

Saint-Sauveur en Puisaye (89)



➔ **Guide to the
the **m**useum**

Colette





A theatrical Entrance

A museum conceived as a work of art set out according to an inventive and subtle plan.

On the floor one can discover Colette's main addresses over looked by a Puisaye sky.

On each side, photos of the house where she was born (in this village) and her last Parisian home by the Palais-Royal

« Give me fresh new pastel pencils, colours that are not named yet, give me sparkling powders and a fairy like brush and ... No, but that won't be enough as there aren't any words, or pens, or colours to depict the sky from my native village, overlooking a violet slate roof bordered with scarlet moss, the sky that radiated over my childhood »

*Colette
(From Paysages et Portraits, 1958, posthumous book)*

The museum has been set up thanks to :

Mr Foulques de Jouvenel (Colette's great grand nephew), Mr Bertrand de Jouvenel (son of Colette's second husband) and his children Anne and Hugues de Jouvenel.

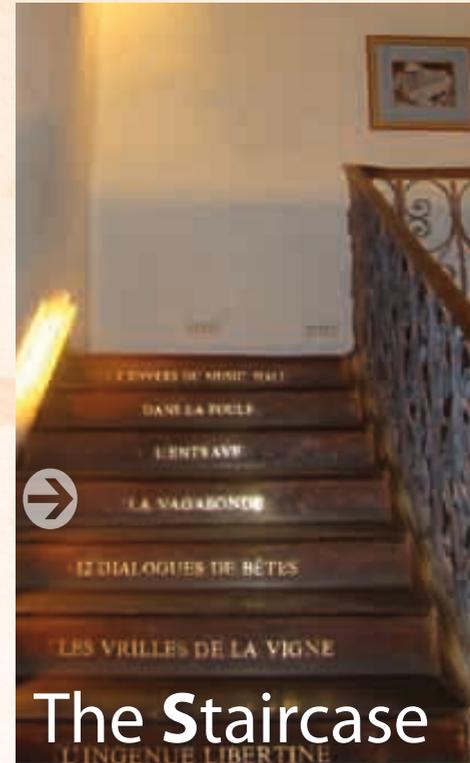
GMF Insurance for the sponsorship

*Museum design :
Hélène Mugot, artist*

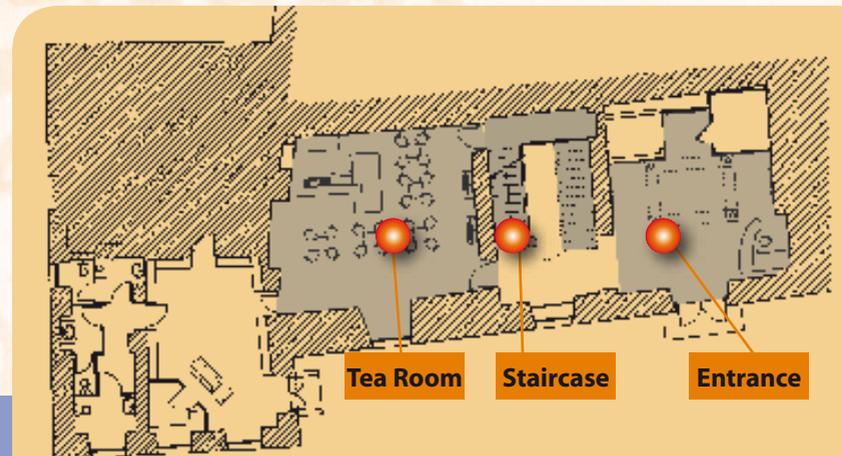


Door decorated with an ornamental plant.

Titles of Colette's books engraved in golden letters on the stairs that lead up to the top of the castle.



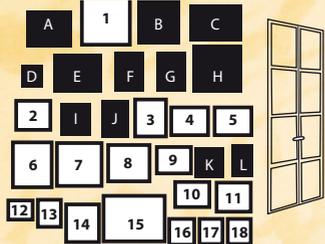
The Staircase





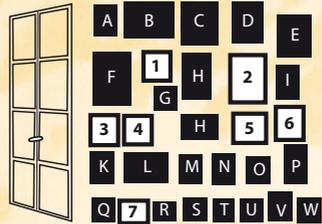
Colette's biography room

250 moments of her life



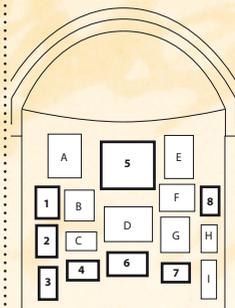
Wall A
Childhood and early life

in St Sauveur and Châtillon-Coligny
28th january 1873 : birth of Sidonie, Gabrielle Colette.
1889 : passes the « Certificat d'études » (equivalent to today's GCSE).
1890 : participates in the opening of the new school complex.
1891 : leaves St Sauveur for Châtillon-Coligny (in the nearby county, Loiret).



