 9pm to 11.30pm

At nightfall, water, light and sound turn the parterres and groves of the Palace of Versailles Gardens into a surprising visual and musical environment. The Grand Canal fireworks display closes and illuminates this magical and timeless walk.



© J. de Givry

The King's Promenade

Saturday 20 and Friday 26 June, Saturdays 4, 11, 18 and 25 July, Saturdays 1, 8, 15 and 22 August 2009, 6.30pm to 9pm

As a prologue to the Grand Evening Fountain Displays, exceptional visits of the State Apartments and Hall of Mirrors are organised at sunset.

- **14 July event**

Lunch on the lawns

14 July, 11am to 4pm

For further information on these shows: www.chateauversailles-spectacles.fr

Press contact: Opus 64 – Valérie Samuel

Tel: +33 (0)1 40 26 77 94

- **The Academy of Equestrian Arts**

The Way of the Equerry opus 2009

14 February to 26 April: Saturdays at 6pm and Sundays at 3pm. 2 to 31 May and 4 to 12 July: Saturdays at 8pm and Sundays at 3pm.

Equestrian show choreographed by Bartabas.

Equerries' Mornings

14 February to 12 July: Saturdays and Sundays at 11.15am.

The Academy of Equestrian Arts, a high-level equestrian arts training school and live show venue, introduces visitors to the work of the Academy's horses and equerries in the beautiful surroundings of the Palace of Versailles' Main Stables built by Jules Hardouin-Mansart.

For further information: www.acadequestre.fr Press contact: Laure Richard Tel: +33 (0)1 39 02 62 70

Music at Versailles

- **Reopening of the Royal Opera House**

The reopening will enable the EPV to schedule shows in an exceptional venue. Château de Versailles Spectacles and the Baroque Music Centre of Versailles have designed a programme in keeping with this venue that has finally been rediscovered and will contribute to the Palace's cultural identity.

Gala Reopening

Monday 21 September 2009

The Jealous Lover by Grétry, Marc Minkowski (conductor), Les Musiciens du Louvre-Grenoble.

- **Château de Versailles Spectacles**

Great Concerts

– *Tenebrae Lessons* by Marc-Antoine Charpentier: Christophe Rousset (conductor), Les Talens Lyriques, Saturday 4 April at 9pm (Royal Chapel).

– *Tenebrae Lessons* by François Couperin: Sébastien d'Hérin (conductor), Les Nouveaux Caractères, Sunday 5 April at 6.30pm (Royal Chapel).

– *The Great London Symphonies* by Joseph Haydn, on the bicentenary of his death: Marc Minkowski (conductor), Les Musiciens du Louvre-Grenoble, Sunday 24 May at 6.30pm (Battles Gallery).

– *Farinelli in Versailles*: Philippe Jaroussky (soprano), Ensemble Artaserse, Wednesday 17 June at 9pm (Hall of Mirrors).

▪ Baroque Music Centre of Versailles

Baroque Celebrations

25 September to 5 December 2009

- In France for the first time, the Boston Baroque Orchestra conducted by Paul O'Dette.
- Les Arts Florissants 30th anniversary concert conducted by William Christie.
- Performance of *Symphonies for the King's Supper* by Delalande, Les Talens Lyriques conducted by Christophe Rousset.
- Production of *Amadis* by Lully, Orchestre des Musiques Anciennes et à Venir and the Cantors of the Baroque Music Centre of Versailles, conducted by Olivier Schneebeli.

Great Grétry Days

4 October to 21 November 2009

- The stage production of *The Jealous Lover*, a comic opera, with Le Cercle de l'Harmonie conducted by Jérémie Rhorer, featuring restored Royal Opera House painted canvas scenery. Part of the Royal Opera House reopening programme.
- New concert version of the lyrical tragedy *Andromache* with Le Concert Spirituel and the Cantors of the Baroque Music Centre of Versailles, conducted by Hervé Niquet.
- New stage production of *Beauty and the Beast*, a mime based on the opera *Zemire and Azo³r*, by the Cécile Roussat and Julien Lubek company, Ensemble Ausonia conducted by Frédérick Haas.
- Concert production of *Cephalus and Procris*, a heroic ballet, with Les Agrémens and Le Choeur de Chambre de Namur, conducted by Guy van Waas.

Musical Thursdays at the Royal Chapel

Thursdays during term-time at 5.30pm, from November to June.

