



Perched on a small hill, Lourmarin is one of France's most beautiful villages. Its silhouette is broken by three towers - the belfry, the Catholic church and the 'temple' or Protestant church - together with a jumble of narrow streets that encircle the heart of the village. The smart boutiques, galleries and restaurants of today showcase the fine characterful properties that have been witness to Lourmarin's long history. And then there is the château, open all year round, which was Provence's first Renaissance castle. Albert Camus and Henri Bosco, two notable writers who succumbed to Lourmarin's charms, have also contributed to the village's fame.

1 House of Philippe de Girard

The private mansion of the de Girard family, which dates back to the eighteenth century, was sold to the town of Lourmarin in 1902. Philippe de Girard was undoubtedly the most illustrious representative of this local family. Born in Lourmarin in 1775, de Girard was an engineer and the father of a host of inventions, the most famous being the first flax spinning machine, for which he filed a patent in 1810. De Girard was invited to Poland by Tsar Alexander I in 1825, and it was here that he developed weaving factories in the city that came to bear his name, Zyrardow.

2 Fountain in the Square

Fontaine de la Place, the oldest fountain in the village of Lourmarin, was repaired and rebuilt many times between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and was classed as a historic monument in July 1914. The iron pipe leading from the fountain was used as a washing place and a drinking trough for sheep. In an age when the streets were very narrow, the fountain was built at a point where the road widens slightly, which was considered a square - or place - at the time. Next door is the Place de l'Ormeau, named after a majestic tree: an elm planted in 1792 (the 'Tree of Freedom') - much loved by Henri Bosco - that was cut down in 1944 when it became diseased.

3 Covered Fountain

This fountain dates from the sixteenth century and was restored in 2010. The initials of the sculptor are engraved on the fountain. Next to it is a wash-house that was used until the end of the Second World War. The river flowing alongside is called Le Rayet.

4 The Belfry / Le Castellas

The bell tower houses the village's public clock, with the entire ensemble listed as a historic monument in 1942. It was constructed in the seventeenth century on the site of an old château, hence the other name it is known by, Le Castellas - a motte castle characteristic of the Middle Ages. The village's bell tower is home to a superb bronze bell, 57 cm high and 70 cm wide, manufactured in 1732. The belfry is one of three in Lourmarin, together with those of the Catholic and Protestant churches.

5 Parish Church of St. Andrew and St. Trophime

Few traces remain of the original twelfth century building, left by the Romanesque arches of the first bays. The nave was extended in 1343 with the addition of a side chapel. In the sixteenth century, the Agoult Montauban, owners of the château, constructed the Chapelle du Seigneur (the last two bays of the aisle). From 1685 onward, the diocesan authorities began remodelling the vaults of the nave, and erected a new sacristy in 1696. The St. Joseph Chapel (the first bay of the aisle) dates from the early eighteenth century. The bell tower was built in 1839 to rival the Protestant church's, and the sacristy was laid out in 1871.

One side of the baptismal font in the Chapelle du Seigneur is graced with an animal carving, the symbol of the Agoult family and part of the coat of arms of Lourmarin: a rampant wolf standing firm on its legs, 'mean-mawed' and 'primed to attack.'

6 Three-Masked Fountain

The Fontaine aux Trois Masques, which was given to Lourmarin by the Fondation Laurent-Vibert, dates from 1937. Henri Bosco claimed that these heads represented the region's most important natural features: the Rhone, the Durance and the Luberon. These three heads might also refer to three Greek gods, with from left to right: Neptune, the god of the sea, Apollo, the god of beauty, and Pan, the god of shepherds and their flocks. However, there is no written confirmation of this.

7 Protestant Church

In the fifteenth century Lourmarin was inhabited by a high proportion of Protestants. In the seventeenth, the village had a mere 80 Catholic residents out of 1,300 inhabitants. They worshipped in secret in a variety of venues, either in the centre of the village or the surrounding countryside. The 'temple' we see today was not built until 1806-1816, funded by the municipalities of Lourmarin (for the building) and Puyvert (the contents). The largest Protestant church in the Vaucluse region, the building consists of a porch and a rectangular room; the decoration is sober and the ceiling coffered.

8 Castle

There are two parts to Lourmarin château: one is from the medieval period (1475-1526) and was built by Foulques III d'Agoult; the other is in the Renaissance style (1526-1560) and was constructed by Foulques' descendants, giving rise to the first Renaissance castle in Provence. The old château consists of an interior courtyard surrounded by three floors of Italian-style galleries and a small polygonal tower topped by battlements. The Renaissance section also occupies three levels, with a series of large, furnished rooms served by a beautiful, double-spiral staircase. As well as featuring original architectural elements, these Renaissance rooms house collections of engravings and objets d'art. The château, which was restored by a patron in 1921, is now used as a residence for young artists. It is also a major cultural centre that plays host to numerous events throughout the year, including concerts, conferences and exhibitions. The château is open to visitors all year round, with treasure hunts organised for children.

9 Fruitière Numérique Digital Space

The Fruitière Numérique - Lourmarin's very own digital and IT complex - is housed in the village's old fruit and vegetable cooperative, and boasts 3,200 m² of indoor space as well as outdoor areas. A contemporary venue created in 2014, the Fruitière Numérique is a stage for transmitting digital knowledge, a cultural haven for reflection, creativity, intellectual output and learning. It is also a place of discovery, socialising, discussion and debate, all designed to advance 'digital citizenship'. There is a 'fab lab', seminar area, co-working space and an internet room. The Fruitière Numérique is open to everyone (individuals, companies, schools, associations, local communities, etc.).



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