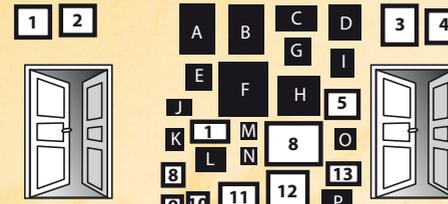
Wall B
Life with Willy

1893 : marriage to Henri Gauthier-Villars (Willy) in Châtillon-Coligny. Willy, born in 1859 was a writer, music and theatre critic. Colette is well received in the literary and musical circles in Paris.
1905 : death of Capitaine Colette (Colette's father).
1906 : Colette and Willy separate.



Wall C
The pets' corner

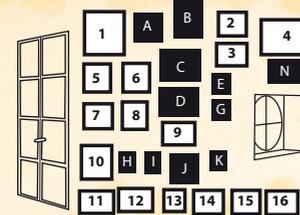
Biography by Marguerite Boivin



Wall D (30 to 38 years of age)

Colette and Missy – Colette at the cabaret

After her separation from Willy Colette throws herself into music-hall. She acts in 'Pan' at the Théâtre Marigny (Paris), in 'An Egyptian dream' (Rève d'Egypte) at the Moulin Rouge (Paris) and tours in the 30s with the actor and agent Charles Baret (1880 – 1965).

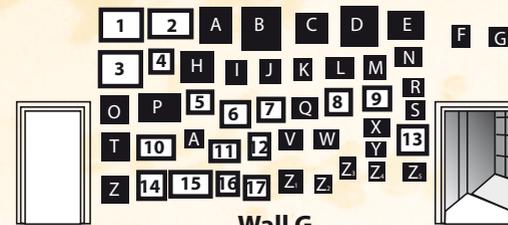


Wall F (50 to 60 years of age)
Life with Maurice Goudekot

1928 : promoted to Officer of the Legion of Honor.

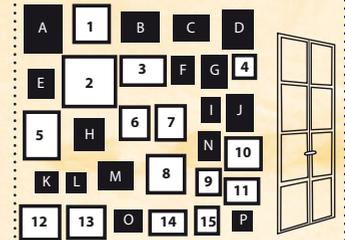
1935 : elected to the Royal Academy of language and French literature in Belgium. Marriage to Maurice Goudekot.

1936 : promoted to Commander of the Legion of Honor.



Wall G
From her 60th birthday to her death

1945 : unanimously accepted at the Goncourt Académie, the exclusive French literary circle.
1949 : elected president of the Académie Goncourt.
1953 : awarded the prize of the Ville de Paris. Promoted to the title of Grand Officier de la Légion d'Honneur the highest rank awarded by the Legion of Honor and presented the prize of the National Institute of Arts and Letters by the US Ambassador.
1954 : Colette dies in her flat by the Palais-Royal in Paris. National funerals held on 7th August.



Wall E (38 to 50 years of age)
Life with Henry de Jouvenel

1910 : Colette and Willy divorce. It is the beginning of a career as a journalist for Parisian broadsheet « Matin »

1912 : death of Sido (Colette's mother) in Châtillon-Coligny. Marriage to Henry de Jouvenel, chief editor of « Matin ».

1913 : birth of daughter Colette, Renée de Jouvenel in Paris, (daughter of Colette and Henry de Jouvenel).

1920 : awarded the medal of Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur (first rank in the Legion of Honor prizes)

1923 : Colette and Henry de Jouvenel separate.

Inscribed on the floor are the names of those who were important to Colette.





