

# THE CASTLE GARDENS

# d'Ainay-le-Vieil

LISTED AS A HISTORIC MONUMENT  
OUTSTANDING GARDENS LABELS



[www.chateau-ainaylevieil.com](http://www.chateau-ainaylevieil.com)



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## In practis

### LOCATION

Château d'Ainay-le-Vieil  
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### INFORMATION

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### ON SITE

Restaurant "La Volière"  
[www.lavoliererestaurant.com](http://www.lavoliererestaurant.com)

### MORE INFORMATION

[www.chateau-ainaylevieil.com](http://www.chateau-ainaylevieil.com)

### LES CHARTREUSES

Parterre de broderies  
Cloître des simples  
Jardin des méditations  
Verger sculpté  
Jardin bouquetier

Volière

Grand carré en l'île

Allée des poètes

Kiosque



Parc à l'anglaise

Aire de pique-nique

Pavillon de la grainetière

DÉPART VISITE

Pavillon de la volière

WC

ACCUEIL BOUTIQUE

Jardin des arcades

Roseraie

Jardin de la guérite

PARKING

ENTRÉE



**Built on an older castle, the Château d'Ainay le Vieil is one of the best-preserved feudal fortresses of the 15th century in the Centre Val de Loire region. Its vast octagonal enclosure, which houses a medieval dwelling and a Renaissance residence, is surrounded by moats and situated in a 7-hectare landscaped park.**

**The Lords of Bigny made it their home and built a Renaissance residence there from 1467 onwards, the date when the Château d'Ainay-le-Vieil entered the family of the current owners and has remained there ever since.**

**Family continuity but also continuity of the gardens, which have existed since the Renaissance. They have regularly suffered the ravages of time but have been regularly recreated within the same ancient structures. The gardens date from 3 different periods:**

- Renaissance water gardens,- gardens,
- 19th-century landscaped park and chartreuses,- chartreuses,
- 20th-century contemporary gardens.- gardens.

## The Renaissance Water Gardens

*From the outset, during the construction of the fortress in the 15th century, the presence of water was very important as it played an essential defensive role. From this period date the moats of the castle and the water-filled ditches that surrounded the second enclosure, now disappeared, but on which the two Renaissance Pavilions were built.*

In the 16th century, with less troubled times, the castles opened up to the outside world and gardens were created. The abundant water at Ainay played an essential role in the creation of the new gardens. They benefited from the installations that had existed for centuries, and the old hydraulic circuit inherited from the Middle Ages was regularized, enlarged, and transformed into a network of canals: one that frames the "Grand Carré en l'île" of 120 meters on each side and twelve meters wide, and the other, "Le carré long" situated between the two Renaissance Pavilions.

The centuries pass, the gardens of Ainay evolve with the fashions but retain their original water structure. The Cassini

maps of the 17th century provide a very precise survey, and subsequently, the Napoleonic cadastre established in 1830 shows the new developments.

The structure of the water gardens, preserved over the centuries, guides us on an initiatory walk through the art of gardens: the Rose Garden of ancient roses, the Carré en l'île with its hornbeams trimmed into a palisade, and the Chartreuses with their enclosures.

**NOT TO BE MISSED:** *The remarkable hydraulic system that, through a series of successive weirs, supplies the canals of the "Carré en l'île," the moats of the castle, the mill's diversion canal, and the village washhouse. A system of sluices regulates the flow from end to end.*

## The Contemporary Gardens

*These themed gardens were created from 1985 onwards on the site of gardens that had disappeared over the centuries.*

*You enter them through the Pavillon de la Volière, crossing the old diversion canal that led water to the millrace, which remained in operation until the 1950s.*

### JARDIN DES ARCADES

A stone bench invites the visitor to enjoy the perspective of the castle seen through hornbeams trimmed into arcades. Varieties of ancient and modern roses planted in garlands of boxwood draw the eye towards the rose garden.

### THE ROSE GARDEN

The Rose Garden is framed by the two Renaissance Pavilions and bordered by the canals of the Grand Carré en l'île and the Carré long. It features a collection of ancient roses as beautiful as they are ephemeral since most of them bloom only once, in June. In the Rose Garden, perfumed by their countless scents, many varieties bear historical names: Chapeau de Napoléon, Souvenir de la Petite Malmaison, Impératrice Joséphine, Colbert... There are also collectors' roses such as Sericea Pteracantha and Viridiflora.

**NOT TO BE MISSED:** *among the countless roses, the Viridiflora rose for its unusual green color, Chapeau de Napoléon for the moss that covers its sepals, and Fantin Latour for its exquisite scent and hundred petals.*

### THE KIOSK

The kiosk is a "fabrique" that punctuates the visitor's journey in a strategic location in the garden and creates a perspective point on the canals. Originally built in the 19th century to serve as a small outdoor sitting room for the lady of the house, it was moved from its original location in the park and rebuilt with the same materials by the château's gardening team: a remarkable job, worthy of a compagnon du Tour de France.

### THE POETS' ALLEY

In the "Poets' Alley" connecting the rose garden to the chartreuses, an action to preserve birds and the environment has been initiated: 35 birdhouses and feeders are installed because it is becoming

increasingly difficult for them to find natural nesting sites. Another awareness-raising action on the interactions of nature with ecology and culture is in place: 35 poems are displayed, speaking of nature, flowers, and love, written by the greatest French poets from the Middle Ages to the present day, from François Villon to Paul Eluard...

### THE CHARTREUSES

Around 1860, the botanist Léonce de Lambertie, close to the Marquis de Bigny, was behind the creation of the chartreuses. The Chartreuses are an ancient architectural structure rarely found in France. Composed of equal rooms connected by a succession of arcades, they are located on a terrace overlooking the canals. The walls, about 4 meters high, were designed to create a succession of microclimates to spread fruit production over time.

This architecture is inspired by that of the Potager du Roi in Versailles, created by the gardener La Quintinie for King Louis XIV, a great lover of fruit.

Covering 5000 m<sup>2</sup> and nestled within the high walls of the chartreuses, five gardens evoke the evolution of the art of gardens in France. Moving from one garden to another, one moves from one era to another.

**NOT TO BE MISSED:** *entering the first chartreuse near the Pont des Montreuil, from where two perspectives can be seen. One on the five chartreuses with their arcades covered in flowers and the statue of Pomona, the other on the canals of the Parc du kiosque.*

## The Landscaped Park

*Abandoned following the Revolution, the château was restored around 1855 by the Marquis de Bigny and the architect Chauvez. The park became a landscaped park created by the botanist Léonce de Lambertie.*

*The oval shape of the moats, which ensured the defense of the castle, and the canals of the Renaissance water gardens that surround the Grand Carré en l'île and the Carré long of the pavilions strongly structure the park and have not undergone major modifications to this day.*

**NOT TO BE MISSED:** *Some remarkable trees:*

- The bald cypress by the drawbridge on the edge of the moats,
- The imposing plane tree near the weir,
- The large oak facing the Chapel Tower.