

a history...

The first official mention of Bellegarde dates back to the 10th century. Its name is Sociacum. The church and the 1st keep were built at that period. **Then, the village took the name of Soisy-aux-Loges and the first well-known Lord was Nicolas Braque.** It was one of his descendants Jacques de L'Hospital who built the outer bailey of the château of Bellegarde and who created fairs, barns and the « Captain's tower ». It was during that period that Soisy aux Loges became Choisy-aux-Loges. **In 1644, the Duke of Bellegarde gave his own name to the village.**

In 1692, Louis Antoine de Pardailan de Gondrin, legitimate son of the Marquise de Montespan (who was the second favourite woman of King Louis XIV) bought the château of Bellegarde. In charge of the King's buildings, Louis Antoine de Pardailan de Gondrin made some changes to the château : he improved the stables and built several buildings around the keep.

Since 1844, the castle and its gardens have been shared and sold to several owners. This is how the city of Bellegarde started bying the « Salamander pavillion » and then others buildings throughout the centuries.



Le duc d'Antin

Patronage

Several families redesigned successively the château of Bellegarde. Originally, the keep and the church had medieval architecture but **the Duke of Antin redesigned the château with a Renaissance style in the 18th century.**

It is very important for the city of Bellegarde to preserve, protect and value this historic monument by conducting restoration work.

Today, the keep has been deteriorating and important restoration work has begun in the moat. But other parts of the château need to be restored too.

So, you can participate in saving this beautiful monument by donating! Anyone or any company can donate to preserve the château of Bellegarde, no matter how much is given.



www.fondation-patrimoine.org



The Keep

credit photo : cosydidoweblogbusinessbellycat.com

its Economy...

Bellegarde is a dynamic, forward-looking village made up of nearly 2,000 inhabitants and about 80 shops and businesses. It provides an exceptional working and relaxing environment

Bellegarde possesses a significant economic potential, allowing it to provide around 1,500 jobs. The village itself lies 120 km (75 miles) south of Paris, 50 km (31 miles) east of Orleans, 40 km (25 miles) north of Gien, and 30 km (18 miles) from Montargis or Pithiviers.

Bellegarde lies at the heart of the Loiret, and is easily accessible by car or bus. It lies close to the A6, A10 and A77 motorways, and can be reached via the N60. The village is served by a regional bus service and is also close to train stations providing both a national and regional service.

Thanks to its rich heritage and geographical position, **Bellegarde is in an ideal location for an enjoyable stop-over,** or a longer stay. It can offer comfortable hotels and restaurants, a rural gîte, furnished lodgings and a campsite answering a broad spectrum of demand. The tourist office welcomes you to Bellegarde and is always there to assist you in your enquiries: www.tourisme-gatinais-sud.com

Events...

The culture department of the city of Bellegarde schedules a wide range of cultural events every year. Looking for an activity for your children, an exhibition, a family guided tour or even a play? You will certainly find something just right for you!

The sport and youth department of the city of Bellegarde organizes internships and stays for teenagers throughout the year. Also, the « Maison des jeunes » organizes outings (paintball, cinema...).

More than **30 associations with 2,200 members** organise all sorts of different events: concerts, dinner and dances, exhibitions, fishing competitions, lottos, and, of course, the Rose Festival at Easter, and the Rose Market in November.

Other events, not to be missed, are organised by the very active Festival Committee. These include the Music Festival, the National Festival, the Festival of Bellegarde, the Gastronomic Salon and the Wine Market.

What is more, Bellegarde is twinned with the German town of Havixbeck, and has been since 1973. **Throughout the year, a number of exchanges take place thanks to the work of Bellegarde's twinning committee.**



Mairie

Cour d'Antin
45270 Bellegarde
Tel: 02 38 90 10 03

www.bellegarde-45.fr



Mairie Bellegarde 45

conception: www.grafity.fr



VILLE DE
Bellegarde

Found in the Loiret, between three regions: the Valley of the Loire, Beauce and Gâtinais, Bellegarde is a village with a rich historical past. In the centre of the village you can view a number of monuments which were built between the 12th and 18th centuries.