Colette's living room from the Palais-Royal ↑



- 1) Colette by Vertès
- 2) and 3) Landscapes, gouache, anonymous
- 4) Miniature, anonymous
- 5) Bunch of flowers, enamel by Jean Terrières, 1947
- 6) Rose by Marie Wonder
- 7) Landscape by A. Töpffer
- 8) Flies by Louise Hervieu, 1948
- 9) and 10) Still lives by Luc-Albert Moreau
- 11) Colette by Emile Charmy, 1921
- 12) Carpet, school of Wissa Wassef, Cairo, Egypt
- 13) Colette by Ferdinand Humbert
- 14) Beggars in Spain by Gustave.

Furniture and objects donated to the museum.



Glass cases :
Letters from Sido to Colette or « Sido as a writer in the making »
Pen case that belonged to Colette.
The virgin book, aborted work from the capitaine (Colette's father).



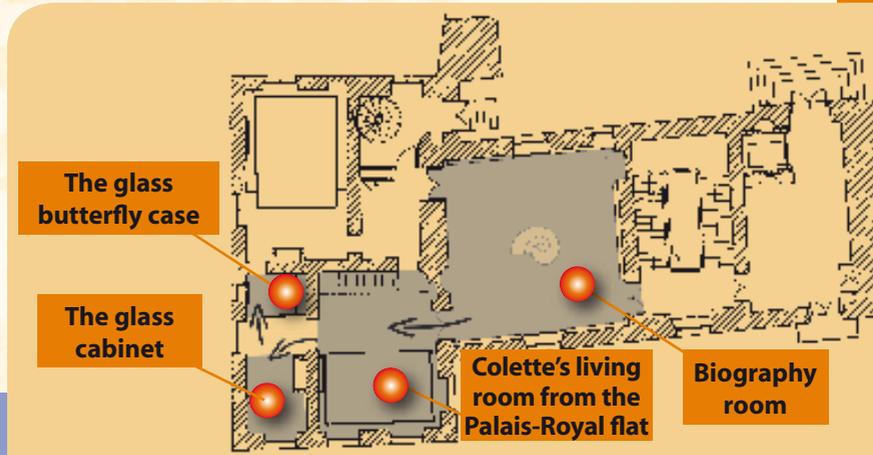
The glass cabinet ←

In 1910 Colette started to collect glass paperweights, she called them her « still gardens » or « multi coloured tour de force ». Whilst contemplating one of her rock crystals that sat next to her paper-weights she compared it to tamed water logs in which she did not see « future » but « ponds and water springs from her native land ».



→ The glass butterfly case

Colette covered one of the wall panels with these little glass cases filled with butterflies whose intense blue and pure red wings shone in the sunlight.



The glass butterfly case

The glass cabinet

Colette's living room from the Palais-Royal flat

Biography room



Bedroom at the Palais-Royal

Listen to Colette's deep, harsh voice revealing secrets of her dark and mischievous side, this fiercely private room.



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) Pious image that Colette kept all her life | 14) G. D'Annunzio by Cividimi, 1920 |
| 2) Colette, litho by Forain, 1918 | 15) Colette's parents |
| 3) Flowers by Emilie Charmy | 16) Lady in an antique shop, by J. Terrières, 1945 |
| 4) A farm-yard, by Isabey | 17) Le capitaine Colette (Colette's father) |
| 5) Dog, 19th century, anonymous | 18) The fortune-teller, by Emile Leleux |
| 6) Roses by Puvy de Chavannes | 19) Colette by Christian Bérard |
| 7) Saint-Tropez by Camoin | 20) Colette, pastel by Stéphane Baron, 1874 |
| 8) Hortensias by La Gandara | 21) Colette, a photo from Dragon Studios, 1880 |
| 9) Basin of Arcachon (northeast of Bordeaux) by Jean Marais | 22) Cat by Valentine Hugo, 1935 |
| 10) Blue lantern (bed side lamp) | 23) Colette at the age of 5 by Gerschel, 1878 |
| 11) Sido, daguerrotype, 1853 | 24) The « Sylph », watercolour by A. Sagnez, 1835 |
| 12) Sophie Chatenay by Foulard, 1830 | 25) Arrayolo Portuguese carpet |
| 13) Castel-Novel by Gaston de Villers, 1934 | |



The Nam Room

A famous animal painter who illustrated two of Colette's books : « Dialogues de bête » (Creatures great and small) 1912 and « Chats » (The Cat) 1935.



Exhibitions of the Colette studies Centre (Centre d'études Colette) run by the local council for Cultural Affairs in the Yonne County. It curates and handles archives of the Musée Colette and la Société des amis de Colette (Colette's Friends Society).

