



THE DAUPHIN'S RESTORED APARTMENT

CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES



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RESTORING THE DAUPHIN'S APARTMENT

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Nestled in the heart of the royal residence, the Dauphin's apartment is reopening to the public from 1 April 2022 following months of restoration works: a sweeping project that has reunited this prestigious apartment with all its original cohesiveness and legibility. The works set out to restore the spaces to the condition and state they would once have been in when Louis XV's son first occupied them in 1747. The restoration was made possible thanks to the support of several patrons.

Giving out onto the gardens on the ground floor of the palace's main building, the Dauphin's apartment is one of the former royal residence's most prestigious, designed in a succession of rooms, each more opulent than the last. Now restored to its former glory, the apartment is an invitation to delve deep into the beating heart of the royal family's private life. The three main rooms that form the Dauphin's apartment — the bedchamber, the Great Chamber and library — were restored and offer up unique views of the gardens. They are positioned beneath the Hall of Mirrors, the Peace Room, and the Queen's bedchamber respectively.

Yet between the 17th and 20th centuries, these spaces were used and tweaked in such a way as to gradually compromise the cohesiveness of the rooms and their décor. The restoration works returned the spaces to how they would have looked in the 1740s, when architect Ange-Jacques Gabriel was tasked with refurbishing the royal apartment occupied by Louis XV's eldest son, the Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand.

THE DAUPHIN'S GREAT CHAMBER

The Great Chamber is the corner room in the centre of the apartment. The décor here was entirely refreshed in 1747 with the help of sculptor Jacques Verberckt and his Rococo woodwork. Only the fireplace and a section of the sculpted panels have survived.

The room was subjected to its most significant alterations at the turn of the 19th century, when the Palace of Versailles was transformed into a museum on Louis-Philippe's orders. It was at this point that most of the decorative elements were stripped away. In 1978, France's programme law for museums paved the way for work to begin on restoring the Great Chamber to its Ancien Régime glory. This work had remained unfinished, and was finally completed through the campaign that was launched in October 2020.



The Great Chamber prior to restoration, 2020 © Palace of Versailles, C. Millet

The combination of period and more recent panelling did not reflect Gabriel's original designs. The more structural elements such as the trumeau mirrors, the trumeaux between the windows and the large sculpted, gilded wooden panels had been missing, and were returned to the spaces during these restoration works, following in-depth assessment and research.

THE DAUPHIN'S GREAT CHAMBER WAS RESTORED THANKS TO THE PATRONAGE OF:

BARON PHILIPPE DE ROTHSCHILD, S.A.

THE DAUPHIN'S LIBRARY

This small room is the cosiest in the apartment and lies adjacent to the Great Chamber. It was turned into a library between 1755 and 1756. It still bears most of its original layout and Rococo-style décor, with the emphasis on floral wreaths, dolphins and depictions of the arts (architecture and painting trophies, dancing putti).

This intimate space is a unique room, and an invaluable asset to the Palace of Versailles. Its colourful décor was carried out in 1756 in the 'Vernis Martin' style, a French lacquering technique, and embodies mid-18th-century tastes for painted interior design inspired by nature.



The Dauphin's library prior to restoration, 2020 © Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier

Restoration works in the library focused on the panelling, as assessments conducted on the painted decorative elements confirmed fears that the previous restoration works in the 1960s had been driven by misinterpretation, with the décor now looking yellowed and faded. The background was refreshed to restore the panels' porcelain-look whites and blues. The stucco cornice appeared worryingly frail, and was both consolidated and repainted.

THE DAUPHIN'S BEDCHAMBER



The Dauphin's bedchamber prior to restoration, 2020 © Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier

When the room was refurbished for the Dauphin, Louis XV's son, in 1747, it was decorated by some of the greatest masters of the times. Jacques Verberckt sculpted the woodwork based on drawings by Ange-Jacques Gabriel, Jean-Baptiste Pierre produced the paintings above the doors (works of art that had been kept in the Palace of Versailles' collections and were put back in place following the restoration), and Jacques Caffieri crafted the bronze sculptures.

The palace's 19th-century refurbishment transformed the room, with much of the décor removed to ensure framed paintings could be mounted on the walls. In the 20th century, the woodwork and gilding was restored, the fireplace was dug out of the archives and returned to its rightful place, and the woodwork elements were put back up.

Today, the Dauphin's bedchamber is one of the most opulent and best-preserved of the royal apartments, with much of its original décor still standing: a true masterpiece of Rococo art.

The restoration works polished the gilded panelling to a shine, returning a sense of splendour and sheen to the panels that had become dulled and flawed. The restoration works also set out to clean and add to the existing décor with the utmost respect shown for authenticity and the overall effect enhanced by repainting the walls in an immaculate, regal white.

THE DAUPHIN'S LIBRARY WAS RESTORED THANKS TO THE PATRONAGE OF:



SOCIÉTÉ DES AMIS
DE VERSAILLES

FONDATION



WITH THE SUPPORT OF: DU
PATRIMOINE

I STEP INTO A WORLD SHROUDED IN MYSTERY...

This is often the way in Versailles: stepping into a world that has long remained shrouded in mystery, restoring a room clouded in disjointed memory as a result of it having been used in many different ways over the years, positioning a piece of furniture suddenly imbued with importance in light of a prince's biography, refurbishing décor alluded to in archive materials and brought to light quite by chance, and coaxing out a whole chapter of history in the process. Some rooms unveil often forgotten riches, and life stirs once more at the Palace of Versailles, reminding us yet again that it was first and foremost a home.

This is the overriding sense one experiences upon discovering the Dauphin's apartments. Suddenly, a shaft of light streams down, flooding the gilding with a vibrancy that had been dulled, and drawing the eye to the glistening mirror effect of the Parterre d'Eau or the Pièce d'Eau des Suisses pond. Beautifully rebuilt trumeaux erase the listless empty spaces left behind by the passing of time, Mentelle's globe, on loan from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, serves as a reminder of the Princes' schooling. Restoration and refurbishment works gently slough away the damage caused by time, successive kings' whims and fancies, the intricate binds of history, restoring three major rooms – the Dauphin's library, bedchamber, and Great Chamber – to their former glory and cohesiveness.

Three rooms now returned to perfection, single-handedly embodying life as it would have been for the Dauphin, Louis XV's son, in its 1747 layout. This was restored in the 1980s after having undergone a number of upheavals, particularly under Louis-Philippe, who was intent on turning Versailles into a museum to the history of France, rather than crystallising it as a testimony to the monarchy that thrived here until the Revolution. Three rooms amidst the sweeping immensity of the palace, yet three exceptional rooms, which along with the apartment belonging to Louis XV's daughters, allow us to open up the entire ground floor of the main building for the public to enjoy, after many long years of being closed.

