



**REOPENING
OF THE APARTMENTS OF MESDAMES,
DAUGHTERS OF LOUIS XV**

25 APRIL 2013

PALACE OF VERSAILLES

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FOREWORD

BY CATHERINE PÉGARD

LOCATED ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE CENTRAL SECTION, these apartments, symmetrically matching those of the Dauphin and the Dauphine on the other side of the Lower Gallery, were the finest in the Palace of Versailles after those of the King.

ALTHOUGH THEY HAD BEEN COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED by Louis-Philippe, in the 20th century they were gradually restored to the way they looked during the Ancien Régime. The project was halted due to a lack of funds in the 1980s. Supervised by Béatrix Saule, Director of the National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon, the restoration work was eagerly resumed to restore these apartments – hitherto closed to the public most of the time – to their former splendour and put them back in the main visit circuit of the Palace.

THE APARTMENTS OF MESDAMES – Princesses Adélaïde and Victoire, daughters of Louis XV, who occupied them for twenty years from 1769 until the Revolution – have recovered their furniture and fittings made for the royal household and the objets d’art that decorated them: an ignored treasure that has emerged from the Versailles storehouses.

THE PRINCIPAL ROOMS are decorated with Lyon silk wall hangings and curtains. These fabrics, newly woven and based on models from the 18th century, were part of exceptionally large orders made to silk weavers in Lyon, as were those for the ornaments made by French braiders. The Palace of Versailles in this way gives considerable – and often vital – support to the applied arts.

THE AIM IS NOT ONLY TO SHOW THE LUXURIOUS ATMOSPHERE in which the Princesses lived but also to show their taste for the arts, particularly for reading (the great Latin and Greek classics) and above all for music. In his Memoirs, in 1750, Luynes remarks: “I don’t know if I have mentioned the large number of occupations that Mesdames chose for themselves... They studied and read with good taste... They found the time to amuse themselves with drawing and even painting which they were fairly good at... Apart from that, Madame Victoire, who could already play the harpsichord very well, learned to play the violin, the guitar and the bass viol... Madame Adélaïde played the violin with ease.” Both of them were taught how to play the harp by Beaumarchais...

IT WAS IN THE MAIN DRAWING-ROOM OF MADAME VICTOIRE that the young Mozart (in 1763) played the harpsichord before the royal family. The following year, he dedicated to this princess one of his very first sonatas for the same instrument.

The drawing-rooms of the daughters of Louis XV, immortalised as musicians by the painter Nattier, will feature musical instruments from the Versailles collections, notably the violin said to have belonged to Madame Adélaïde.

And why not imagine that you can hear the sonatas offered by Mozart to Madame Victoire being played on the harpsichord made by Ruckers or Blanchet?

THE OPENING TO THE PUBLIC OF THESE NINE ROOMS OF THE PRINCESSES not only shows the will of the Public Establishment of the Palace, Museum and National Estate of Versailles to offer an ever-growing range of cultural attractions but also to ensure the consistency of its policy aimed at passing on knowledge. Lastly, it reinforces a reality: the Palace of Versailles is not a museum but a “royal residence”. Which lives...

CATHERINE PÉGARD

President of the Public Establishment of the Palace, Museum and National Estate of Versailles

RECREATING THE SPIRIT OF THE PRINCESSES' APARTMENTS

BY BÉATRIX SAULE

A DECISIVE STAGE IN THE REFURNISHING OF VERSAILLES. In accordance with the principle whereby the central section of the Palace is being restored to how it appeared in 1789, the nine rooms making up the apartments of Mesdames were recreated, thanks to the work of Pierre Lemoine and Jean Dumont, with some of the original wood panelling, during the 1978-1982 programme. But, until recently, no proper programme to refurnish them was undertaken.

APARTMENTS THAT EVOKE THE LIFE OF THE COURT at the end of the Ancien Régime. From a reading of the Memoirs of the Comtesse de Boigne and the Souvenirs of the Marquise de La Tour du Pin, it appears that on the eve of the Revolution these apartments occupied an important place in the daily life of Versailles, hosting what was called “the old court”. This strong presence was due to the status of Mesdames as Daughters of France, their attention to observing the court etiquette, their influence on the members of the Royal Family, and their taste for the fine arts and music.

WORKS OF ART OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY. This new presentation brings together the greatest names both in the field of portrait painting - Nattier, Drouais, Heinsius, Labille-Guiard Vallayer-Coster – and in the decorative arts: wood panelling by Verberckt and Rousseau framing overdoor paintings by Oudry, Taraval, Natoire and Restout, pieces of furniture by Riesener, Leleu, Levasseur, Weisweiler and Carlin, joinery work by Tilliard, Foliot, Boulard, Sené and Jacob, and bronzes by Caffieri, Pitoin, Gouthière, etc.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH WAS CARRIED OUT to establish the historical bases of the furniture. Under the direction of Bertrand Rondot, the project leader, research was carried out, notably in the inventories of the Furniture Storehouse (the Furniture Storeroom of the Crown). This revealed various points: the maintenance of the furniture delivered for the installation of the princesses in 1769, rigorous observance of the etiquette in terms of seating, a certain carelessness in the description of the antechambers and the fact that the small private rooms, not described in the inventories, had probably been furnished in a more modern fashion, paid for from the personal resources of Mesdames.

CONFRONTATION WITH THE STATE OF THE COLLECTIONS. Unfortunately, the collections of Versailles do not contain the sixty folding seats made by Foliot nor the large armchairs adapted for these apartments where the etiquette reigned. But they do preserve other prestigious sets of seats. So this is a golden opportunity to put on display the “furniture of the gods”, the “eagles furniture”, “the furniture of Gustave III”, etc. The same applies to the objets d’art from the Palace of Bellevue, the summer residence of Mesdames, which have been removed from the stores and all brought together here. Sèvres biscuit ceramics, bronzes and candlesticks complete this setting, recalling the taste of Mesdames for decorative objects and giving back to these rooms their lively atmosphere. Instruments and portraits of the princesses playing or singing evoke their keen interest in music.

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ENRICHING THE COLLECTIONS. This specific refurbishing project encouraged the Mobilier national to make deposits and guided exchanges with the Louvre. This led to Versailles receiving ten pieces of furniture made by Levasseur and Carlin, purchased by Mesdames for Bellevue. The municipal library of Versailles deposited a quantity of old books to fill the shelves of Mme Victoire's library while the Bibliothèque nationale de France made a long-term loan of the scale model of Bellevue, made for the princesses. Lastly, this project encouraged numerous acquisitions, in particular the vases in Madame Victoire's bedroom.

A PROGRAMME FOR THE APPLIED ARTS. Textiles play a key role in every refurbishing operation. The production of wall hangings, curtains for windows and door, screens, bedspreads and upholstery for seats took three years to complete and mobilised silk weavers, braiders and tapestry-makers in Lyon. On the site, they rubbed shoulders with restorers in all specialities (painting, metals, cabinetmaking and joinery, etc.). With the advice of the decorator Jacques Garcia, all these restoration projects were completed by installing a delicate, attenuated lighting system to restore the ambiance but also to ensure the preservation of the carpets from the Savonnerie manufactory which are among its finest achievements.

A LONG-TERM PROJECT. Today's opening to the public marks a stage, no doubt a decisive one, but only one stage. We hope that the years to come will bring the identification and the re-weaving of the silk covers of the two main sets of seats, the acquisition of large alcove sofas and the folding seats made by Foliot (whose absence is without doubt the most serious), and lastly the completion of the restoration of the wood panelling in the framework of the overall development plan.

BÉATRIX SAULE

Director of the National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon

PART 1

THE APARTMENTS OF MESDAMES

MESDAMES, DAUGHTERS OF LOUIS XV



Louis XV
François-Hubert Drouais
1773
Versailles, National Museum of the
Palaces of Versailles and Trianon
© RMN-Grand Palais (Château de
Versailles) / Gérard Blot

LOUIS XV MARRIED MARIE LESZCZINSKA IN 1725. Very soon the couple had a large family around them. They had ten children in ten years, two boys and eight daughters.

- **Louise-Elisabeth de France (1727 - 1759)**, known as Madame Première.
- **Anne-Henriette de France (1727 - 1752)**, twin sister of Louise-Elisabeth, known as Madame Henriette.
- **Marie-Louise de France (1728 - 1733)**.
- **Louis-Ferdinand de France (1729 - 1765)**, Dauphin.
- **Philippe de France, duc d'Anjou (1730 - 1733)**, who died from smallpox at the age of three.
- **Marie-Adélaïde de France (1732 - 1800)**, known as Madame Adélaïde.
- **Victoire-Louise-Marie-Thérèse de France (1733 - 1799)**, known as Madame Victoire.
- **Sophie-Philippe-Elisabeth de France (1734 - 1782)**, known as Madame Sophie.
- **Thérèse-Félicité de France (1736 - 1744)**.
- **Louise-Marie de France (1737-1787)**, known as Madame Louise.

