

Lapidary collection

Religious sculptures

Jean Mouliérat laid out a sculpture garden, set out between the plants, at Castelnau. For conservation reasons, part of this collection of architectural components and statues is now presented in the east wing.

- 11 The great hall** houses thirteenth to seventeenth-century sculptures of various origins and an early Middle Age sarcophagus slab placed on a panel covering an old well.
- 12 In the small room**, a former bakery, there are the twelfth-century capitals from the old Romanesque church in Sainte-Croix-du-Mont in the Gironde département and two sixteenth-century capitals with Corinthian leaf patterns. A screen wall and a panel decorated with entrelac patterns are remains of the first Carolingian church in Carennac. A late fifteenth-century *Lamentation over the Dead Christ*, a Languedoc sculpture influenced by Flemish art and of outstanding quality, still has some traces of colour.
- 13 Beneath the gallery**, there are two remarkable twelfth-century illustrated capitals from the old church at Sainte-Croix-du-Mont: the *Resurrection of Christ* and the *Betrayal by Judas on the Mount of Olives*, and a fifteenth-century Archangel Michael flanked by recumbent statues.

Glossary

Arrow and cannon hole: an arrow slit combining a vertical slit for shooting arrows and a round hole for cannon balls.

Aula: a large state room or auditorium.

Counterscarp: the outer side of a moat, as opposed to the scarp.

Crosspiece: the horizontal part of a cross-shaped arrow-slit.

Fall trap: an opening in the vault of an entrance designed for throwing missiles.

Lists: in Mediaeval architecture, the space between two enclosures or an enclosure and moat.

Putlog hole: hole left in stonework after pieces of wood have been removed.

Stirrup base: the flared bottom of an arrow-slit.

Practical information

Average length of visit: 1 hour 15 minutes.

The Centre des monuments nationaux publishes a collection of guidebooks about French monuments, translated into several languages. Éditions du patrimoine publications are on sale in the bookshop-giftshop.

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Castelnau-Bretenoux Castle

A remarkable example of changes in castle architecture

An eventful history

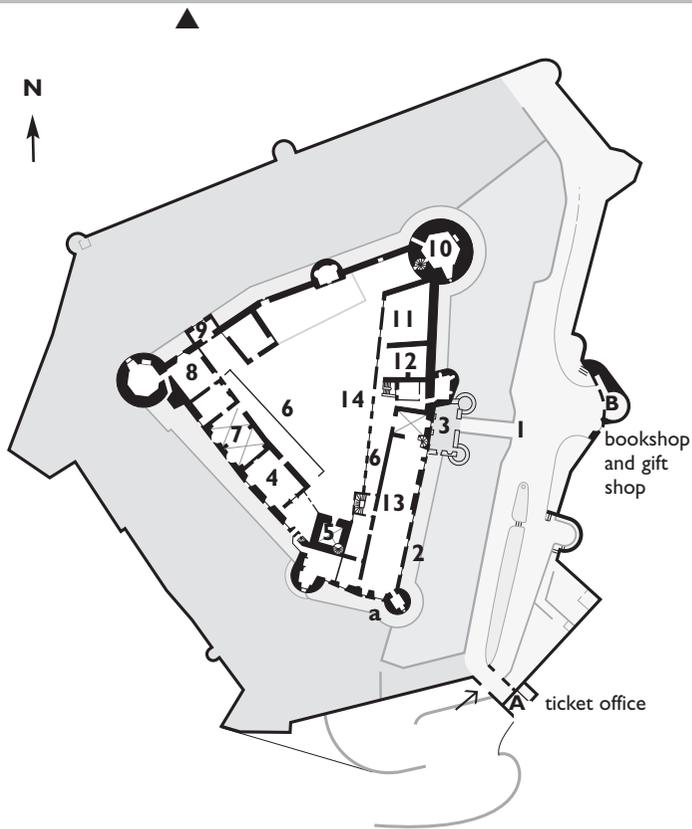
Castelnau-Bretenoux Castle was built in the 13th century by the Barons of Castelnau de Bretenoux, who had long been established in the Haut-Quercy. It had the glory and splendour of the grandest lordly homes, before being abandoned in the 18th century. In 1851, some of the living areas were destroyed by fire. It was bought in 1896 by Jean Mouliérat (1853-1932), a lyricist, who saved it from ruin and gave it a new lease of life and purpose. Mouliérat donated it to the State shortly before his death.