We required the exemplary support of our patrons to do so, an artful balance of the Friends of Versailles Society's generosity, one family's passionate devotion to the arts through the Baron Philippe de Rothschild S.A. company, and Gilles Dupuis' skills-based patronage through his Atelier, picking up where his father left off in "refreshing" the painted décor at the Dauphine's Cabinet – adjacent to the Dauphin's – and allowing us to pay tribute to all the artisans who help us reconquer the past.

Catherine Pégard

President of the Public Establishment of the Palace,
the Museum and National Estate of Versailles



| WHICH DAUPHIN?

The Dauphin's apartment lies at the heart of the palace, and enjoyed the greatest of opulence, just as it would go on to suffer from the harshest of dismantlement. As its restoration works draw to a close, pure history shines through in its spaces in a tangle of successive generations of heirs to France's throne.

The Dauphin's apartment was closed due to works in the palace's main building for a number of years, and is one of Versailles' most iconic spots. Its spectacular location on the ground floor giving out onto the gardens beneath the Hall of Mirrors and the Peace Room symbolised the heir's dominance, putting him on even footing with the entire estate. The Great Chamber offers up sweeping views of the Parterre d'Eau and Parterre du Midi, stretching down to the Pièce d'Eau des Suisses pond. The Dauphin's courtyard is adjacent to that of the Queen, with a maze of stairs linking his inner cabinets to his mother's apartment, located just above.

Yet as is ever the case at Versailles, the "Dauphin's apartment" was in fact a complex and ever-changing space. The first point to note is that we are forced to make do with a reconstruction that dates back to the 1980s, as the apartment was radically truncated by Louis-Philippe to make way for galleries of portraits of admirals and constables: although the royal apartments were kept as they were, that belonging to the Dauphin, an inflammatory symbol of dynasty and direct legacy, home to a child who was to meet a tragic fate at the dawning of the Revolution, inevitably became a target as the "citizen king" set about re-writing France's history.

1980S ENDEAVOURS TO RESTORE IT TO ITS 1747 STATE

The apartment was renovated to replicate the layouts that were completed in 1747 for Louis XV's son following his second marriage. It would once have been more majestic still under the Grand Dauphin, Louis XIV's eldest son, who occupied roughly the same rooms and had embellished and adorned them with breathtaking decorative elements. Yet there was no way of restoring these vanished gems, such as the cabinet of mirrors with its Boulle work marquetry, its forest of console tables and pedestals crowned by precious objects: the 1747 version was the best solution, with some woodwork and paintings above the doors having been kept. The Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand had initially lived here as soon as he had 'come of age' in 1736, before moving to the south wing upon marrying the Infante of Spain in 1745.

When the latter died, he required new lodgings with the second Dauphine, Maria Josepha of Saxony. As soon as the court moved to Fontainebleau in the autumn of 1746, work began in the traditional apartment in the main buildings, based on plans by Gabriel of which we still have a number of details, and which marked the pinnacle of the Rococo style in all its majestic splendour.

HOME TO A NUMBER OF DAUPHINS, UP UNTIL THE LAST IN THE SUMMER OF 1789

Once the decision had been made to restore the apartment to this date, one issue needed to be tackled: the apartment had been used in a variety of ways up until the Revolution, as it had been home to a succession of Dauphins who varied wildly in age ranges, ending with the last Dauphin, Louis-Charles, who had moved in when he was four in the summer of 1789, following the death of his brother, Louis-Joseph-Xavier. The idea of refurbishing Versailles to its "6 October 1789" state required that the apartment capture life as it would have been for these last two Dauphins, as well as the setting Louis XVI had intended for their schooling. As a result, Harcourt's furniture was chosen for its close similarity, and the Mentelle terrestrial and celestial globe was offered up on loan from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, a mesmerising piece that Louis XVI commissioned in 1788 to teach Louis-Joseph-Xavier about the world around him. Yet some spectacular relics of the apartment's Louis XV chapter – Bernard Van Riesen Burgh's furniture for Louis-Ferdinand, the Vernis Martin japanning in the library – demanded that this period be showcased as it deserves. With this in mind, the Great Chamber was restored to its original appearance, complete with fully gilded décor, despite the fact that they would have been largely bleached under Louis XVI. The ingenuity and creativity that powered Gabriel-Verberck's team are now on vibrant display for all to admire.

MAKING LEAPS AND BOUNDS INTO THE PAST

There will always be gaps in our ability to fully recreate the charm of this 18th-century apartment. The painting Fredou produced for the courtyard in 1746 to create an illusionist space eludes us, as do the most valuable pieces of furniture. But we have come on in leaps and bounds, moving forwards into the past, as we are so often wont to do in Versailles.

Laurent Salomé,

Director of the

Palaces of Versailles and Trianon national museum

Extract taken from the Carnets de Versailles, n°19





PART 1 | RESTORING

PART 1 | THE BEDCHAMBER



The Dauphin's bedchamber after restoration © Palace of Versailles, C. Fouin

The Dauphin's bedchamber was built in 1668 during Le Vau's first round of works to extend the palace. It was restructured and laid out in several different ways until the 19th century. It once served as the old gilded cabinet of Louis de France, known as the "Grand Dauphin" or "Monseigneur", featuring a ceiling painted by Pierre Mignard. It was here that Louis XIV's son exhibited his collection of paintings.

Later on, it was used as the Regent's work cabinet, and was where he died on 2 December 1723.

IN 1747, the Dauphin's apartment was rearranged for Louis-Ferdinand of France and his new wife Maria Josepha of Saxony, with the room extended and turned into a bedchamber, and it is this layout and décor that is still visible today: woodwork sculpted by Jacques Verberckt based on Ange-Jacques Gabriel's designs, a red Griotte marble fireplace adorned with Jacques Caffieri's gilded bronze statues of Flora and Zephyr, and paintings above the doors by Jean-Baptiste Pierre.

BETWEEN 1830 AND 1837, Louis-Philippe embarked on plans to create a series of historical galleries, triggering radical changes in the process: the alcove was stripped away, the fireplace, mirror trumeaux and panelling were removed, and all available wall space was given over to framed paintings.

FROM 1946, the bedchamber's woodwork and gilding were restored. The room was repainted and refurnished as a bedchamber reflective of life in the Ancien Régime. It was rearranged once again during the museum programme law of 11 July 1978. This room and the Dauphin's library and Great Chamber were refreshed between 2016 and 2019 as part of moves to boost health and safety in the southern section of the palace's main building.