OF ALL THE KING'S DAUGHTERS, ONLY ONE MARRIED: Elisabeth (Madame Première) married Philip of Spain, the heir to the throne, in 1739 and became Duchess of Parma in 1748. All her sisters remained single. They never left Versailles and led a quiet life in the court. Mesdames de France were very attached to their parents, and Louis XV loved his daughters tenderly and refused them nothing. He was grief-stricken at the death of Madame Henriette in 1752 and was greatly saddened by the departure of Madame Louise to the Carmelite convent of Saint-Denis in 1770.



Madame Louise de France
Jean-Marc Nattier
Versailles, National Museum of the
Palaces of Versailles and Trianon
© RMN-Grand Palais (Château de
Versailles) / Gérard Blot

THE EIGHT PRINCESSES WERE NOT ALL BROUGHT UP IN THE COURT because their education was regarded as too costly. So the four youngest, Victoire, Sophie, Thérèse and Louise were placed in the Abbey of Fontevraud, while the four eldest, Elisabeth, Henriette, Marie-Louise and Adélaïde stayed with the King.

ON THEIR RETURN FROM FONTEVRAULT, these four formed with their sisters and Dauphin a united set of siblings who kept a watchful eye on their father's mistresses and favourites, not hesitating to plot against them. Madame de Pompadour, notably, became their target.



Madame Adélaïde
Johann Ernst Jules Heinsius
Versailles, National Museum of the
Palaces of Versailles and Trianon
© RMN-Grand Palais (Château de
Versailles) / D.R.

THE PRINCESSES WERE ACCOMMODATED FIRST OF ALL in the South Wing, and then on their return from Fontevault they were moved closer to their father. Adélaïde stayed for a time on the first floor of the central section of the Palace, in the King's Small Apartment. Mesdames Victoire, Henriette, Sophie and Louise moved into the ground floor of the central section under the King's State Apartment. Madame Adélaïde joined Victoire in 1769. They stayed in these apartments up to the Revolution.

IN 1774, THEIR FATHER GAVE THEM AS A GIFT THE PALACE OF BELLEVUE, the former estate of Madame de Pompadour, who died in 1764. A country home and summer residence, the princesses fitted out this Palace in keeping with their taste and the fashions of the period. In Versailles, the apartments of the princesses were official apartments. They did not have, like the King and the Queen, their own genuinely private apartments. This explains their attachment to Bellevue. They escaped there often to get away from the court and the etiquette.



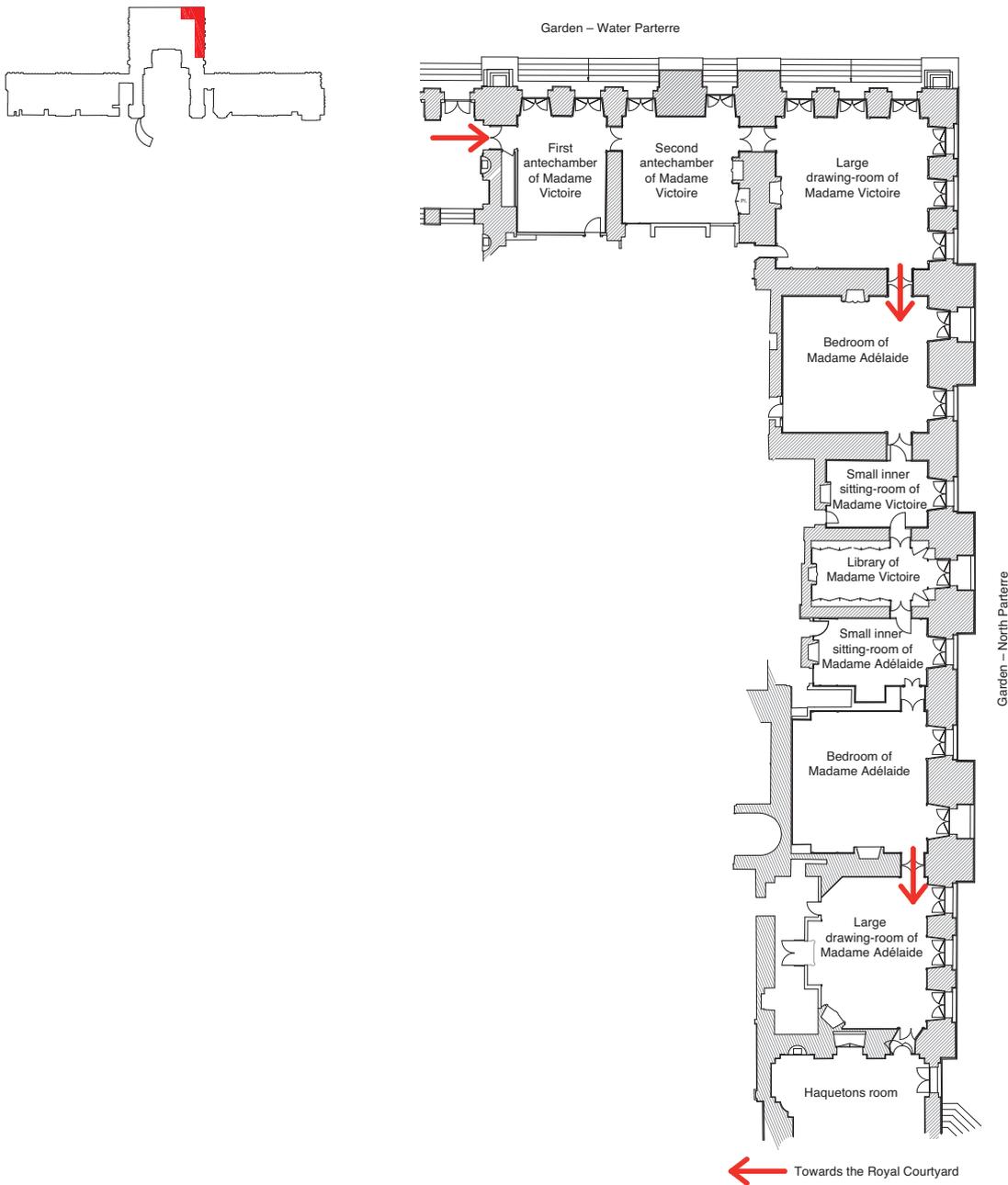
Madame Victoire
Jean-Marc Nattier
Versailles, National Museum of the
Palaces of Versailles and Trianon
© RMN-Grand Palais (Château de
Versailles) / Gérard Blot

MADAME ADÉLAÏDE was very witty and her cutting remarks were feared. Madame Victoire, very kind by nature, was led by her elder sister. They showed irreproachable courage by tending to their father when he was dying of smallpox, a very contagious disease.

IN 1789, FACED WITH THE DANGER OF THE REVOLUTION, they left Versailles for Bellevue, and then in 1790 Madame Adélaïde and Madame Victoire, the last two survivors of the royal siblings, fled to Italy. Adélaïde died in Trieste in 1800, shortly after her younger sister.

Part I - The apartments of Mesdames

MAP



Part I - The apartments of Mesdames

CHRONOLOGY OF THE OCCUPATION OF THE APARTMENTS

ORIGINALLY, THE BATHS APARTMENT OF LOUIS XIV. As always happened in Versailles, the different areas went through many successive states. These apartments of Mesdames were originally the Baths apartment of Louis XIV. Decorated in the grand Italian style, with coloured marble mosaics and gilt bronze sculptures, for a decade before the construction of the Hall of Mirrors it was the most prestigious place in the Palace, where the King liked to receive the ambassadors with full pomp.

THE APARTMENT OF REJECTED MISTRESSES. The Baths apartment was fitted out when he was having an affair with Madame de Montespan. After her disgrace, she had to give up the apartment she occupied on the first floor, close to the King. Louis XIV then assigned to her, with a touch of cruelty, the old Baths apartment. After her, her descendants continued to live here: first the Comte de Toulouse (her legitimate son by the King), then her grandson, the Duc de Penthièvre. Later on, in an odd repeat, the apartment was assigned to Madame de Pompadour when she became the King's "friend"; she stayed here until her death in 1764.

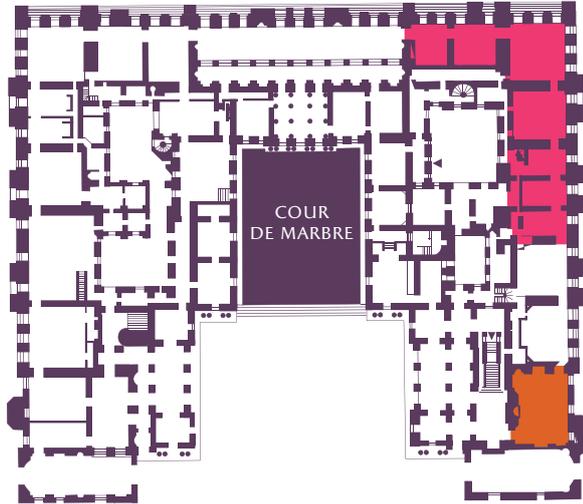
WHEN MESDAMES MOVED IN. In 1750, after the return of the four youngest Mesdames from the Abbey of Fontevault, accommodating the numerous daughters of Louis XV became a nightmare for the Director of Buildings. They lived according to various arrangements in the part not occupied by Mme de Pompadour until stability was established in 1769: for the last twenty years of the Ancien Régime, the apartments would be used exclusively by Mesdames Adélaïde and Victoire.