Conductor: Olivier Schneebeli

Revealing the choristers' day-to-day work, these recitals by the Pages and Cantors of the Baroque Music Centre of Versailles introduce visitors to masterpieces from the 17th- and 18th-century French and European repertoires. Alongside these, organ students from the Paris Conservatoire produce incomparable sounds from the Cliquot organ, the living soul of the Royal Chapel. For further information: www.cmbv.fr
Press contact: Valérie Weill Tel: +33 (0)1 47 63 26 08

³ Il semble que *Zemire* et *Lubek* soient les orthographes les plus usitées.

4. Scientific activities

The palace of Versailles Research Centre is dedicated to research and education in the field of places and expressions of power as represented in Versailles and Europe, principally in the 17th and 18th centuries. Court civilisation is considered from very angle, from how power was exercised and the structure and functioning of Curial institutions, to customs and mentalities, the movement of people and ideas, the development of the arts and sciences, the design of the Palace and Gardens and the significance of ceremonies, celebrations and shows.

The centre welcomes French and international researchers who work together to produce research programmes that are validated by its Scientific Committee. Among its activities, the research centre organises and hosts symposiums, study days and seminars, some of which are open to the public:

- Patrons and collectors under Saint-Simon
Study day, 7 March 2009.

- Material and visual cultures of dress in European courts (1400-1815)
International symposium, 5 and 6 June 2009. Coinciding with the exhibition *Court Pomp and Royal Ceremony in Europe* on show at the Palace.

- Princely courts, republican palaces and places of power in the eyes of television
International symposium, 17, 18 and 19 September 2009.

- Historiographic assessment of European courts
International symposium, 24, 25 and 26 September 2009.

- Dynasties, nations, Europe: princes' funerals and the collective memory
International symposium, autumn 2009.

For further information: www.centrederecherche@chateauversailles.fr

5. 2009 publications

▪ Art books

- *Le mobilier 19e de Versailles* P. Arizzoli-Clémentel (Faton)

▪ Exhibition catalogues

- *Fastes de Cour et cérémonies royales* Collectif (Rmn)
- *La Guerre sans dentelles* Laurent Gervereau (Skira/Flammarion)
- *Louis XIV : l'homme et le Roi* N. Milovanovic and A. Maral (Skira/Flammarion)

▪ Guidebooks

- *Versailles en poche*, Béatrix Saule (Art Lys), multilingual edition (including Arabic)
- *Napoléon, les grandes batailles* David Chanteranne (Ouest France), multilingual edition
- *Objectif Versailles* Brunhilde Jouannic and Liliana Tinoco (Actes Sud)
- *Louis XIV et Versailles* (from the *Grands noms de Versailles* collection), Mathieu Da Vinha (Art Lys)
- *L'Opéra royal* Jean-Paul Gousset and Raphaël Masson (Art Lys)
- *Le Grand Trianon* Jérémie Benoît (Editions du Gui)

▪ For children

- *Je colorie Versailles* (Ouest France), multilingual edition
- *Je colorie Marie-Antoinette* (Ouest France), multilingual edition
- *Je colorie Louis XIV* (Ouest France), multilingual edition

6. The palace of Versailles in short

Louis XIII's former hunting lodge was transformed and extended by Louis XIV during a vast programme of work that began in 1668. Fourteen years later, he made it the seat of the French Court and Government. Although the Palace's inhabitants left during the French Revolution, it continued to be maintained. In 1793, the National Convention (the executive government of the French Republic) opened the Palace to the public. Louis-Philippe turned it into a Museum of the History of France in 1833.

Over 100 rooms testify to the splendours of the former royal residence, while around 100 others house, over more than 10,000 m², the Museum of the History of France.

Apart from the three historical residences

– the Palace, the Grand Trianon and the Petit Trianon – the Estate of Versailles comprises the Baroque garden designed by Le Nôtre, the gardens of the Grand Trianon and Marie-Antoinette's Estate, and a wooded park on either side of the Grand Canal. There are numerous other buildings and outbuildings.

A Unesco world heritage site, former royal residence and Museum of History, the Palace is also a national palace where both houses of the French Parliament meet in joint session (forming the French Congress). Furthermore, the room known as the Congress Room is where the Presidents of the Republic were elected during the Third and Fourth Republics. Since the head of state has been elected by universal suffrage, the National Assembly and the Senate only meet there to revise the Constitution.