TODAY, the Dauphin's bedchamber is one of the most opulent and best-preserved of the ground-floor garden apartments, with much of its original décor, exquisite panelling and sculpted, gilded wooden trumeau mirrors still standing: a true masterpiece of Rococo art.



The Dauphin's bedchamber after restoration © Palace of Versailles, C. Fouin

Prior to restoration, the look and feel of the room was satisfactory from an historical and aesthetic perspective. Yet as the decorative elements had been gradually dulled and damaged over a 40-year period,

restoration works were kickstarted to simply clean up the room: a general dusting down and clean of the décor and gilding, and a fresh coat of paint on all the white backgrounds behind the décor. All the impost frames in the room were removed and restored. The woodwork was also regilded in full.

PART 1 | THE GREAT CHAMBER



The Dauphin's Great Chamber after restoration © Palace of Versailles, C. Fouin

When it was first built by Le Vau in 1668, the corner room was split into three distinct rooms: Monsieur's bedchamber, Monsieur's small corner cabinet, and Madame's cabinet. In 1693, Monseigneur extended his apartment and opened up the space to create his Great Chamber. From that point on, the room was traditionally set aside for the Dauphin, and was used as a luxurious reception room.

IN 1747, when the apartment was restructured for Louis XV's son, the décor was refreshed in full, and like the neighbouring room, the woodwork was sculpted by Jacques Verberckt based on drawings by Ange-Jacques Gabriel, with the purple Brèche marbre fireplace embellished with Rococo bronze statues sculpted and gilded by Jacques Caffieri. The Great Chamber was left alone until the redevelopments that took place **IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY** as part of Louis-Philippe's plans to transform the palace. It was then that the room was stripped of a portion of its décor to make space to hang a number of large paintings.

AT THE TURN OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES, the Great Chamber was relieved of its role as a museum space, and was reunited with its feel as an Ancien Régime-era apartment room. A new cornice was added using a mould taken of the cornice in Madame Victoire's Great Chamber, and a Louis XV marble fireplace was replaced on the eastern wall. Jacques Verberckt's paintings above the doors were removed and replaced with new Rococo-style doorway edges that frame a selection of landscape paintings, and the mirror trumeaux were repositioned in the spaces between the windows, inserted into simple frames despite the ghostly outlines of the 1747 mirror backings.

The enactment of **THE PROGRAMME LAW ON MUSEUMS DATED 11 JULY 1978** ushered in restoration works and continued efforts to return the Dauphin's Great Chamber to its Ancien Régime state: reflooring with Versailles-style parquet, returning the original fireplace, restoring the supporting panelling and the handful of ceiling panelling left under Louis-Philippe, sanding down the woodwork, returning the paintings above the doors. During this period, the 18th- and 19th-century bronze work was also refurbished.

In 2016, the room's mirrors had been removed due to the health and safety works conducted on the southern section of the palace's main building, revealing the four 1747 mirror backings on the trumeaux between the windows, which still bore traces of the swirls from the medallions that would once have adorned these pieces, as shown in the Ange-Jacques Gabriel drawings still in our possession. The outlines of these medallions and their upper and lower ornaments remain clearly visible, as do two wreaths extending from the upper ornament to the wings at the outer edge of the trumeau. This was a major discovery in guiding the restoration works, and prompted the team to reflect on refurbishing elements that had disappeared.

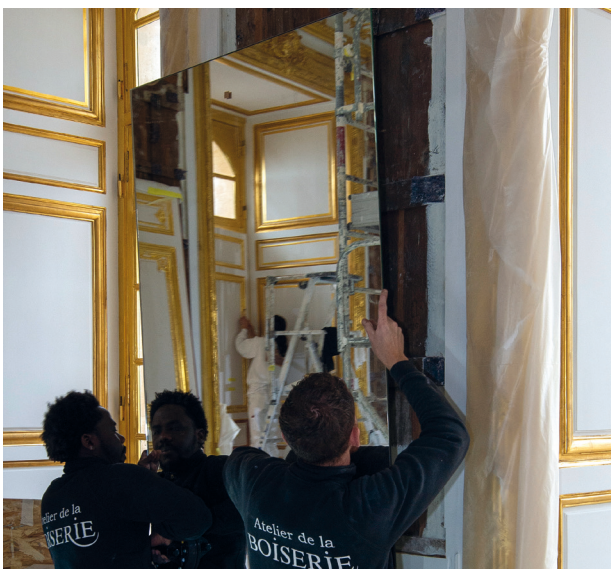


Close-up of the traces still visible under the trumeaux mirror backings between the windows in the Dauphin's Great Chamber
© Palace of Versailles, D. Saulnier

Prior to the now completed restoration, the décor in the Great Chamber was confused and incoherent. The room had suffered from the many changes that had taken place in the 1930s, in addition to an incomplete restoration that resulted in a mix of primarily authentic Rococo-style panelling, and overly simplified panelling that had merely been moulded. The incomplete gilding disrupted the sense of balance, harmony and beauty that the original décor would have once enjoyed (a plain white pasted background that helped the moulding pop, sculpted edges and gilded tempera décor). **Furthermore, the Great Chamber was out of step with the opulence of the other, contemporary adjacent rooms in the Dauphin's apartment, and did not do justice to the level of prestige inherent to Ange-Jacques Gabriel's vision. This created a jarring, disjointed sense in the overall feel of the apartment.**



Restoration of the Dauphin's Great Chamber © Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier



Reinstalling the mirror trumeaux between the windows © Palace of Versailles, D. Saulnier

The restoration works aimed to reinject a sense of cohesiveness into the room's decorative elements, marking a return to the space's original purpose and opulence, which in line with the apartment's ascending majesty, forms one of the most luxurious and remarkable rooms, along with the bedchamber.

These works restored the mirror trumeaux that had been removed in accordance with Ange-Jacques Gabriel's plans in 1747. This decision was based on in-depth assessment and a series of specific archaeological findings. The room was in a fairly satisfactory state in terms of health and safety, with the works focusing primarily on the woodwork and their gilding. All the impost frames were also removed and restored, and the woodwork regilded in full.

Finally, significant works were rolled out on the fireplace, where a bronze ornament was missing. This was replicated from a clay mould made of the identical stone tie on the other side, which was still standing. Bronze prototypes were made in order to conduct gilding tests with a view to achieving a finish as close as possible to the existing stone tie. The result is a fireplace that now looks entirely cohesive.



Close-up of the Dauphin's Great Chamber © Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier

INTERVIEW WITH SCULPTOR AND ORNAMENTALIST FRANÇOIS GILLES

François Gilles explains how he worked with Charles Boulnois on the decorative elements that had vanished from the woodwork in the Dauphin's Great Chamber.