THE ROYAL STATUS OF THESE APARTMENTS. The apartments in Versailles have a genuine hierarchy, depending on how close they are to the apartments of the King and the queen. Hence, those which are located in the central section of the Palace are more valued than those in the North or South Wings; and, in principle, they were reserved to the nearest members of the royal family. The apartments of Mesdames, located under the King's apartments, thus had the genuine status of a royal apartment.

THE LAYOUT OF THESE APARTMENTS. They are twin apartments that join up in the last rooms, the most intimate rooms of the suite, usually providing separate facilities for husbands and wives. Moreover, each of these apartments had a double aspect. Behind the official rooms that look out on the gardens, a series of small private rooms, mostly mezzanine, looked out on the inner courtyards: small bathroom, wardrobe room, oratory, etc. and rooms for the domestics. The transformations of the 19th century removed this network of small rooms.

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1672-1729



**APPARTEMENT
DES BAINS DE
LOUIS XIV**
OCCUPATION : 1672-1685

PUIS ▶



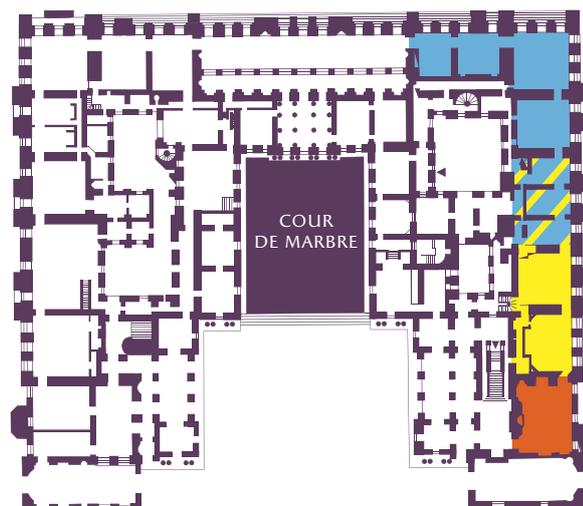
**MADAME DE
MONTESPAN**
OCCUPATION : 1685-1691

▶
**PUIS SON PREMIER FILS :
LE DUC DU MAINE**
OCCUPATION : 1691-1692

▶
**PUIS SON SECOND FILS :
LE COMTE DE TOULOUSE**
OCCUPATION : 1692-1723

**SALLE DES HOQUETONS
(SALON DE L'ESCALIER DU ROI)**

1729-1750



LA COMTESSE DE TOULOUSE
OCCUPATION : 1723-1750



**LE COMTE DE
TOULOUSE**
OCCUPATION : 1723-1737

PUIS ▶

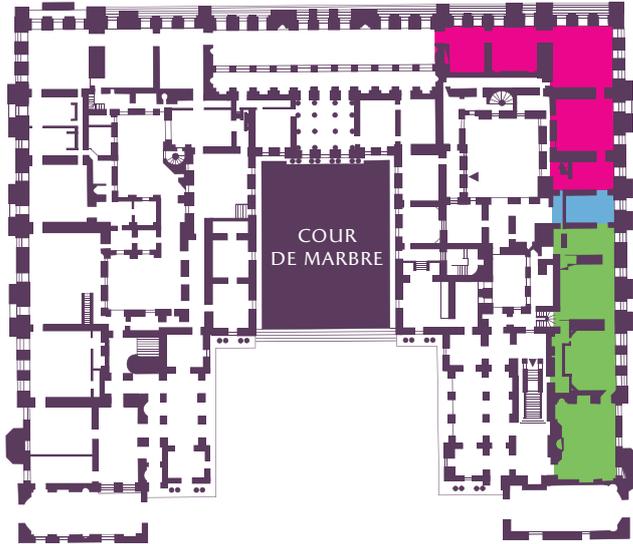


**LE DUC DE
PENTHIEVRE**
OCCUPATION : 1737-1750

**SALLE DES HOQUETONS
(SALON DE L'ESCALIER DU ROI)**

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1750-1767



**MESDAMES
CADETTES
VICTOIRE, SOPHIE, LOUISE**
OCCUPATION : 1753-1767



**LA COMTESSE
DE TOULOUSE**
OCCUPATION : 1750-1766



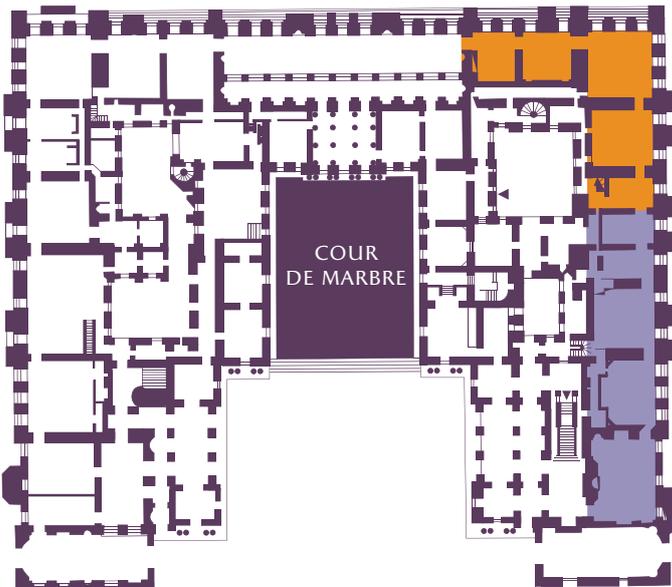
**MADAME DE
POMPADOUR**
OCCUPATION : 1750-1764

PUIS ▶



**MARIE-JOSÈPHE
DE SAXE**
OCCUPATION : 1764-1767

1767-1769



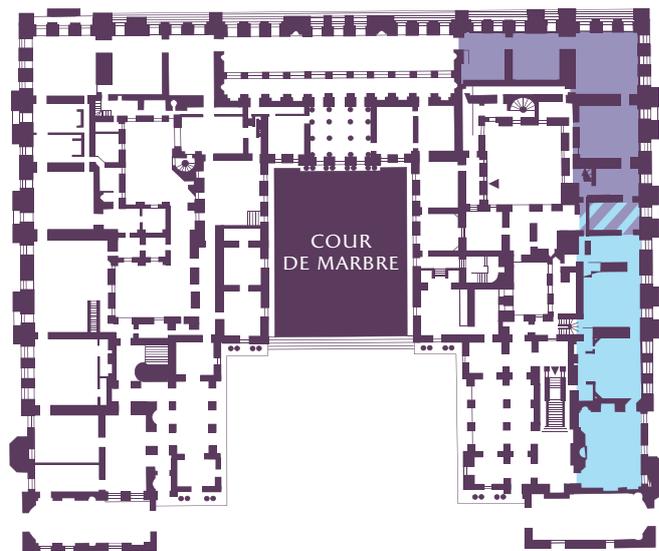
MADAME SOPHIE
OCCUPATION : 1767-1769



MADAME VICTOIRE
OCCUPATION : 1767-1769

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1769-1784



MADAME VICTOIRE
OCCUPATION : 1769-1789



MADAME ADÉLAÏDE
OCCUPATION : 1769-1789

THE APARTMENT OF MADAME VICTOIRE

The first antechamber of Madame Victoire

THE FIRST ROOM IN THE APARTMENT OF MADAME VICTOIRE, this antechamber is the most accessible room, as all those wishing to approach the princess could enter it. It is a waiting room for visitors, with little decoration, which was also used by the domestics. Its furniture was very simple: straw-covered chairs, a wardrobe and a vigil bed for a valet, hidden by a screen.

THIS ROOM which has not retained its architectural features of the 18th century is presented according to a layout principle more suited to palaces in the succeeding century: three large portraits of Madame Adélaïde, Madame Victoire and their deceased sister, Madame Infante, by the official portrait painter of Mesdames, Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, introduce the visitor to the hostesses of the apartments.

The second antechamber or Nobles Room of Madame Victoire



© château de Versailles, C. Milet.

IN THIS SECOND ANTECHAMBER we get a better idea of the organisation of this apartment. By apartment is meant the suite of five rooms: the first antechamber, the second antechamber, the large drawing-room, the bedroom, and lastly the small inner sitting-room. Close friends were received here but also complete strangers. It has the classic design of official apartments which are laid out according to strict rules set down in the court etiquette.

THE FURTHER WE MOVE IN THIS SUITE OF ROOMS, the more intimate they become and the less people were authorised to come. The first antechamber was essentially devoted to the reception of visitors by servants, and the second to official presentations, for

example when a new person was introduced to the court.

