



THE CHATEAU DE VOLTAIRE REOPENS TO THE PUBLIC IN 1ST JUNE 2018

Near to the Swiss border, in the Jura Mountains, the Château de Ferney-Voltaire, which was built between 1758 and 1766, was home to one of the most illustrious philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment for 20 years: Voltaire.

Two centuries later and this property has been listed as a historic monument, passing into the hands of the State in 1999. The château where Voltaire wrote so extensively on the subject of the Rights of Man has become a remembrance site. Following substantial renovation works, the site is once more **open to visitors since 1st June 2018**, 260 years after the arrival of Voltaire!

AT HOME WITH VOLTAIRE AT THE CHATEAU DE FERNEY-VOLTAIRE

It was in 1758 that Voltaire purchased the Ferney estate. He would spend the final 20 years of his life there. He had the château completely rebuilt, establishing a park and setting up a theatre in one of the estate's buildings where his plays are still performed almost every day.

An undesirable in the Court of France, banned in Geneva, Voltaire decided to purchase two estates that were close to Geneva, but still in France, Ferney and Tournay, in order to be « independent and perfectly free ». He later declared « Could there be a happier state? I find myself between France and Switzerland without being dependent on either one or the other » and « after having spent time with kings, I have become king in my own home ».

Ferney would become the obligatory stop-off for the elite from across all of Europe. From this retreat, Voltaire would rage against the injustices of society and fly to the defence of victims of political and religious intolerance. He published the Philosophical Dictionary, the Treatise on Tolerance, several tragedies and theatre plays; his correspondence stretched to 10,000 letters.

Possessing the philosophical principles of the Age of Enlightenment, at once a town planner, entrepreneur and collector, he transformed the manor at Ferney: the marshes were drained, artisanship flourished and the site was built up. Twenty years later, upon the death of Voltaire, this hamlet became a prosperous town.

A RENOVATION THAT BEFITS THE SITE...AND ITS OWNER

Following 3 years of works, the château has been open to the public since 1st June. Its restoration has been comprehensive. Innovative media features have been placed at the disposal of the public in order to bring to life both the Age of Enlightenment and this remembrance site from the XIX Century. Voltaire's former home has finally regained its

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Images : Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Tourism



grandeur with the aim of sharing the tolerant, generous and free spirit of the illustrious philosopher himself.

The garden level will host temporary exhibitions, whilst the ground floor will be devoted to Voltaire, his works and his life at Ferney. The interior has been entirely refitted: restoration of the collections, faithful reproduction of the apartments of Mme Denis (Voltaire's niece) and the establishment of new media facilities so the spaces can be understood more clearly. This provides an original way to explore the character of Voltaire, the evolution of the manor and the programme of restoration works undertaken...

www.chateau-ferney-voltaire.fr

THE GRAND-EST NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE HUB:

The Château de Ferney-Voltaire is part of the Grand-Est National Remembrance Hub that brings together an ensemble of remembrance sites and historic figures, leading lights in the abolition of slavery. It preserves the memory of Voltaire, who, like all Enlightenment philosophers, tackled the question of slavery, albeit in a less engaged and developed way than some of his contemporaries. www.abolitions.org

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