The Great Chamber lost a large proportion of its ornamental detailing in the 19th century. What work did you carry out, exactly?

Let me start by saying that in terms of the sculpted woodwork, nothing had been done on this scale since the 1980s, when the ground-floor apartments were refurbished to their Ancien Régime appearance. During this period, renovation works on the Great Chamber remained incomplete. The authentic panelling had been replaced and the sections that had once featured panels were merely hinted at with simple moulding, which did not reflect the rich complexity of the design dreamt up by famous architect Ange-Jacques Gabriel.

Charles Boulnois and I were therefore entrusted with making six mirror trumeaux – two large and four small – which are structural components of a décor such as this. Our work would be better described as a 'reconstruction', rather than a 'restoration'. We can't pretend to have achieved complete accuracy, as although some source material still exists, nothing physical remains of these trumeaux.

Speaking of which, what sources did you draw on?

Quite a few, but they were lacking. They hinted at Gabriel's intention, but not the end result. Two hand sketches served as a starting point for our brainstorming, but they were lacking detail and were contradicted by the quotes for the work, which detailed the measurements for the ornaments. This points to the project having evolved and grown in complexity over time. We're quite sure of this, as the same thing occurred for the panelling in the Dauphin's bedchamber. However, reports and accounts of the work were missing, as were a greater number of examples of authentic trumeaux inside the palace. This is because the mirrors were sold during the Revolution, and because they were fragile. For the small trumeaux, we were able to draw on one invaluable and indisputable clue: the traces left on the parquet, outlines of the bottoms of the mirrors, which allowed us to imagine the silhouette of the upper section. The detailing of the ornaments is described in the old quotes, without any specific design being known. Our reconstruction work was carried out blindly due to this lack of material, which might strike you as audacious.



François Gilles in his atelier © Laure-Hélène Arnault

However – and this is important to note – it is entirely reversible: one day, we may come across additional information allowing us to revise these trumeaux, and it will be easy to rework them, and even start all over again. Our work was carried out by analogy, by examining Gabriel's work (in particular for the sitting room in the Château de Bellevue) and aspects of the trumeaux at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. Naturally, our guide was always the Dauphin's bedchamber, where a large trumeau by the same sculptor (Jacques Verberckt) still exists.

In a way, you were required to step into the shoes of Jacques Verberckt (1704-1771), one of the 18th century's greatest wood sculptors?

Yes. Charles Boulnois and I got started, with nothing more than what he would have been working with at the time. We had to become him, getting into the mindset of the sculptor at that precise point in his career, at a time when Rococo was all the rage: a style that lends itself particularly well to inventiveness. Verberckt's initial focus was statues, and he was able to deploy all his flair for volume and extraordinarily spontaneous approach. He rejected realism, creating patterns and designs with a view to catching and reflecting the light. Some of the flowers he sculpted cannot be found in nature, but their carefully arranged petals shimmer into life at the slightest flicker of light. It's difficult to imitate a master on this scale. He was a favourite of Gabriel's, and was asked to work on all the royal projects. His work is well known, and sparked the greatest of admiration in myself and Charles.

Extract from the interview published in
the *Carnets de Versailles*, n°19



Restored library in the Dauphin's apartment © Palace of Versailles, C. Fouin

When it was originally built by Le Vau in 1668, the space now occupied by the Dauphin's library, the adjacent Dauphine's cabinet and the corridor running at the back of these rooms served as the antechamber for the apartment belonging to Philippe I, Duke of Orléans (1640-1701) and brother to Louis XIV.

IN 1747, when the apartment was refurbished, this room was closed off to house the Dauphin and Dauphine's cabinets and a service corridor. Less than a decade later, the Dauphin's private cabinet was turned into a library, reusing some of the panelling, and the access points were bricked up and replaced with shelving. **IN 1789**, the library was refurbished into a night watch room, with an alcove cleared and the passageway leading to the Great Chamber reopened. **IN 1814**, the library became the Duke of Angoulême's bedchamber, the alcove was kept and the woodwork shifted colour palette for the first time, with the blue, white, and "natural" flowers replaced with a white and gold scheme.

As work continued to return the palace to its Ancien Régime appearance, the woodwork was restored and stripped **IN 1898**, the panelling was repainted white and blue, and the cornice as well as the edges around the mirrors and paintings above the doors were gilded. More a nod to the past than an authentic restoration, these attempts sought to reunite with the blue-heavy colour palette recorded in the archives. The most glaring error in this approach resided in its hybrid nature, in which blue-painted reliefs were combined with overwhelming amounts of gilding. This paired with the reliefs being undiscerningly painted blue resulted in an overall effect that was far removed from the original vision.

IN THE 20TH CENTURY, the library was hit by wave after wave of works triggered by misinterpretation. In 1907, the panelling was stripped and left as simple oak boards. Repainting work took place between 1913 and 1922, but was interrupted by the war. In 1953, the alcove was removed to return the room to its 1755 layout, but a misinterpretation resulted in a niche being created, inspired by those that still remained on the room's other walls. From 1960 to 1963, the panelling was removed, restored, and repainted in the Vernis Martin style using shades presumed to be close to the original, as seen on two door leaves that were removed under Louis-Philippe and rediscovered in the palace's archives. The moulded sections were painted in "Prussian blue" while the backgrounds were "daffodil yellow". In reality, the latter was initially a white, with the varnish having jaundiced with age. With France's programme law for museums (11 July 1978), woodwork with backgrounds deemed too yellow were lightened to a "pale yellow" shade by removing the yellow varnish and glazing that was applied in 1963. This achieved a result closer to the library's original palette, which was initially white and blue as stated earlier, with natural, foliage-inspired decorative elements.



Library in the Dauphin's apartment, close-up © Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier

Today, the Dauphin's library boasts the vast majority of all its original decorative elements and layout:

- The fireplace with its curved red Griotte marble surround, the shutters, the embrasures and panel above the window date back to 1747 when the Dauphin's private cabinet was built,
- The wood cornice on the panelling and the mirror trumeaux edges to the east and west partially re-use decorative elements from 1747,
- The stucco cornice on the ceiling, the paintings above the doors and the bookcase frames date back to the 1755 renovation.

Taken as a whole, this space offers up one of Versailles' most enchanting examples of subdued, measured and symmetrical Rococo style. While the authenticity of almost all the décor's components here is indisputable, the same cannot be said for the panelling's pictorial decoration, which was smoothed over in 1898 and again between 1906 and 1907.