THIS ROOM HAD A DATED LOOK in most of the furnishings. Door curtains made from Gobelins tapestry woven for Louis XIV covered three doors; today, only one has a "Mars" model designed by Charles Le Brun. The two chests of drawers dating from the reign of Louis XV are similar to those that were there on the eve of the Revolution.



© château de Versailles, C. Milet.

The main drawing-room of Madame Victoire

HERE Madame Victoire received the members of the court for readings, private concerts or to play cards. This is also where the family met to play music.

THIS CENTRAL ROOM OF THE APARTMENT with its double exposure on the Water Parterre and the North Parterre was essentially furnished with folding seats. To replace these missing “etiquette” seats, the curators decided to present the furniture purchased by the Furniture Storehouse of the Crown in 1784 to be placed in the apartment prepared for the visit of Gustav III of Sweden. It had been made in 1778 for the Comte de Gamaches and its sumptuousness was noticed by the Furniture Storehouse administration when

its owner put it up for sale. After the royal visit (Gustav III finally did not stay in the Palace) it was sent to Compiègne, in the office of Louis XVI. The two small chests of drawers by Leleu, from the bedroom of the Duchesse de Bourbon in the Palais Bourbon, evoke the four chests of drawers placed between the windows that feature in the inventories. The gilt and patinated bronze clock placed on the mantelpiece depicting *The Rape of Europe* is the work of the maker of bronzes Jean-Joseph de Saint-Germain; Madame Victoire owned one like this. In the fireplace, the pair of andirons comes from the large drawing-room of Mesdames in Bellevue; she had bought it from the Darnault silk merchants in 1784. In the centre of the room, the harpsichords by Hans Ruckers, from the 17th century, and François-Etienne Blanchet, 1746, show the importance of music in the life of Mesdames. Although they do not appear in the inventories of the Furniture Storehouse, they were indeed present in these apartments.

ON THE WALLS, portraits of the daughters of Louis XV depict them at different times in their life. Painted by Nattier in the 1740s when most of the princesses were educated in the royal Abbey of Fontevault, then by François-Hubert Drouais over fifteen years later, they present a striking summing-up of these sacrificed lives.



© château de Versailles, C. Milet.

The bedroom of Madame Victoire

IN VERSAILLES, Mesdames had to take part in the life of this centre of power and to receive certain visitors, even in their bedroom. A daily ceremonial took place here in the presence of a limited group: each of the court ladies in the service of the princesses played her role: dressing, hairdressing, jewellery.

THE ROOM HAS KEPT the chiné wool fabrics with the branch pattern installed in 1982. The Turkish bed, donated to Versailles in 1965, is matched by a domed tester, on deposit from the *Mobilier national*, and also covered with the same chiné wool with the branch pattern. Apart from the two corner units delivered for this room in 1769 and which were

purchased recently, the “banded” wall clock placed on one of the mirrors corresponds to the model that was in the room from 1769 to the Revolution, now on deposit from the *Mobilier national*, originally from the Elysée Palace.

ON THE MANTELPIECE, the set of three Sèvres vases is one of the major acquisitions made in recent years by the Palace: these porcelain masterpieces painted by Charles Nicolas Dodin have recovered the place given to them by Madame Victoire after their purchase in December 1772. This acquisition came after that of the large carpet of the Savonnerie, with the coat of arms of France, whose design was drawn in 1738 by the draughtsman of the Savonnerie Manufactory, Pierre-Josse Perrot, and of which a small number of copies were woven before the Revolution. The one presented here is in a remarkable state of preservation that allows us to appreciate the vigorous harmony of colours in vogue in the 18th century.



© château de Versailles, C. Milet.

The small inner sitting-room of Madame Victoire

THE SMALL INNER SITTING-ROOM is the smallest in these official apartments. It is also the only one that was properly private. To enter it, one had to be specifically invited by the princess.

THE LARGE WRITING DESK by Jean-Henri Riesener forms part of the recent deposits made by the Louvre Museum; it came from the Palace of Fontainebleau where it seems to have been intended for Marie-Antoinette. It is a desk very similar to the one featured in the portrait of Madame Adélaïde in her library, by Lié-Louis Perin-Salbreux, near the window, proof that such pieces of furniture were delivered to Mesdames in the 1770s. Thanks to the deposit made by the Mobilier national, the room has been enriched with two pieces of furniture of another style by Etienne Levasseur, bought from the Darnault silk merchants for Bellevue in 1789: one small bookcase with a door and a tiered roll-top writing desk. Their moiré mahogany

veneering enhances the decoration of gilt bronze featuring fine arabesques and ivy branches. This set had been purchased for the inner small room of Madame Adélaïde in her country residence. The writing desk also comes from there. On the eve of the Revolution, Mesdames replaced their furniture both in Bellevue and in Versailles to fit into the latest taste; the events prevented them from enjoying them.



© château de Versailles, C. Milet.

The library of Madame Victoire

THE DAUGHTERS OF LOUIS XV loved to read alone or to be read to by their readers. They all possessed libraries in their residences. Inventories drawn up during the Revolution enable us to understand their reading tastes. The library of course contained religious and history books, but science was also largely represented and Mesdames possessed treatises on chemistry and physics, one of them presenting the first experiments with electricity. Each princess seems to have had her books bound in a different colour: green leather for Madame Victoire, and red for Madame Adélaïde.

ALL THE SEATS by Nicolas-Quinibert Foliot ordered for the apartment of the Dauphine Marie-Antoinette in the Palace of Choisy in 1770 correspond perfectly by their style and rich decoration to the suite delivered for Madame Victoire in 1769 and which gave this small room its comfort and luxury. The clock by the maker of bronzes Robert Osmond and the clockmaker Charles André Caron, placed on the mantelpiece, had been delivered in 1757 for the apartment of Madame Adélaïde; it was then assigned to the first chambermaid of this princess. It has returned to Versailles thanks to a deposit made by the Mobilier national. Books provided by the municipal library of Versailles fill the bookshelves, and visitors can inspect up close a series of bindings with the coats of arms of Mesdames, Queen Marie Leszczinska and the Dauphine Marie-Joséphé de Saxe.

Part I - The apartments of Mesdames

THE APARTMENT OF MADAME ADÉLAÏDE

PREVIOUSLY, ONE ENTERED THE APARTMENT OF MADAME ADÉLAÏDE BY AN ANTECHAMBER LOCATED AT THE END OF THE SUITE OF ROOMS. THE VISIT IS MADE TODAY IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.



© château de Versailles, C. Millet.

The small inner sitting-room of Madame Adélaïde

AS IN MOST OF THE ROOMS, most of the wood panelling that decorated the walls of the room has disappeared, and only the frames of the overdoor paintings are original. The thick walls conceal enormous marble columns that decorated the vestibule of the Baths apartment of Louis XIV. These columns still support the Large Apartment, located above it. In the 17th century the structure of this place was totally different. This vestibule was divided up to form a suite of three small rooms (small inner sitting-room and library of Madame Victoire and small inner sitting-room of Madame Adélaïde). The doors at the back of these rooms led to service rooms and stairs, as well as to the bathrooms and

wardrobe rooms of Mesdames. This more intimate part of the apartments was essential in the life of Mesdames.

EVENTUALLY, THIS ROOM will receive the so-called “Eagles” furniture from the bedroom of Marie-Antoinette in Saint-Cloud, delivered by Jean-Baptiste Claude Sené. The pekin fabric with painted Chinese landscapes and figures that covered this furniture is currently being studied in preparation for its re-creation. To mark the reopening of this apartment, a loan was made by a private individual of a large drawing featuring, partly in allegorical mode, the goodbyes of Madame Louise to the royal family before her departure to the Carmel convent on 10 April 1770. This retrospective drawing gives the opportunity to ascertain in detail the furniture of the small inner sitting-room of Madame Adélaïde before its wood panelling was transformed by Richard Mique in 1781. This interior scene, exceptional for Versailles, reveals how a small private sitting-room was furnished and decorated, far from the strict rules of the court etiquette.

ON THE MANTELPIECE, the “Chinese” vase was acquired by Madame Adélaïde in 1784 but the archives of the Sèvres Manufactory indicate that the princess parted with it the following year!



© château de Versailles, C. Millet.

The bedroom of Madame Adélaïde

THE BEDROOM OF MADAME ADÉLAÏDE is a very large and richly decorated room. In the days of Mesdames, the official apartments had a different décor for winter and summer. Twice every year the fabrics were removed and replaced: velvet for the winter and lighter fabrics for the summer. This replacement policy helped to preserve these precious fabrics. Currently, the summer fabrics have been recreated in the different rooms of the Palace. They correspond to those that were in place when the royal family definitively left Versailles because of the Revolution.