The castle in the 19th century

The rebirth of Castelnau

Jean Mouliérat was clearly intent on restoring the abandoned, ruined Castelnau Castle to something of its former glory. The singer's taste was influenced by his familiarity with the scenery of historical operas, as can be seen. His restoration work saved the monument and also shows the continuation of Gothic Revival tastes into the early 20th century.



The castle acquired an initial curtain wall, 250 metres long and including six semi-circular towers and three spur bastions, all of which were backed up at the entrance by the cart gate, which was equipped with a portcullis and fall trap*.

- 1 The lists*** form part of the concentric layout: an area left free to allow movement between the outer enclosure and the deep dry moat, which still exists to the east.
- 2 The fausse-braie** was a second rampart added at the end of the 15th century to reinforce the bottom of the curtain wall and towers. With vaulted casemates and an upper level in the form of a platform suitable for the use of firearms, it enabled

those defending the castle to fire over the counterscarp*. Some of the arrow and cannon holes* still have the stirrup bases* and crosspieces* to aid shooting. A **doorway -a-** opened much later in the bottom of the tower in the south-eastern corner, leads to the shooting levels. They are linked by a small stone staircase.

- 3 Fortified gateway.** Protected by a drawbridge (replaced in the 18th century by a fixed bridge), the square entrance tower with machicolations and portcullis grooves replaced two round towers which were partially levelled in the seventeenth-century alterations.
- 4 The residential tower.** This outstanding lordly residence built of ironstone is the first known building on the site. It is square in shape, with five levels. Light on the aula* level comes from elegant windows with columns. It is a fine example of Romanesque palatial architecture, dating from the early thirteenth century.
- 5 The keep** or main tower was also built in the thirteenth century. It is thirty metres tall and dominates the entire site. A triangular arched doorway, six metres above the ground, leads into the tower. Another doorway, accessible from the second floor, led to a wooden gallery where the line of putlog holes* is. Although this tower was for defence rather than residential purposes, and is devoid of all comfort, it was preserved during the seventeenth-century rebuilding work, as a mark of lordly power.
- 6 The mediaeval residences.** As early as the 14th century, the building adjoining the lordly residence, the fortified entrance to the east and then the first adjoining building were built. In the second half of the 15th century, two further residences were built, extending the buildings to the north-west and south-east. They all had rampart walks and machicolations, and were topped with round towers.

- 7 The castle chapel** was part of the fourteenth-century building campaign. It takes the form of two bays of cross-ribbed vaults, with the keystones displaying the Castelnau coat of arms. Jean Mouliérat replaced the original doorway with a Gothic bay from Carennac in the Lot département. Although little remains of the painted decorations, the Gothic furniture has survived down through the centuries.
- 8 The old kitchen** dates from the 17th century. As well as providing access to the grand balcony, this room now houses exhibitions.
- 9 The grand balcony**, at the end of a grand gallery, is an elegant vestige of the embellishment work carried out in the 17th century.
- 10 The artillery tower** or “military tower” is the most imposing of the three corner towers. It was built in the 15th century. It was given this name due to its huge diameter - over fourteen metres - and the arrow and cannon holes* and cannon ports on all five floors. Three rooms designed as living areas, with window seats, fireplaces and latrines, are situated above two levels with large shooting openings. The roof-top terrace offers panoramic views of the outlying regions of the Limousin to the north and the Auvergne to the east.
- 11-13 The arcaded portico** opens out onto the inner courtyard and houses part of Jean Mouliérat's lapidary collection (see overleaf).
- 14 The guided tour** of the Mouliérat apartments begins here.