Yet the "daffodil" shade painted on to the panelling's background in the 1960s did not do justice to the original colour scheme, despite having been significantly tempered to a very pale "straw yellow" in 1980: the original colour combination featured sculpted naturalist motifs and mouldings embellished in blue and other shades, which popped against a white background, all varnished to replicate the high gloss, coolness and intensity of porcelain.

Although studies conducted upstream of the restoration works revealed that the panelling was in good structural condition, the cornice was worrying. Made of plaster and silicone, it was webbed with cracks that had rendered it fragile, and called for a general structural refreshment that inevitably raised the question of how to handle its pictorial layer - and by extension, how to handle the room's décor in its entirety, which was meant to look perfectly even.

It was therefore proposed that there be a hint of the original feel, as no material vestiges had survived, and the natural painted décor and ornamental sculptures were lost for evermore. The shades and colour scheme used were chosen based on archive source documents that mentioned Prussian blue, and by following the example of the contemporary Poets' Cabinet and the Crécy panel at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, which still bears its original 18th-century décor.

In a bid to achieve a full return to the 1756 aesthetic, archaeological assessments of the spaces resulted in the 1960s niche being removed and the central panels replaced in line with Ange-Jacques Gabriel's designs.



Restoring the library © Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier



Restoring the library © Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier



Restoring the library © Palace of Versailles, D. Saulnier

CONTRACTOR

Frédéric Didier, Head Architect of Historical Monuments, 2BDM agency.

CONTRACTING BODY

Department of Heritage and Gardens
at the Palace of Versailles.

COMPANIES

- **Woodwork – mirror restoration:**

SAS ATELIER DE LA BOISERIE

- **Wood sculpture:**

GROUPEMENT BOULNOIS / GILLES

- **Ironwork/metalsmithing – Bronze sculpture –**

Fireplaces: ÉTABLISSEMENT DE CHANT VIRON

- **Painting – Vernis Martin-style decorative painting –**

Gilding:

MERIGUET RESTAURATION and ARCOA

- **Stucco restoration:**

TOLLIS SARL



Restoration of the Dauphin's Great Chamber © Palace of Versailles, D. Saulnier



Restoration of the Dauphin's Library © Palace of Versailles, D. Saulnier



Restoration of the Dauphin's Great Chamber © Palace of Versailles, D. Saulnier



Restoration of the Dauphin's Great Chamber © Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier

WORK ON THE DAUPHINE'S CABINET DE RETRAITE

Upon restoring the Dauphin's apartment, the Dauphine's Cabinet de Retraite, which lies adjacent to the apartment, was also refurbished thanks to the skills-based patronage provided by the Atelier Gilles Dupuis.



The Dauphine's restored Cabinet de Retraite © Palace of Versailles, D. Saulnier

The Dauphine's Cabinet de Retraite emerged in 1747. A year later, Alexis Peyrotte's painted décor had warped as a result of poor application. The Dauphine's Cabinet de Retraite was therefore reworked, with new decorative sculpted elements added and the room expanded. It was at this point that the Martin brothers produced a lavish series of painted and varnished sculpted decorative pieces.

In the 19th century a number of tweaks were made to the room, with these changes then removed in 1946. At the time, the size and scale of the room was returned to their 1747 measurements, but the décor was never fully restored. The programme law of 1980 saw these works draw to a close.

Before the refurbishments, other than the yellowed varnish that had been applied to the décor in the early 1980s, the room was in good general condition. The work carried out by the Atelier Gilles Dupuis under the guidance of Frédéric Didier, Head Architect of Historical Monuments, was therefore restricted to refreshing the décor without tackling the colour scheme rolled out in 1980.



© Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier

THREE QUESTIONS FOR PAINTER AND DECORATOR GILLES DUPUIS

Why was it important to you to offer skills-based patronage for this project?

Our family atelier has been working for the Palace for over 90 years now. We've been involved in a number of restorations, including the Poets' Cabinet, Marie-Antoinette's apartments, and the Petit and Grand Trianon. It was important that we lend the Palace our own unique brand of support. It was also a way of paying tribute to my father and the work we have carried out at the Palace of Versailles over all these years.

Can you talk us through the relationship between the Palace of Versailles and the Atelier Gilles Dupuis?

My father Raymond Dupuis started working for the Palace of Versailles in 1929 as part of the large-scale restoration of the Queen's Hamlet funded by John Rockefeller's donation. I shadowed him, and was able to learn by his side from a very young age, so you might say it has been a love affair with the Palace of Versailles.



© Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier

What were the key stages in your work on the Dauphine's Cabinet de Retraite?

The idea was to refurbish all the very ornate and elaborate woodwork. The restoration set out to return the room to how it would have looked in the 18th century when it was occupied by Maria Josepha of Saxony. At the time, this small cabinet was reminiscent of Meissen porcelain – white with colourful edges. We sought to restore this aesthetic, and then applied a clear, more stable varnish. Under the direction of the Head Architect of Historical Monuments, a few sculpted wooden pieces were then added to some parts of the décor. We then embellished the ornamental work with touches of colour and highlights to add interest. We drew on an original panel from the Palace's archives to inform the colour choices for these touch-ups. Thanks to the research that was carried out, we had access to very precise references for the colours that were used in Maria Josepha of Saxony's day.





PART 2 | REFURNISHING

FURNITURE AND ARTWORKS

The work that was completed in 1980 led to the spaces being reconfigured to their 1747 layout, with priority given to Gabriel's vision – for lodgings for the Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand, son of Louis XV, upon his marriage to Maria Josepha of Saxony – over later works that had seen some of the rooms divided up. The campaign to restore the edges of the mirrors in the Dauphin's Great Chamber follow on from this vision.

Consequently, the refurnishment prioritises two periods that proved most significant in the history of these apartments' Ancien Régime occupancy. As there was a complete lack of any architectural decorative elements from the Grand Dauphin, son of Louis XIV, era and as all the furniture from the original apartment had vanished, restoring the room to its late 17th-century state was impossible.

The two princes reflected in the apartment's décor were the Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand, son of Louis XV, and the Dauphin Louis-Joseph, son of Louis XVI, who moved in upon 'coming of age' in 1787. Between these two periods, the apartment was primarily occupied by the heir apparent to the throne, the Count of Provence, brother to Louis XVI.

However, the rarity of the furniture that has now been identified, supplied in either 1747 or 1787, allowed teams to proceed by analogy, as in the rest of the palace: missing furniture key to understanding how the rooms would have been used was replaced with traditional furniture of equivalent origin and quality, thanks to a continuous acquisitions and deposits policy, particularly with respect to pieces identified in France's extensive Mobilier National collections.