THE NEW BROCADE DECORATING THE WALLS OF THE ALCOVE, the bed coverings and the other pieces of furniture

reproduce a model commissioned by the Russian court in 1788 for the Grand Duke Paul, replacing the Tours brocade with a pattern of “interlaced buttercup flowers, roses and blue hyacinths and garlands of varied flowers on a white background” delivered in May 1770 and which remains to be identified.

THE BED WITH THREE BED-HEADS, attributed to Georges Jacob and on deposit from the Louvre Museum, has been linked with a domed tester by the same joiner, decorated with flowers such as poppies, associated with sleep. It replaces the more monumental canopy bed, with the canopy placed perpendicular to the wall that featured in this vast bedroom until the Revolution. Lacking the twelve folding seats by Foliot delivered in 1769, folding seats ordered by Napoleon I for the Monte-Cavallo palace in Rome (now the Quirinal palace) have been placed in the bedroom. Their shape corresponds to those of the 18th century and they can thus be presented as equivalents, until some of the original folding seats are located. The chest of drawers by Riesener, placed in front of the fireplace, comes from the Nobles Salon of the Comtesse d’Artois in Versailles, where it was delivered in 1779; it replaces another chest of drawers by Riesener delivered for Madame Adélaïde in 1778 which was also decorated with fine marquetry work featuring bouquets of flowers, typical of the most refined pieces of furniture of this cabinet-maker. In 1787, Madame Adélaïde replaced the wall sconce of her bedroom: the bronze craftsman Louis-Gabriel Feloix delivered six wall sconces in the arabesque style with twisting branches ending in eagle heads. The model proved popular, because Marie-Antoinette adopted it for her apartment in Saint-Cloud. A pair based on this model was acquired by the Palace. The large candelabra placed on the chest of drawers lit the same table in the large drawing-room of Mesdames in the Palace of Bellevue. This monument in gilt and lacquered bronze, one of the finest French examples from the late 18th century, was delivered by the Darnault brothers.



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The large drawing-room of Madame Adélaïde

IT WAS MADAME DE POMPADOUR who gave this room its present form, and the mantelpiece carved from multicoloured Sarancolin marble was installed for her.

IT WAS THE PRINCIPAL ROOM of the princess's apartment and was originally mostly furnished with folding seats, a kind of court stool which furnished most of these official rooms, which have not survived.

THE FURNITURE PRESENTED TODAY evokes the atmosphere of Bellevue, in the large drawing-room of Madame Adélaïde: the pair of corner units with panels of Japanese lacquer, and the tiered chest of drawers, all by Martin Carlin, come from

there. They were bought in 1782, and were joined five years later by the pair of vases in Sèvres porcelain with a gold grisaille pattern acquired by Madame Adélaïde. All the seats were not ordered by Mesdames but by Louis XVI for the Games Room of Saint-Cloud from the joiner Georges Jacob. These pieces are presented in the usual way of the 18th century, parallel to the walls.

AS IN MADAME VICTOIRE'S APARTMENT, the large drawing-room was used as a music room: the organ at the back of the niche may have belonged to Madame Adélaïde; it was one of the three organs ordered from the organ-maker Nicolas Sommer in 1747 and intended for the Dauphin, the Dauphine and Madame Adélaïde. The initials MA revealed by a recent restoration point to the daughter of Louis XV. The Gagliano violin decorated with fleurs-de-lys also indicates that it was owned by Madame Adélaïde. The last musical instrument presented in the room is a rare "drawer" piano produced in the workshops of the German cabinet-maker David Roentgen, who ran a shop in Paris where the members of the royal family often ordered pieces of furniture. However, nothing better evokes music than the presence of the large portraits of *Madame Adélaïde Singing*, by Jean-Marc Nattier, from 1759, and *Madame Victoire Playing the Harp*, by Etienne Aubry, from 1773.

The Haquetons Room

THE HAQUETON GUARDS WERE CALLED after their tunic, inherited from archers of the Middle Ages. They were the guards of the Provostship, in charge of the police of the Palace. This room, where they were usually on duty, is the only one to have preserved its décor which was completed in 1672, announcing the décor of the Baths apartment to which it gave access through two vestibules.

MADAME DE POMPADOUR had split the room to form two antechambers, which were later used by the Dauphine, Madame Victoire and finally Madame Adélaïde, but which have not been recreated. **THE STAIRCASE INSTALLED IN THE REIGN OF LOUIS-PHILIPPE** occupies part of the area taken up by the Grand Degré staircase of the King, also called the Ambassadors Staircase, built from 1678 to 1680. Decorated with polychrome marble and allegorical paintings by Charles Le Brun, this majestic staircase led up to the King's Grand Apartment. In the reign of Louis XV it was no longer used and the King even had a removable theatre set up here. Its destruction in 1752 deprived the Palace of one of its finest pieces of architecture: a very exact scale model evokes its vanished splendours. In the reign of Louis XVI, the vestibule that gave access to its and the small rooms around it were fitted out for Madame Adélaïde as a library and private inner room that have not been restored.

PART II

AN EVOCATION OF LIFE IN THE COURT

VERSAILLES, ROYAL RESIDENCE



The Queen's Gold Room
© château de Versailles, C. Milet

Grasping the function of each room and how they were used

THE ESTABLISHMENT WISHES to offer the public a better grasp of the function of its rooms in order to understand how Versailles worked as a royal residence. This approach has gathered pace since 2010.

IN PARALLEL TO THE MAJOR RESTORATIONS carried out in some rooms of the State Apartments and the private apartments of the King and Queen – their architectural structure, paintings and sculptures – large-scale refurnishing operations are under way.

IN 2010 a committee was set up, bringing together curators of Versailles, the Mobilier national, the Louvre Museum and the

decorator Jacques Garcia. Their discussions, backed up by a new reading of the inventories and an examination of the resources offered by the collections of the three institutions represented, led to programmes concerning both the rooms dedicated to state occasions (one per year) and the private rooms.

SOME ROOMS DEDICATED TO STATE FUNCTIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN PRESENTED:



The Mercury Salon
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- the **Queen's Antechamber** (2009 - 2010) in the Queen's State Apartment
- the **Queen's Gilt Study** (2010 - 2012) in the inner rooms of the Queen
- the **Games Room** (2010 - 2012) in the private apartment of the King
- the **Mercury Salon** (2011-2012) in the State apartment of the King
- the **apartments of Mesdames** (2012 - 2013)

THE OPERATIONS UNDER WAY CONCERN:

- the **Abundance Salon** in the Large Apartment of the King

The décor was in a very poor state of preservation. Successive clumsy repainting efforts had spoiled the quality of Houasse's paintings. The preliminary study revealed the presence of the original under these later coats. It was rediscovered when the paintings were restored, a task now finished. The restorers are now completing the work on the cornices.

- the **Chamber of Louis XVI** in the Small Apartment of the King

Ongoing since 2011, the refurnishing of this room will be completed in late 2014. A large-scale weaving operation was initiated and is under way with silk weavers in Lyon to recreate the brocaded lampas fabrics of the door and window curtains, and the folding seats. The last fabrics will be delivered to Versailles in June 2013, before being used to upholster the folding seats, and then in 2014 for restoring the bed.

The refurnishing of the Palace of Versailles

IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY, thanks to the scientific research and enthusiasm of the curator Pierre de Nolhac, it was decided to restore the former residence of Kings. In 1939, the first object originally from Versailles was purchased: the mantelpiece screen of the Queen's bedroom. Thereafter, led by Pierre Verlet, systematic research was carried out on the inventories and journal of the Furniture Storehouse of the Crown, which recorded the deliveries made each day, in order to identify the vestiges and, if possible, to buy them back: this is a long-term effort to make purchases for different rooms, involving considerable financial input, fortunately often backed up by donations... An immense task carried out with passion by generations of curators since G erald Van Der Kemp.

SOME ITEMS ORIGINALLY FROM VERSAILLES may return there, but others were ordered for other royal households. In this refurnishing policy, these "equivalents" are preferred to copies – the latter are accepted only when the original is definitively unavailable. This policy was decided after discussions: Pierre Verlet, a curator in the Louvre, advocated refurnishing Versailles with copies. A pragmatic approach emerged: a compromise between what the inventories describe and the real state of the collections. But the guidelines were firm:

- search out newly available pieces and purchase them,
- increase the quality display of this treasure of royal furniture to foster appreciation of its exceptional quality,
- restore to Versailles the image of a lived-in palace.

THE REFURNISHING POLICY OF VERSAILLES could not be implemented without the close



The antechamber of
the Queen's Grand Couvert
  ch teau de Versailles, C. Milet

collaboration that has been established with the Louvre Museum and the *Mobilier national*. Since 2007, the deposit policy of the *Mobilier national* in favour of Versailles has brought to the Palace highly significant pieces of furniture and objets d'art: items originally from Versailles and which were not sold off in the Revolution's auctions, or others which are the perfect equivalents of those that have not survived or have left France. This collaboration between the institution that is the heir to the Furniture Storeroom of the Crown and the Palace of Versailles started during the 20th century. For

example, in 1953, the desk of the Dauphin by BVRB was returned to Versailles. A new impetus was given to these exchanges recently by the signing of a proactive policy between the presidents of the two institutions. Over a hundred objects of royal origin have returned to the collections of Versailles since 2007, marking a decisive stage in the immense task of refurnishing the Palace.