By decree on 27 April 1995, the Palace of Versailles was given the status of a public establishment with an administrative vocation and placed under the aegis of the French Ministry of Culture. This status is aimed at the greater advancement of essential missions like the conservation, scientific study and development of the collections, buildings and gardens, and education, training and research in the fields of history, art history, museology, music and the performing arts. This status also grants the Palace greater management autonomy, enabling it to complete major restoration projects, improve visitor reception facilities and maintain cultural activities in keeping with the site.

The Public Establishment of Versailles intends to remain an important hub of creativity and cultural events. Every year, it offers exhibitions, symposia, publications and shows that bring together some of the greatest names in music, theatre and dance in the Royal Opera House, the Chapel and the Gardens.

Within the framework of its scientific and cultural projects, the Public Establishment of the Museum and National Estate of Versailles has the following missions:

– to conserve, protect and restore on behalf of the State and manage, develop and present to the public the cultural property that makes up the collections registered on

the inventories of the national museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon, and of the annexes in its charge, and the Estate and estate buildings, and use it in accordance with the conditions set out in article 7;

- to contribute to enriching the national collections through the acquisition of cultural property on behalf of the State, by purchase or for free;

- to ensure by every appropriate means that the widest possible audience is received in the Palaces, Museum and Estate in its charge, that visitor figures increase, that knowledge of the buildings and their collections is promoted, and that education and communications initiatives aimed at ensuring equal access to culture for all are designed and implemented;

- to ensure the scientific study of its collections and the architecture of its buildings and gardens;

- to work together towards education, training and research in the fields of history, art history, museology, music and other performing arts;

- to organise shows, especially musical, theatre and ballet, in the Palaces and Museum and on the Estate.

7. Key Figures

- **Staff**

- 980 staff in total, including 583 civil servants, 129 contract staff and 251 temporary employees.
- 268 people working for the concessions – up to 380 during peak season (2008).

- **The collections**

60,000 works, including 7,000 paintings, 700 frames, 2,100 sculptures, 400 of which are outside, 4,000 pieces of furniture, 2,500 objets d'art, 35,000 graphic arts documents, 6,000 antique books, 1,200 vehicles and accessories.

- **The property**

Total built heritage: 233,091 m²

- **The Palace**

The total surface area of the Palace of Versailles is 63,154 m², including:

- 36,671 m² in the museum areas, including 7,420 m² in the Royal Opera House
- 12,181 m² in the Museum of the History of France
- 23,072 m² open to the public (non-guided and guided tours)
- 1,525 m² for temporary exhibitions (Africa Rooms and Maintenon Apartment)
- 2,300 rooms, including the National Assembly
- 1,944 windows

- **The Estate of Versailles represents nearly 730 hectares, including:**

- 431 hectares in the Great Park
- 96 hectares in the Trianon Estate
- 77 hectares in the Garden and Groves
- 39 hectares for the Swiss Guards Lake
- 66 hectares in the Mortemets area
- 24 hectares for the Grand Canal

- **Outbuildings on the Estate (excluding the Palace's):**

- 80,489 m², including the buildings on Rue de l'Indépendance Américaine
- Outbuildings in town: 89,448 m²
- Garden plants and structures
- 350,000 trees on the Estate
- 40 km of arbours
- 32 hectares of lawn
- 43 km of paths
- 23 km of trellises

- 700 topiaries in 67 different shapes
- 6,000 regularly pruned trees, including 1,886 lime trees around the Grand Canal
- 300,000 flowers planted every year by the gardeners, 260,000 of which are produced in the Estate's greenhouses
- 1,500 trees in planters in the Orangery, including 900 orange trees

- **The effects of the 1990 and 1999 storms**

- 1,500 trees came down in February 1990
- 10,000 trees decimated in December 1999

- **Ornamental lakes and fountains**

- 55 fountains and over 600 fountain displays
- 35 km of hydraulic pipes (90% in cast iron and 10% in lead)

- **Broad outlines of the 2008 budget**

Expenditure: €101 million

- €13m salaries and wages
- €20m civil servants' salaries
- €37m day-to-day running costs
- €31m refurbishment work

Receipts: €101 million

- €59m own resources
- €22m investment grants
- €19m civil servants' salaries