THE SECOND ANTECHAMBER

The second antechamber featured paintings above the doors depicting landscapes by Aubry which remain unidentified, and served as a waiting room. With the Ancien Régime-era tapestries of the History of the King missing, portraits of the royal family adorn the walls. The furniture is reflective of the room's past in the two mid-18th-century chests of drawers that are very similar to the ones that would have stood here, and the banquettes covered in Savonnerie carpet. Another piece was gifted in 2019: a decorative clock based on the one supplied for the apartment of Louis-Charles, Duke of Normandy, who occupied these rooms with his sister Marie-Thérèse Charlotte, known as Madame Royale, for some of 1789, and replaced the one provided for his elder brother's service in 1787.



© Palace of Versailles, D. Saulnier

THE BEDCHAMBER

The bedchamber has retained all its 1747 décor. While none of the furniture supplied for the Dauphin in 1747 could be reinstated, the sumptuous early-18th-century bed belonging to the duchess is evocative of the royal bed that once would have been, although the latter was adorned with a gold-trimmed damask rather than a patchwork tapestry. The spirit of the Dauphin — son of Louis XVI — shines through clearly in the rest of the furniture, however. Indeed, the bottom of the wardrobe produced by Guillaume Benneman in 1787 was donated to the palace by the Friends of Versailles Society in 1991, and was returned to its rightful place beneath the mirror trumeau opposite the fireplace. This mahogany piece bears simple mouldings and is devoid of any gilded bronze ornamentation, reflecting all the care and attention that the Garde-Meuble of the Throne poured into ensuring that the furniture placed in the seven-year-old child's room could not cause injury.



Bottom of wardrobe, made for this room in 1787 by Guillaume Benneman (1750-1811)
Donation from the Friends of Versailles Society by Count Edouard de Royère
©Palace of Versailles, C. Fouin

A stunning gilded bronze fire screen sits in the fireplace, supplied for the bedchamber occupied by the Dauphin, Louis XVI, at the Château de Fontainebleau. A decorative clock adorned with particularly lavish Rococo embellishments was supplied for the bedchamber occupied by the Duke of Burgundy, Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand's eldest son, in 1759, replacing the one supplied for his father in 1747, which was very similar in design.



Bedding furniture placed in Marie-Antoinette's bedchamber to add to her comfort while awaiting the birth of the Duke of Normandy in 1785.
Jean-Baptiste Boulard (1725-1789)
© Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier

With the original seating missing, the idea was to infuse this room with furniture brimming with a sense of childhood: the furniture made by Jean-Baptiste Boulard in 1785 for the Queen's bedchamber on the first floor when Marie-Antoinette was expecting her third child, the future Duke of Normandy. Simple

in style and shape, these white-painted wood pieces are characteristic of the purposefully fuss-free, child-friendly furniture used in 1787. This furniture is made all the more moving when you consider that it was used to furnish the Queen's room at the Tuileries Palace from October 1791 on: a living, breathing testimony to the monarchy's dying days.

The resplendent gilded wood screen was made by Boulard in 1787 for the Count of Provence's new bedchamber in Versailles when he was forced to leave the Dauphin's apartment to make way for his nephew, the Dauphin Louis-Joseph.

THE GREAT CHAMBER

Here too, the furniture that the Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand or his grandson Louis-Joseph would once have enjoyed could not be identified, or could not be returned to Versailles. Consequently, instead of the many chairs that would have been here in 1787, all the furniture supplied for the living room used by the Duchess of Harcourt, wife of the Dauphin's governor in 1787, has been moved to the room. The Duchess of Harcourt's apartment was located close by, in the Dauphine's former apartment, where some of the rooms had been sectioned off. This collection of pieces included chairs by Jean-Baptiste Claude Séné and a large console by Claude-Charles Saunier (acquired in 2008 thanks to the company KPMG), made from Guadeloupean walnut veneer with a gilded bronze Apollon sun, used to hold a service fit for a prince.



Console commissioned in 1787 for the lounge used by the Duchess of Harcourt, wife of the Dauphin's governor.
Claude-Charles Saunier (1735-1807)
Acquired in 2008, thanks to the patronage of the company KPMG
© Palace of Versailles, D. Saulnier

The Dauphin's Great Chamber was designated at his study at the time, hence the desks on display, supplied for the first Dauphin by the atelier of cabinetmaker Bernard Van Riesen Burgh: one large flat-topped desk deposited by the Mobilier National collections in 1953, and one small desk, donated in 2018. Both were made in 1745.



Flat-topped desk supplied by marchand-mercier craftsman Hébert in 1745 for the Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand's (1729-1765) Great Chamber in the southern wing
Bernard II Van Risen Burgh (1696-1766)
© Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier

Two exceptional items deepen the atmosphere of this study: a large barometer commissioned for the Dauphin and future Louis XVI in 1773, and a large two-part globe by Edmé Mentelle depicting the seabed most notably — one of the first attempts at achieving a realistic illustration of deep-sea topography. Commissioned in 1788 for the Dauphin's schooling, it was ultimately delivered to the Tuileries Palace, where the family had fled in October 1789.

The clock on the fireplace mantel was taken from the Count of Artois' bedchamber in Versailles, and was made in 1773 based on a model designed by sculptor and founder-chiseller Jean-Louis Prieur. It features two cherubs in a style not dissimilar to the clock Prieur made for the Dauphin and future Louis XVI's wedding. In the fireplace are the andirons made by bronzesmith Quentin-Claude Pitoin from the Queen's first-floor apartment, which were supplied when the Dauphine Marie-Antoinette took up occupancy in 1771.



Barometer commissioned in 1773 by the Administration des Menus Plaisirs for the Dauphin, future Louis XVI (1754-1793), but never delivered.
Jean-Baptiste Toré and Jean-Joseph Lemaire
© Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier

MENTELLE'S GLOBE



Mentelle's globe ©Palace of Versailles, C. Fouin

Exceptional loan from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France's maps department

This monumental piece towers two metres forty high, and was made between 1786 and 1789 upon Louis XVI's request. Designed for his eldest son's schooling, this science prop transformed geography into a modern discipline while forging connections between the dynasty and the cosmic order.

The surface of the earth is depicted on the outer calotte, of which the two hemispheres can be parted in two sections showing the New World (America and the Pacific) and Old World (Eurasia and Africa) along the prime meridian (at the time the Ferro meridian in the Canaries). The insides of these hemispheres showed the constellations painted in white against a "celestial blue" backdrop, as well as the brightest stars. Inside was another globe, showing wax reliefs of the earth, mountain chains and seabed — ground-breaking at the time.

The geographical and astronomical content of Mentelle's globe reflects French knowledge in this period.

