

VISIT OF THE MEDIEVAL CITY... MONTREAL

DESTINATION GRAND VÉZELAY

LA GRANDE RUE

Here the beautiful stone dwellings still have their dovescotes, turrets and spiral staircase towers. The oldest houses are in this street and you will notice the porticoes supported by corbelled pillars. Observe how some houses have wine cellars. Up until 1950, certain house owners still had enough vines to harvest.

PLACE DE LA MAIRIE ET SUITE DE LA GRANDE RUE

This is where you would have found the Market Hall. The market cross was erected in april 1781 but the pedestal is much older and has an inscription in gothic characters. There also used to be a fountain on this spot. To the right of the well by the town hall, you will notice a stone engraved with a salamander, the emblem of François 1st, who came several times to Montréal and held his General Assemblies here. The stone comes from the Market Hall. Continue along the Grande Rue to the cross roads. The paving stones indicate that you are where the second gate once stood (long since demolished).

Further on, you will reach the third gate which houses the church bells. Around you, you will notice the beautiful houses and as you continue down Rue de la Poterne, the remains of the fortifications.

Carrying on towards the church, one of the houses has some very impressive cellars which were used as a guard-room (located at the foot of the ramparts). Beyond this last gate, on your left (No. 45) is the school where Prior Antoine de Fontaine gave Maréchal Vauban his first lessons of mathematics and geometry.

You are now on the top of the hill where the castle used to be, although only the well and the church remain.

LA COLLÉGIALE

The collegiate church was built in 1150 by Anséric II on his return from the second crusade, and completed in 1170. Viollet-le-Duc was so impressed by the architectural excellence that he had it classified as a historical monument in 1845 and received funds to restore it. The impressive rounded arch doorway takes up over a third of the building's façade, and is a perfect example of roman floral art.

The rose-window above the doorway is one of the oldest in France and inspired the one completed fifty years later at Notre-Dame de Paris.

The side walls have bevelled windows and the corner gables each bare a different cross. There is no bell tower; the initial plan did not provide for one!

You have to go down several steps to access the church as it was built approximately one meter below ground level.

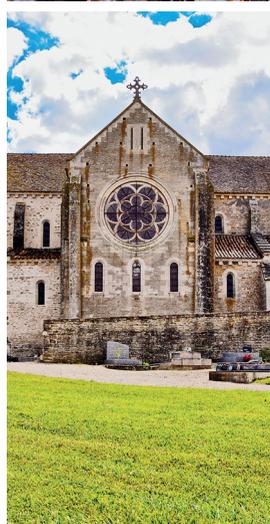
Take a look around the church and admire its numerous treasures. It is particularly renowned for its twenty six oak stalls, eight low relief carvings and five figurative groups carved in the round. They were sculpted during the first half of the 16th century by the Rigolley brothers, two craftsmen from Nuits-sur-Armençon.

The alabaster altarpiece (a noble white stone, used for both carving and sculpture) to the left of the choir dates back to the 15th century, and was imported from Nottingham.

The wooden triptych to the right of the altar is 16th century.

The finely carved oak pulpit and lectern are 15th century

The Christ, facing the pulpit, dates from around the same era



The renaissance cross, in the right side transept was found broken, but has since been restored by the sculptor Michel Roetwer.

The painting above the pulpit is dated 17th century and represents the coronation of the Virgin. Since 2000, several 21st century works of art have been placed in the church, notably a processional cross (by A. Legouy) a roman statue (by Xavier Bouzerand) and a high relief of Saint Jean-Paul II (by François Rouillot).

Before you leave, take the time to walk around the cemetery. You will see underfoot vestiges of the old ramparts and the remains of two square towers to your right and left.

SUMMER WALKING TOURS (JULY & AUGUST) : EVERY TUESDAY AND FRIDAY AT 11 AM - 5 € PER PERSON

GRAND VEZELAY TOURIST OFFICE

MONTRÉAL'S TOURIST OFFICE
4 PLACE DU PRIEURÉ - 89420
+331013 86 49 02 82

MONTREAL@DESTINATIONGRANDVEZELAY.COM

AVALLON'S TOURIST OFFICE
+331013 86 34 14 19

VÉZELAY'S TOURIST OFFICE
+331013 86 33 23 69

NOYERS'S TOURIST OFFICE
+331013 86 82 66 06

WWW.DESTINATIONGRANDVEZELAY.COM