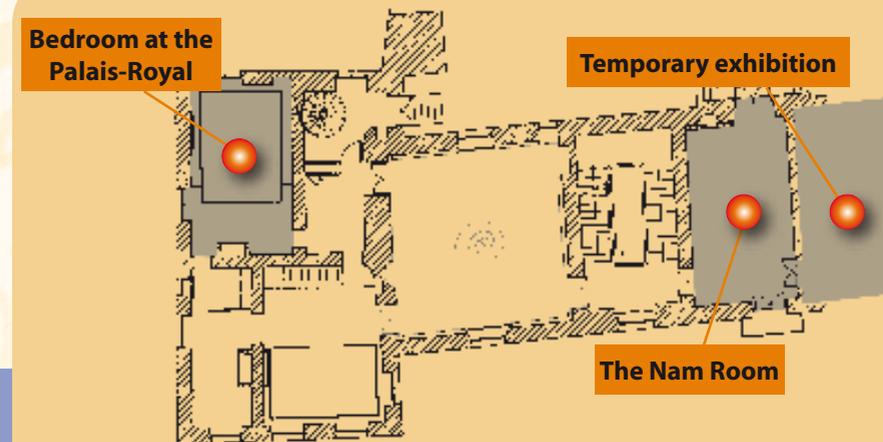
Each year a new exhibition sheds some light on aspects of Colette's life and work.

Documentation from the studies Centre is available upon request.
Please write to :
Conseil Général de l'Yonne
Direction des affaires culturelles,
Centre d'études Colette
10, rue de St-Georges 89000 PERRIGNY
Telephone : + 33 3 86 72 85 28. Email :
centre.colette@cg89.fr



Temporary exhibition

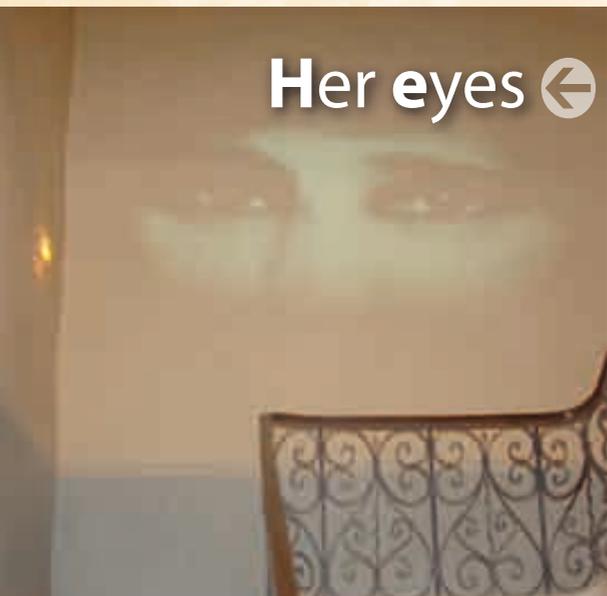
Do not forget to visit the permanent exhibition of painter and poet Fernand-Rolland (1920 – 2004).





The imaginary Library ↕

A coloured mosaic made of 1500 fake books... To discover Colette's work and listen to different extracts read out from one of a selection of 52 books.



Her eyes ←

The artist's immense eyes look at us from the top of the stairs, appearing and disappearing in a slow metamorphosis from the innocent child to the cynical old lady, without forgetting the sad and artificially provoking gaze of the young woman but also that of the wise older woman.

(Hélène Mugot)



Video room

In this room visitors can see a documentary on Colette's life (45 minutes). Documentary in French, no subtitles.