Edme Mentelle, a history and geography teacher at the École Militaire, was commissioned to produce the piece, but it was manufactured by a hefty team of engineer draftsmen and geographers.

The sky painted on the inside of the two detachable calottes ensures the Dauphin's globe aligns with ancient tradition: just like the huge celestial globe Coronelli gifted to Louis XIV, depicting the position of the planets and stars at the time of the Sun King's birth, Mentelle's globe shows the planets "in the place in the sky where they would have been on 22 October in the year 1781": the date on which the young Dauphin Louis Joseph, for whom the globe was intended, was born.

THE LIBRARY

Refurnishing this room was representative of the issues that works such as these raise at Versailles.

In 1747, the room originally served as the Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand's inner cabinet, but was turned into a library upon his request in 1756, when the furniture was entirely changed.

In terms of the original furniture, the Palace of Versailles has in its possession the chest of drawers produced by Mathieu Criaerd at the start of 1758, which has been returned to the room to sit alongside a flat-topped desk and a study chair (the latter was acquired in 2010 in the United States, when quite serendipitously, the desk was deposited by the Mobilier National the following year). Both pieces were produced in 1745 for the prince's inner cabinet at the Château de Fontainebleau, but we know that near-identical furniture had been made for Versailles, too. The room's décor reflects its 1756 appearance, and the only item of furniture from this period to be returned to Versailles, a flat-topped desk by Simon Ceben, is now on display in Louis XVI's far inner cabinet in the centre of his inner apartment, where the king had positioned it. As a result, this one piece of furniture has occupied two historic locations within the palace, and a decision had to be taken, although it may be displayed alternately between the two.

A L'Étude decorative clock, deposited by the Mobilier National, once belonged to the Dauphin, future Louis XVI, who was given use of this library while residing in the Dauphine's former apartment next door.

Bertrand Rondot
Head curator of the
Palaces of Versailles and Trianon national museum



Chest of drawers made in 1748 for the inner cabinet of the Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand (1729-1765), before the room was turned into a library.
Mathieu Criaerd (1689-1776)
©Palace of Versailles, C. Fouin



L'Étude decorative clock made in 1770 for the private cabinet of the Dauphin, future Louis XVI (1754-1793), watch-maker Charles-Athanase Pinon (1734-1815) and bronzesmith Jean-Joseph de Saint-Germain (1719-1791)
© Mobilier National, I. Bideau

PART 2 | PAINTINGS

In selecting the paintings to display, the aim was to revive the spirit of the apartment occupied by the Dauphin Louis Ferdinand of France, son of Louis XV.

All the paintings above the doors were restored. Those in the library were put in place in 1763. Executed by Joseph Vernet, one of the 18th century's master landscapers, they depict the *Hours of the Day* as seascapes.



Evening or Sunset
Joseph Vernet (1714-1789)
© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN © C. Fouin

In 1751, portraits of the Dauphin's sisters painted by Jean-Marc Nattier as allegories of the Elements (Brazil, Museum of Sao Paulo) were positioned in the Dauphin's corner cabinet above the doors. Portraits of the women by the same painter serve as a reminder of this: Madames Victoire, Sophie and Louise (painted from studies executed when the princesses were growing up in Fontevault, away from court), and Madame Adélaïde holding a fan.



Marie-Louise Thérèse Victoire of France (1733-1799), known as *Madame Victoire*
Jean-Marc Nattier (1685-1766)
© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN
© C. Fouin



Sophie Philippine Élisabeth Justine of France (1734-1782), known as *Madame Sophie*
Jean-Marc Nattier (1685-1766)
© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN
© C. Fouin

Only one of Joseph Natoire's paintings above the doors in the corner cabinet, *Telemachus on the Island of Calypso*, was commissioned for the Dauphin's apartments in Versailles (along with *Dream of Telemachus* which is missing today). The others come from a range of different series (*Bacchus and Ariadne* and *Diana Resting*, commissioned for the king's apartments in Marly, *Beauty Rekindles the Flame of Love* for the queen's bedchamber in Versailles). All were showcased in this room in 1988.



Telemachus on the Island of Calypso
Charles-Joseph Natoire (1700-1777)
© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN © C. Fouin

Jean-Baptiste Oudry, one of the Dauphin's most favoured painters, produced depictions of several fables based on the tales of La Fontaine. Two works from this series, *Two Dogs and the Dead Donkey* and *The Fox and the Stork*, originally intended for the Dauphin's cabinet, have now been placed in the room.



Two Dogs and the Dead Donkey
Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686-1755)
© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN
© C. Fouin



The Fox and the Stork
Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686-1755)
© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN
© C. Fouin



Infanta Maria Teresa Antonia Rafaela of Spain (1726-1746), first wife of the Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand (1729-1765)
Louis-Michel Van Loo (1707-1771)
© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN © C. Fouin

The paintings hanging in the bedchamber are partially devoted to the Dauphin's first wife, Maria Teresa Rafaela, shown with her parents, King Philip V of Spain and Elisabeth Farnese, in portraits by the Spanish court's official painter, Louis-Michel Van Loo.

The Farm, Marie Leszczyńska, after Oudry, serves as a reminder that the subject for the original painting was requested by the Dauphin. In *The Battle of Fontenoy* (1756), attributed to the Queen, Louis XV and his son Louis Ferdinand are shown dominating the battlefield. *Madame Henriette en Flore*, an historiated portrait by Nattier, illustrates the Dauphin's affection for his siblings.



A Farm, after Jean-Baptiste Oudry
Marie Leszczyńska (1703-1768)
© RMN-GP (Palace of Versailles) © G. Blot

The second antechamber is concerned with showcasing paintings by one of the most iconic portrait artists of the times, Jean-Marc Nattier, and the Dauphin's inner circle.



Maria Josepha of Saxony (1731-1767), second wife of the Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand (1729-1765)
Jean-Marc Nattier (1685-1766)
© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN © C. Fouin

His second wife, Maria Josepha of Saxony, is flanked by *Marie Leszczyńska in town attire*, and Madame Infante, Duchess of Parma, in hunting dress. The latter's daughter, *Isabella, Infante of Spain, Madame*

Sophie as Vestal Virgin and *The Duke of Burgundy*, the first son of the Dauphin and his wife, complete the set.



The Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand (1729-1765) in Uniform as Colonel of the Dragons-Dauphins Regiment
Alexandre Roslin (1718-1793)
© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN © C. Fouin

Louis-Ferdinand of France, meanwhile, was brought to life by Swedish painter Alexandre Roslin, who depicts him in his Dauphins-Dragons Regiment captain's uniform.

Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre's doorway paintings, *Juno Requesting the Girdle of Venus* and *Juno Deceiving Jupiter by the Girdle of Venus*, have been on display in their original location since 1748.

Gwenola Firmin

Head curator of the
Palaces of Versailles and Trianon national museum





PART 3 | THE
PATRONS



BARON PHILIPPE DE ROTHSCHILD, S.A.

Baron Philippe de Rothschild S.A. is a family-owned company that was established in 1933 with a view to producing the finest wines for its three Grands Crus Classés in Pauillac, including the prestigious Château Mouton Rothschild, and for its branded wines, including the famous Mouton Cadet.

Art has always been central to the history of Baron Philippe de Rothschild's family, and Château Mouton Rothschild has a long-standing and close link with leading contemporary artists. Every year since 1945, a great artist has illustrated the label of Château Mouton Rothschild, and their original works are on display in the estate's Paintings for the Labels Room.

THE ORIGINS OF THE PATRONAGE



© Deepix

In early 2019, Baron Philippe de Rothschild S.A. auctioned a limited number of Versailles Celebration cases at Sotheby's, paving the way for patronage on an unprecedented scale for the benefit of the Palace of Versailles.

Each case contained five Château Mouton Rothschild vintages with labels by outstanding contemporary artists who have also exhibited at the Palace of Versailles:

- Giuseppe Penone (Château Mouton Rothschild 2005; Château de Versailles, 2013)
- Bernar Venet (Château Mouton Rothschild 2007; Château de Versailles, 2011)
- Anish Kapoor (Château Mouton Rothschild 2009; Château de Versailles, 2015)
- Jeff Koons (Château Mouton Rothschild 2010; Château de Versailles, 2008-9)
- Lee Ufan (Château Mouton Rothschild 2013; Château de Versailles, 2014)

Fifty cases were sold at auction in Hong Kong and New York, allowing restoration work to begin on the Dauphin's Great Chamber.

This is a novel and unprecedented patronage project: we wanted to support restoration work at the Palace of Versailles by creating a limited-edition collector's case bringing together two internationally renowned icons of the art world. The bidders who bought the case enabled the Palace of Versailles to continue its tireless work of restoring a monument of world heritage that belongs to us all. The Dauphin's Great Chamber was chosen for restoration. Baron Philippe de Rothschild S.A. and my family are very proud to have been able to support this restoration project and the craftspeople who have worked on it.

Philippe Sereys de Rothschild, Chairman & CEO of Baron Philippe de Rothschild S.A.



The Dauphin's Great Chamber restored, thanks to the patronage of Baron Philippe de Rothschild S.A.
© Palace of Versailles, C. Fouin

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The Friends of Versailles Society was founded in 1907 by a handful of well-known faces who came together around Raymond Poincaré, future President of the French Republic, in a bid to prevent the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon from falling into ruin. For over a century now, the Society has thrown heart and soul into restoring, elevating, and showcasing the Palace of Versailles and its grounds. Awarded official “public utility” status in France in 1913, the Friends of Versailles Society has permission to receive private and corporate donations entitling it to tax reductions, as well as bequests, gifts, and life insurance payouts, for which it is fully exempt from transfer taxes.

The association has expanded beyond France’s borders thanks to the work carried out by its two sister societies: the American Friends of Versailles and European Friends of Versailles. In 2016, a Jeune Ami (“Young Friend”) under-25s membership scheme was introduced to help nurture new generations of Friends and foster a love of heritage.

THE DAUPHIN’S LIBRARY, AN INVALUABLE, INTIMATE SPACE

As the Friends of Versailles Society’s 400th patronage project, restoration work on the Dauphin’s library is a continuation of the association’s initiatives to restore the Palace of Versailles and reopen the royal family’s private apartments to the public. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020 and 2021 the Friends of Versailles Society was yet again able to rely on its donors and the Fondation du Patrimoine’s support in funding this restoration.

THE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FONDATION DU PATRIMOINE

Kickstarted in 2015, the partnership with the Fondation du Patrimoine has led to a number of acquisitions and restorations for the Palace of Versailles. Louis XIV’s desk, the manuscript of Héliot’s 138 Menus, five paintings in the Grand Trianon’s Cotelle Gallery, and François Boucher’s portrait of Alexandrine were all the result of these joint efforts.



The Dauphin’s library restored thanks to the patronage of the Friends of Versailles Society, with the support of the Fondation du Patrimoine
© Palace of Versailles, C. Fouin

THE FONDATION DU PATRIMOINE

The Fondation du Patrimoine was ushered in under the French law dated 2 July 1996 and was awarded official “public utility” status by the decree of 18 April 1997. Divided into 21 regional delegations, its initiatives are rolled out via a network of over 800 volunteers who work tirelessly to safeguard their local heritage.

Since it was first founded 25 years ago, the Fondation du Patrimoine has funneled its financial support into restoring 35,000 public and private heritage sites, theatres, churches, fountains, factories and workshops, estates and grounds, mansions and residences, old vehicles and more, forming an incredibly rich anthology for France in an ever-changing world. Actively engaged in bolstering the country’s regional attractiveness, over the years the foundation has become an invaluable partner to local stakeholders and a powerful driving force for spurring on sustainable development in our country, by helping to create jobs and pass on expert know-how, by supporting employability, and by providing young people with training.

According to a study conducted by the Fondation du Patrimoine-Pluricité 2020, a single Euro invested in heritage generates €21 in returns.

The Fondation du Patrimoine is currently involved in close to 3,000 projects open to donations via its website: www.fondation-patrimoine.org

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Close-up of the Dauphiné's Cabinet de Retraite, after restoration.
© Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier



PART 4 | PRACTICAL
DETAILS

PRACTICAL DETAILS

SELF-GUIDED TOURS

The Dauphin's apartment is open to the public for self-guided tours from 1 April 2022.

The Palace is open every day except Monday
From 9:00am to 6:30pm (last entry: 6:00pm)

For information and bookings:
www.chateauversailles.fr

GUIDED TOURS

Giving out onto the gardens in the heart of the Palace, the Dauphin's apartment is one of the royal residence's most prestigious. After nearly two years of works, it has finally been returned to its former glory. Unfurling in a row of successive rooms each more lavish than the last, the white and gold Rococo décor has been infused with the radiance it would once have enjoyed, the colourful Vernis Martin décor as bright and glossy as originally intended. The spaces here were occupied by the Grand Dauphin, son of Louis XIV, the Regent Philippe II, Duke of Orléans, and the Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand, eldest son of Louis XV respectively, undergoing multiple changes in use and layout in the process.

Step back in time, and admire the masterful skill of craftsmen and craftswomen past and present.

Information and bookings:
www.chateauversailles.fr