Part II - An evocation of life in the court

AT HOME WITH MESDAMES

A first step: the programme law of 1978 - 1982

IT IS NEARLY THIRTY YEARS SINCE the apartments of Mesdames were restored to their state in the late 18th century when they were occupied by Madame Adélaïde and Madame Victoire.

WHILE THE FURNITURE OF THESE APARTMENTS was sold off during the Revolution, the wood panelling mostly survived until its destruction by Louis-Philippe for the creation of the History Galleries in 1837. The presence of numerous remains of this décor in the storerooms made possible the recreation of these rooms, in the framework of the programme law passed in 1978.

AFTER INTENSE RESEARCH in the storerooms and in the History Galleries where some panels, not visible, remained, an ambitious programme to restore the wood panelling was launched, with original pieces completed by newly-carved panels, as in the two bedrooms. In other rooms it was decided not to re-carve the missing elements, rather to simply replace them with plaster casts in the same proportions in order to recreate the volume and rhythm of the rooms, as in the large drawing-room of Madame Victoire, and even more so in that of Madame Adélaïde where none of the pieces carved by Verberckt were recovered, with the exception of the overdoor frames.

IN SPITE OF THESE EFFORTS, these rooms could only be partially refurnished, owing to the absence of the original pieces of furniture and the relative poverty of the Versailles collections at the time for the task of refurnishing two large official apartments that were among the most sumptuous of the Palace in 1789. However, some purchases have made it possible to replace pieces of furniture delivered by the Furniture Storehouse, such as the pair of corner cupboards delivered for the bedroom of Madame Victoire in 1789 and which stayed there until the Revolution, which were acquired in 1982.

New research and new acquisitions

SINCE THEN, THE REGULAR ENRICHMENT of the collections of the Palace and the very important deposits agreed in recent years by the Louvre Museum and the *Mobilier national* have led to a reconsideration of the furnishing of these apartments in order to reinforce their evocative power, with the collaboration of the decorator Jacques Garcia.

THE RESEARCH ON THE PIECES OF FURNITURE AND OBJETS D'ART that decorated these rooms before the Revolution, based on the journal of the Furniture Storehouse of the Crown and its successive inventories, was pursued. The inventories for 1776, 1785 and 1788-1789 (partly included in 1792) give a precise but partial image of the furnishings of these rooms. They only reveal the pieces of furniture mentioned in the inventories of the Furniture Storehouse of the Crown but fail to mention the gilt wooden console tables, linked to the architecture, and hence recorded by the Royal Buildings department, or the pieces of furniture delivered for the private Furniture Storehouses of the princesses.

Nevertheless, it could happen at this time that pieces of furniture transited by the Furniture Storehouse of the Crown before being delivered to the private Furniture Storehouses of members of the royal family. As a general rule, the inventories of the royal Furniture Storehouse only describe the pieces of furniture of the official rooms of the apartments – antechambers, large drawing-rooms and bedrooms – while the furniture of the inner rooms and libraries was recorded by the private Furniture Storehouses. Likewise unrecorded were the objects purchased personally, such as the Sèvres porcelain vases and other objects acquired at sales organised in the winter in Versailles by the King in his inner apartment. The sales registers of the Sèvres Manufactory fortunately reveal the scope of these sales.

THE CURRENT PRIORITY OF THE PALACE is to bring back the pieces of furniture and objects that adorned these apartments. Thus in 2009 it acquired: a pair of gilt bronze wall sconces in the arabesque style with twisting branches ending in eagle heads by the maker of bronzes Louis-Gabriel Feloix, delivered in 1787 for the bedroom of Madame Adélaïde (two other pairs remain to be identified!); and, deposited by the *Mobilier national*, the “large banded model” of the wall clock made by Osmond now adorns the bedroom of Madame Victoire once again.

The necessity to complete the furnishing of Versailles

BUT THE RETURN OF ONLY ORIGINAL ITEMS, far too rare, would have left rooms largely empty. That is why it was decided to evoke the taste of Mesdames with furniture from their Palace in Bellevue. To the rich collections from Bellevue in Versailles were added a deposit from the Louvre Museum of a suite of furniture by Martin Carlin with panels of Japanese lacquer and ebony veneering from 1781-1782, which decorated the drawing-room of Madame Adélaïde in her summer residence, and which naturally finds its place in her drawing-room in Versailles. The deposits made by the *Mobilier national* include a mahogany bookcase and roll-top desk by Etienne Levasseur, in the latest design, which Madame Adélaïde bought on the eve of the Revolution for her inner room in Bellevue. These pieces of furniture from Bellevue not only reveal the taste of Mesdames but also the activity of the two silk merchants, the Darnault brothers. Running one of the most luxurious shops in Paris, in the district around rue Saint-Honoré, with “Au Roy d’Espagne” as their shop sign, they became the principal suppliers of Mesdames, both for their private residence in Bellevue and for the private rooms of their apartments in Versailles. It was through their intermediary that Madame Victoire and Madame Adélaïde kept up with the latest Paris fashions, such as the pieces of furniture with Japanese lacquered panels made by Martin Carlin in the early 1780s, and other pieces as refined but less showy, with mahogany or lemon wood veneering made by Etienne Levasseur, on the eve of the Revolution. They thus differentiated themselves from Queen Marie-Antoinette, who stayed faithful to the style of the cabinet-maker Riesener for many years, and gave a distinct personality to their interiors.

PIECES OF FURNITURE AND OBJECTS FROM THE APARTMENTS OF MESDAMES IN VERSAILLES:

- **Pair of corner cupboards** by Louis Peridiez, delivered for the bedroom of Madame Victoire in 1769 by Gilles Joubert
- **Pair of gilt bronze wall sconces**, model of Louis-Gabriel Feloix, delivered in 1787 for the bedroom of Madame Adélaïde (acquisition 2009)
- **Set of three Sèvres porcelain vases**, painted by Dodin, purchased by Madame Victoire in 1772 and placed on the mantelpiece of her bedroom (acquisition 2012)
- **Bronze clock depicting *The Rape of Europe***, by Jean-Joseph de Saint-Germain, circa 1760-1765 (on deposit from the Louvre Museum, 1975) model similar to the one delivered for the drawing-room of Madame Victoire in Versailles in 1763 (on deposit from the Louvre Museum, 1975)
- **Banded wall clock**, large model, bronze, by Robert Osmond, clockwork by Jean-Antoine Lepine v. 1767-1770, model delivered for the bedroom of Madame Victoire in December 1767 (on deposit from the Mobilier national, 2010)
- **Drop-leaf secrétaire and corner cupboard**, lemon wood and amaranth veneering, by Etienne Levasseur, purchased from the Darnault merchants by Mesdames circa 1789, probably for their inner rooms in Versailles at the start of the Revolution (on deposit from the Louvre Museum and the *Mobilier national*, 2010)
- **Sèvres porcelain “Chinese” vase** with lapis lazuli background, 1781, gold grisaille decoration by J.J. Dieu, N. Schrade and Vincent, purchased by Madame Adélaïde in 1783, probably for Versailles (donated by Mr Hubert de Givenchy through the intermediary of the Société des Amis de Versailles, 1994)
- **Sèvres porcelain “Chinese» liqueur cabinet**, painted by Louis-François LECOT, purchased by Madame Victoire in December 1775 or Madame Adélaïde in January 1776, probably for Versailles (milk jug donated by Mr and Mrs Eugène Becker and by Mr Jacques Garcia).