Film shown at

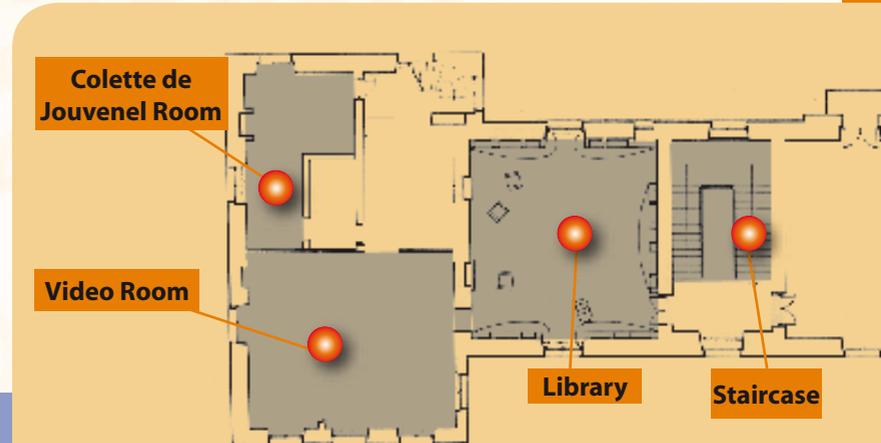
- 10.30 am
- 11.30 am
- 12.30 pm
- 1.30 pm
- 2.30 pm
- 3.30 pm
- 4.30 pm

Towards the end of the nineteen sixties Colette's only daughter, Colette de Jouvenel, undertook the task of creating a museum in memory of her mother. However, neither the house where she was born, nor her flat in the Palais-Royal in Paris are available. She had the idea of establishing the museum in the castle of Saint Sauveur which Colette mentioned in her work but never stayed in. Unfortunately, Colette de Jouvenel died prematurely in 1981, but her descendants took over and donated her collection to the town of Saint Sauveur on the condition that a museum and a study centre were created.

Colette de Jouvenel's wishes were respected, the museum finally opened in 1995. It is in honour of her memory, and thanks to her untiring efforts to give Colette's work the place she deserved, that this museum exists.



Colette de Jouvenel room →

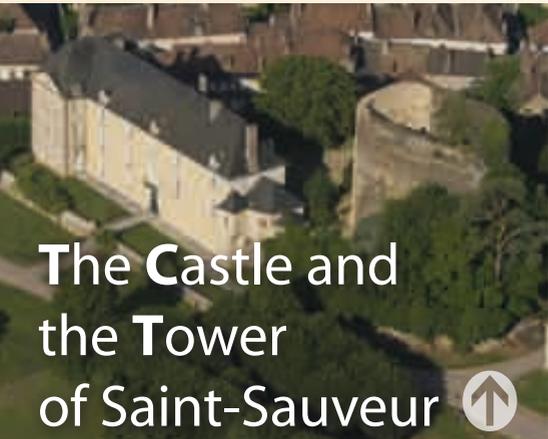




To spend a little more time with Colette and her books...



You can have a drink in what used to be the castle kitchen. "As for coffee, we had to have it somewhere near the gare d'Auteuil (close to the Bois de Boulogne in Paris). It had to be very dark, without much taste, but very hot and syrupy because of all the sugar we put in it." (Colette, Chambre d'hôtel-Hotel room).



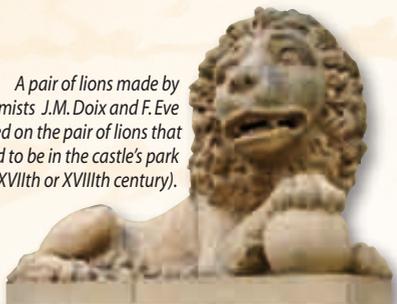
The Castle and the Tower of Saint-Sauveur

Colette mentions **the castle of Saint Sauveur** in her work, but never stayed in it.

The remains of the medieval castle disappeared during the XVIth century. Parts of the foundations probably still exist under the yard of the Vinée (where wine was once stored), or of the "Pâtis" or "Pâté" (a courtyard where animals used to graze). Today's south wall stands on an old wall rebuilt during the XVIIth century.

The pavilion dates back to the beginning of the XVIIth century, the staircase from the XVIIIth or the Restoration period. The entrance to the museum has been, made on the park side of the castle.

The "**Sarrasine**" tower or "**Césarine**" tower is a dungeon with an unusual egg-shaped plan dated from the XIth century. The top part was probably added during the XIIIth or the XIVth century.



A pair of lions made by ceramists J.M. Doix and F. Eve based on the pair of lions that used to be in the castle's park (XVIIth or XVIIIth century).

Opening times

From 1st April to 31st October:
10 am to 6 pm (except Tuesdays)

Tickets

Please call or write for details.

Visits

Visits are without guides.

Allow an hour and a half to see the museum

The museum is accessible to wheelchairs
Toby dogs (Small dogs, so loved by Colette) are accepted but must be kept on the leads.



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