In 1972 Bellegarde was voted the number one Village of Roses in France. This distinction crowns a strong tradition in the culture of roses here.

In the beginning, to make some extra money, the farmers of the region provided wild dog roses, which they collected in the forest of Orleans, for the Orleans rose growers.

Later, at the end of the 19th century, an inhabitant of Bellegarde decided to mass-produce the cultivation of rose bushes himself, and he succeeded. From then on the production of roses continued to develop year after year, and this savoir-faire was passed on from generation to generation.

Nowadays, Bellegarde and surrounding include about eight nurseries specialising in the cultivation of rose bushes rather than just the flower which is specifically grown to make up bouquets.

Thanks to this heritage, Bellegarde has been working to 'enflower' its village.

> Free access to the rose garden and the public garden on the both sides of the keep.



The church



Captain's tower and kitchens



The garden

a Heritage...

The Church

The entrance is composed of a portico with three galleries and is considered as the second most beautiful work of Roman art in the region, after the basilica of Saint Benoît sur Loire.

Whilst the facade has been listed as a historic monument the rest of the building is also of great interest. The woodwork and the paintings come from the ancient seigniorial chapel which was destroyed in the 19th century.

A number of the paintings show the Marquise of Montespan and also Louise de la Vallière, the first favourite of Louis XIV. In what is known as, the 'President's' Chapel, you can view a very beautiful Deposition from the Cross.

The Icehouse

The icehouse is to be found in a small hill situated just behind the church. It was built by the Duke of Antin at the beginning of the 18th century. The pit of the icehouse is reinforced with concrete and could keep up to 100 m³ of ice.

Allowing the duke and his guests to eat sorbets even in summer; the ultimate luxury of the times.

The Keep

Built in stone by Nicolas Braque, Minister of Finance to Charles V, the keep was inaugurated in 1376. More than 200 years later Jacques de L'Hospital added a stone tower with a vault at the top.

In the 18th century the Duke of Antin added large bay windows to the keep and constructed two avant-corps wings which served as a gallery for his ducal paintings as a seigniorial chapel. These wings were destroyed in the mid-twentieth century.

The stairway to the keep was replaced by some steps with neo-Greek columns at the beginning of the 18th century.

The Wedding Room



The wood panelling in the wedding room (part of the Salamander pavilion) is protected as national heritage.

Originally, the wood panels had been commissioned for the former lounge of the Duke of Antin. However, the panelling was not in this place in his time. Gauthier de Bésigny, **President of the Parliament in Paris, bought Bellegarde from the Antin family in 1753 and transferred the panels from the side buildings of the keep to the wedding room.** He then 'signed' this panelling by adding his own family crest to the wall between the windows overlooking the courtyard.

The Kitchens

The château's kitchens were built by the Duke of Antin in 1720. They are situated in the middle of the château complex, between the keep, the Salamander pavilion and the pavilion d'Antin.

This is why it was necessary for the kitchens to be close to the three main buildings where the Antin family and their guests were lodged. Finding that the keep was too cold and draughty the Duke of Antin occupied the Salamander pavilion.

The kitchen fireplaces are amongst the biggest ones of this period.

The Collection of Charles Desvergnés's Sculptures

Charles Desvergnés was born in Bellegarde in 1860 and died at Meudon in 1928. With a passion for sculpture, he studied at the school of fine arts in Paris and joined a famous workshop, that of the sculptor, Chapu, at the age of 15. To help with his studies, Bellegarde gave him a bursary. In 1889 he won first prize in a sculpting competition, the Premier Grand Prix de Rome, with his depiction of 'The Return of the Prodigal Child'.

In order to thank Bellegarde Desvergnés left a large collection of the models for his sculptures to the village. Unfortunately the collection is suffering from weathering. So it's not possible to see it now.

For further information please address enquiries to the culture department of Bellegarde 02 38 90 45 78.