PIECES OF FURNITURE FROM OTHER APARTMENTS OF MESDAMES IN VERSAILLES:

- **Small writing table** with kingwood veneering, by François-Antoine Gaudreaus, delivered in 1746 for the use of Mesdames Henriette and Adélaïde in their apartment in the South Wing of Versailles
- **Sloping secrétaire** by Jacques-Philippe Carel, with kingwood, rosewood and amaranth veneering, delivered by Gaudreaus in 1751 for the use of Mesdames Sophie and Louise in Versailles
- **Chest of drawers with louvers** by Gilles Joubert, delivered for the bedroom of Madame Sophie in 1767
- **Chest of drawers**, by Pierre-Antoine Foullet, delivered in 1768 for the previous bedroom of Madame Victoire (present bedroom of Madame Adélaïde) (On deposit from the Louvre Museum, 1975)
- **Clock with a child “holding a lyre”** (disappeared), by Robert Osmond (1711-1789), maker of bronzes and Charles André Caron (1697-1775), clock-maker, delivered for the apartment of Madame Adélaïde in 1757 on the first floor, then placed in the apartment of the first chambermaid of this princess (on deposit from the *Mobilier national*)
- **Madame Henriette (1727-1752) playing the bass viol** by Jean-Marc Nattier, 1754, cited in 1762 in the apartment that Madame Adélaïde occupied on the first floor of the Palace of Versailles
- **Chamber organ**, carved and gilt oak, one of three ordered from the organ-maker Nicolas Sommer in 1747 and intended for the Dauphin, the Dauphine and Madame Adélaïde (on deposit from the Paris Municipality, 1968)

PIECES OF FURNITURE, OBJECTS AND PAINTINGS FROM THE PALACE OF BELLEVUE:

- **Two chairs**, by Jean-Baptiste Boulard, from a set of 48 chairs delivered in 1784 for the large sitting-room of Mesdames in the Palace of Bellevue (purchase)
- **Pair of andirons “with vases and winged lions”** gilt bronze, delivered in 1784 with another identical pair (Louvre Museum) by the Darnault merchants for the two mantelpieces of the large sitting-room of Mesdames in the Palace of Bellevue (on deposit from the Louvre Museum)
- *The Meal of Tantalus* and *The Wedding of Perseus and Andromeda Disturbed by Phineus*, by Hugues Taraval, two overdoors commissioned in 1766 by the King’s Buildings administration for the dining room of the Palace of Bellevue.
- *Young Shepherd with his Reed Pipe* and *Young Girl Contemplating a Pair of Doves Pecking Each Other*, figures in white marble, base in blue turquin marble, by Jean-François Lorta, 1783, from the collections of Madame Adélaïde in the Palace of Bellevue (acquisition 2005)
- **Relief map of the Bellevue estate**, commissioned by Mesdames and drawn by P.N. Le Roy in 1777, carved and gilt wooden table (long-term loan from the Bibliothèque nationale de France)
- **Banded alabaster pot-pourri vase**, gilt bronze mounting, circa 1720, from the large sitting-room of Mesdames in the Palace of Bellevue
- **Roll-top secrétaire and small bookcase with one door**, by Etienne Levasseur, mahogany veneering and gilt bronze, circa 1789, delivered by the Darnault merchants for the inner room of Madame Adélaïde in the Palace of Bellevue (on deposit from the *Mobilier national*, 2010 and 2012)
- **Writing table** by Etienne Levasseur, mahogany and gilt bronze, white marble top, circa 1785, delivered by the Darnault merchants for Mesdames in the Palace of Bellevue
- **Overdoors: Winter; Autumn; Summer; Spring**, by Jean-Bernard Restout fils (1732-1797), commissioned by the King’s Buildings administration in 1766 for the Games Room of the Palace of Bellevue
- **Alabaster bowl** with figures in patinated bronze, gilt bronze, Italian workmanship, circa 1785, from the collections of Mesdames in the Palace of Bellevue
- **Console table**, by Joseph Deschamps, carved and gilt oak, delivered in 1785 for the small sitting-room of Madame Victoire in the Palace of Bellevue
- **Candelabra**, gilt bronze and varnished bronze, circa 1785, from the large sitting-room of Mesdames in the Palace of Bellevue
- **Tiered chest of drawers and pair of corner cupboards**, by Martin Carlin, Japanese lacquer and ebony veneering with pewter fillets, white marble top, delivered in 1781 and 1782 for the large sitting-room of Madame Adélaïde in the Palace of Bellevue (on deposit from the Louvre Museum, 2011)
- **Chiffonier table**, by Martin Carlin, ebony and gilt bronze, white marble top, delivered for the large sitting-room of Madame Victoire in the Palace of Bellevue (on deposit from the Louvre Museum, 2011)
- **Pair of porcelain “Etruscan” vases** from the Royal Manufactory of Sèvres, with gold grisaille decoration by Charles Eloi Asselin, purchased by Madame Adélaïde in 1787 and placed in her large sitting-room in Bellevue
- **Violin**, circa 1750, by Nicola Gagliano and bow by Léonard Tourte, circa 1750, reputed to have belonged to Madame Adélaïde

Bedrooms recreated

THE VISIT TO THESE APARTMENTS would not be very satisfying without the presence in the bedrooms of grandly draped beds. Until the discovery of the period “duchess” beds – with their canopy perpendicular to the wall – as described in the inventories, two very fine 18th century beds, one of them from the Louvre Museum, are exhibited. To complete the presentation, domed testers deposited by the *Mobilier national* recreate the braided textile that enveloped it. For this occasion, a new brocade was woven for the bedroom of Madame Adélaïde. In the absence of the Tours brocade with a pattern of “interlaced buttercup flowers, roses and blue hyacinths and garlands of varied flowers on a white background” delivered in May 1770 and which remains to be identified, the brocade specifically woven today by the Tassinari and Chatel workshop reproduces a wall hanging commissioned in 1788 for the Grand Duke Paul of Russia.

IN THE BEDROOM OF MADAME VICTOIRE, the chiné with a branch pattern found in 1982, very similar to the one delivered in 1769, “with a foliated pattern on a white background” and featuring “crows and other birds”, has been matched with a new commission from Tassinari and Chatel. It reproduces a drawing made by Philippe de Lasalle in 1773 for Catherine II of Russia.

IN THE TWO BEDROOMS, apart from the alcove hangings and bedclothes, other textile items were recreated: curtains for the windows and doors, screens with six panels (originally with carved and gilt wooden frames).

MESDAMES AND MUSIC

Music at Versailles during the Ancien Régime

IN VERSAILLES music was an integral part of the court life. It was played during the daytime and to accompany the royal occupations: the mass, the outings, the hunts, the official Grand Couvert dinners, the “apartment” entertainments, etc. and numerous performances (operas, ballets, etc.) were also organised in the Palace.

This omnipresence of music was unequalled during the reign of Louis XIV, whose taste for this art is well known. With his successors, Louis XV and Louis XVI, though they were not themselves musicians, the tradition continued. Then it was mostly the women – queens, princesses and favourites – who kept music alive in the court.

During the reign of Louis XV: the influence of the Queen and Children of France

QUEEN MARIE LESZCZINSKA was particularly anxious to maintain the musical tradition of Versailles. On her arrival in the court in 1725 she inaugurated the “Queen’s Concerts”, which became a real institution, under the responsibility of the First Gentleman of the King’s Bedroom and organised effectively by the *Menus-Plaisirs* administration. Several times in the week, usually in the Peace Salon, the Queen had works by Lully, Destouches, Campra, Mouret etc. played. A musician herself, though not a virtuoso, Marie Leszczinska sang and played the harpsichord and the hurdy-gurdy. She liked the company of singers and musicians and would even play with them, for example in 1752 with the famous castrato Farinelli.



Madame Henriette de France
Jean-Marc Nattier
Versailles, National Museum of the
Palaces of Versailles and Trianon
© RMN-Grand Palais (Château de
Versailles) / D.R.

HER CHILDREN AND HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, Marie-Joséphé de Saxe, the second wife of the Dauphin, also loved music. They were good musicians and often played together in the privacy of their apartments, notably in the main drawing-room of Madame Victoire. They sang operas and especially appreciated the Italian arias then in vogue

THE DAUPHIN SANG and played the harpsichord, the organ and the violin. His sisters took harpsichord lessons with Marguerite-Antoinette Couperin, daughter of the composer Couperin, and guitar lessons with Pierre-Mareschal-Paisible. During their musical gatherings, Madame Henriette played the bass viol, Madame Adélaïde the violin and Madame Victoire the guitar.

THE DUC DE LUYNES reports in his Memoirs: “Apart from that, Madame Victoire, who could already play the harpsichord very well when she returned from Fontevrault, continues to improve in this art; she accompanies well and plays pieces almost as well as a teacher; she also learned how to play the violin, the accordion, the guitar and the bass viol. Madame [Henriette] and Madame Adélaïde also took lessons in all these same instruments; only Madame [Henriette] does not play the violin. Madame Adélaïde does not play the bass viol, but plays the violin superbly. Only last year [in 1750] did Mesdames take up the accordion and the guitar [...] It is the King qui pays the teachers of Mesdames, and the First Gentlemen of the Bedroom take care of this detail.”

Mozart in the French court



Madame Victoire
Etienne Aubry
Versailles, National Museum of the
Palaces of Versailles and Trianon
© RMN-Grand Palais (Château de
Versailles) / Gérard Blot

BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S DAY IN 1763 Leopold Mozart presented his two children, Wolfgang and Nannerl, to the court of France. The young virtuoso performed a concert before the royal family and, on January 1st 1764, the Mozart family was invited to a meal in the Grand Couvert dining room. Wolfgang was placed near the Queen, who spoke to him in German and then translated all their exchanges to the King.

BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE FOR AUSTRIA, IN FEBRUARY 1764, Leopold and his children brought to the court two sonatas for harpsichord and violin. One of them was dedicated to Madame Victoire, a matchless harpsichord player. They were received for this occasion in the large drawing-room of the princess, which now displays the two harpsichords made by Blanchet and Ruckers. The music collection, kept for many years in the library of Madame Victoire, is now in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Part II - An evocation of life in the court

AN EXCEPTIONAL ACQUISITION



A REMARKABLE SET OF SÈVRES PORCELAIN PIECES MADE FOR THE ROYALE HOUSEHOLD HAS ENTERED THE COLLECTIONS OF THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES. IT CONSISTS OF THREE VASES WITH A GREEN BACKGROUND AND PASTORAL SCENES PAINTED BY CHARLES NICOLAS DODIN (1734-1803) AND ACQUIRED BY MADAME VICTOIRE, DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XV, FOR HER BEDROOM.

THE SET, ORIGINALLY CONSISTING OF FIVE VASES, was purchased by Madame Victoire (1733-1799) in December 1772, three years after moving into her new apartment on the ground floor of the Palace.

OBSERVE THE SCENES PAINTED ON THE CARTOUCHES OF THE VASES, you may recognise one of the principal sources of inspiration for Dodin, the work of François Boucher (1703-1770). The two side “laurel leaf” vases feature scenes imagined by the protégé of Madame de Pompadour: *The Lovers Surprised* and *The Charms of Spring*. The central “beaded” vase, copies *The Charms of Country Life*, a pastoral scene painted in 1737 for Louis XV by Boucher. The reframing, the totally invented colours and the reduction of the setting to the barest elements necessary – for example, the sheep lying on the ground in *The Charms of Country Life* has disappeared – demonstrate the finesse of the treatment of the details by Dodin and his ability to transcribe and reinvent the style of Boucher in painting on porcelain.

THE SET WAS PURCHASED BY MADAME VICTOIRE during one of the sales held since 1758 in the inner apartment of the King in Versailles. It was probably placed from the beginning on the mantelpiece of the bedroom, as mentioned in an inventory drawn up during the Revolution. So that visitors can fully experience the atmosphere of this room when Madame Victoire lived there, these three masterpieces will henceforth be visible in the same place.

THE ACQUISITION OF THIS EXCEPTIONAL SET WAS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO A DONATION FROM THE LVMH MOËT HENNESSY - LOUIS VUITTON GROUP.

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FURTHERMORE, THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES has received from the Metropolitan Museum of Art an agreement in principle for the long-term loan of two vases with a cover that will complete the set formed by these three vases recently acquired. Following the ideal rule of the “right thing in the right place”, this complete set of five vases will be presented in the Palace of Versailles in their original place. This presentation is exceptional because the Sèvres Manufactory very rarely produced sets of five vases, and only three of them have been traced around the world.

PART III

NEW PLACES TO EXPLORE

NEW PLACES TO EXPLORE

FROM 25 APRIL 2013, THE APARTMENTS OF MESDAMES WILL BE OPEN EVERY DAY EXCEPT MONDAYS FOR VISITORS UNACCOMPANIED BY A GUIDE.

Audioguide

TO MARK THE REOPENING OF THESE APARTMENTS, a new version of the audioguide has been produced. The function of each room is described, with special attention given to recreating the general atmosphere of these rooms in the 18th century. The audioguide circuit also lets the visitor discover the personality of the two principals occupants and their everyday life. Two pieces of music, played by Olivier Baumont on the harpsichord and Julien Chauvin on the violin, have also been recorded for the rooms specifically evoking music (the large drawing-rooms of Madame Victoire and Madame Adélaïde).

DURATION OF THE AUDIOGUIDE: 25 min.

AVAILABLE: from age 8, in 11 languages.

Guided tours

Tuesday 30 April at 11:00 am

Sunday 16 June at 11:00 am

Wednesday 10 July at 11:00 am

Friday 23 August at 11:00 am

DURATION: 1h 30 min.

THESE GUIDED TOURS are accessible to people with reduced mobility.

BOOKING IS OBLIGATORY, by telephone only: +33 (0)1 30 83 78 00

The payment of the guided tours is made directly, by telephone, by bank card.

PART IV

SPOTLIGHT

Part IV- The donors

SWAROVSKI

SWAROVSKI

PRESS CONTACT

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 facebook.com/swarovski

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SWAROVSKI, WORLD LEADER IN CUT CRYSTAL, IS PLEASED TO GIVE ITS SUPPORT ONCE AGAIN TO THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES.

THIS COLLABORATION is part of the rich tradition of patronage of the house of Swarovski, which includes the Paris Opera, the Palais de Tokyo and the Victoria & Albert Museum. Its association with the Palace of Versailles allows Swarovski to reinforce its involvement in creative design and to reaffirm its continuous commitment to the cultural heritage.

A MANUFACTURER OF CRYSTAL COMPONENTS FOR CHANDELIERS since the end of the 19th century, Swarovski has loyally supported the Palace of Versailles for over thirty years. Its patronage actions provided the lighting for the bedroom of the King (1980), the apartment of Madame de Pompadour (2000), the exhibitions *Madame de Pompadour and the Arts* (2002), *Kangxi, Emperor of China* (2004) and *A Hundred Years, A Hundred Objects* (2007) to mark the centenary of the Société des Amis de Versailles.

IN 2011, THE TEAM OF THE SWAROVSKI LABORATORY IN AUSTRIA developed and patented a LED crystal candle that reproduces the appearance and lighting characteristics of the traditional candles of the 17th century. This new candle of the 21st century combines a candle-shaped stele and a LED crystal flame.

SWAROVSKI WISHED TO ADAPT THIS NEW TECHNOLOGY to the needs of the Palace of Versailles in the framework of its refurnishing policy the royal apartments in order to highlight the furniture and reinforce the evocative power of the royal residence as the setting of the court life. A new collaboration between the two establishments was launched to equip with LED crystal candle the chandeliers, wall sconces and girandoles of the State Apartment and the private apartment of the King and the Queen, the apartments of the Dauphin and the Dauphine, and those of Mesdames.

TODAY, SWAROVSKI IS DELIGHTED to allow visitors to rediscover the nine rooms of the apartments of Mesdames; now refurnished as they were during the Ancien Régime and, thanks to the light of these LED crystal candles, evoking the ambience that filled them when the daughters of Louis XV lived in them.

About Swarovski:

IN 1895, THE VISIONARY DANIEL SWAROVSKI invented a machine that revolutionized the process of cutting and polishing crystals. He left Bohemia to move to Wattens, in the Austrian Tyrol, with his incredible innovation. This crystal, with more precise and brighter facets than ever before, soon won over the most outstanding figures in the worlds of fashion, jewellery and, more recently, lighting fixtures, architecture and interior decoration. The company has remained family-owned and is now run by the fifth generation. Known worldwide, Swarovski operates in 120 countries, has 26,100 employees and in 2011 its turnover amounted to €2.22 billion. Swarovski has two major divisions: one produces and markets stone crystals, while the second one proposes its own collections of jewellery, fashion accessories and decorative pieces. The Swarovski crystal has become essential in the worlds of luxury goods, fashion and interior design. Since 1965, the company has also produced for the high-end jewellery market with the creation of natural precious stones and synthetic stones. Each season, its creative activity in finished products proposes collections of jewellery, accessories and decorative items that express its know-how and creativity. These collections can be found in 2,200 shops located in the largest capitals of the world. The Swarovski Crystal Society has nearly 300,000 members around the world who collect its decorative crystal pieces with passion. Since its inauguration in 1995 in Wattens, the Crystal Worlds multimedia crystal museum has attracted over 9 million visitors.

PART V

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

ÉTABLISSEMENT PUBLIC DU CHÂTEAU,
DU MUSÉE ET DU DOMAINE NATIONAL DE VERSAILLES
RP 834
78008 Versailles Cedex

Information

Tel: 01 30 83 78 00

www.chateauversailles.fr



Château de Versailles Officiel



@CVersailles /



<http://www.youtube.com/chateauversailles>

Getting there

SNCF train to Versailles-Chantier (departure: Paris Montparnasse)

SNCF train to Versailles-Rive Droite (departure: Paris Saint-Lazare)

RER regional train to Versailles Palace-Rive Gauche (departure: Paris RER Line C)

Bus no. 171 to Versailles Place d'Armes (departure: Pont de Sèvres)

Disabled access

Visitors with reduced mobility can be dropped off by car or by taxi near Entrance H in the Cour d'Honneur.

Opening times

The Palace is open every day except Mondays from 9:00 am to 6:30 pm (last admission at 6:00 pm) from 1 April to 31 October, and from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm (last admission at 5:00 pm) from 1 November to 31 March.

Tickets

PALACE + EXHIBITIONS

€15, reduced rate €13. Audioguide included.

FROM 16 APRIL TO JUNE 2013, when you buy your ticket on the spot (Palace + exhibitions) from 4:00 pm on, you benefit from the reduced rate of €6.

ESTATE OF MARIE-ANTOINETTE, GRAND AND PETIT TRIANON

€10, reduced rate €6.

PASSPORT TICKET: PALACE, GRAND AND PETIT TRIANON, EXHIBITIONS

€18, €25 on the days of the Musical Fountains Show.