

## The grounds

Of the 600 hectares of agricultural land, gardens and hunting forests previously owned by the estate, 85 hectares remain today. Claude Desgots, a relative of Le Nôtre, and then his son-in-law Garnier d'Isle, designed a formal garden. A plan from 1727 shows a composition featuring a longitudinal axis.

The appearance of the garden has been changed by successive owners.

From 1895 onwards, Henri Duchêne, an expert in the history of French gardens, undertook the work of restoring the formal garden, while also modernising it and retaining part of the informal garden, creating grounds of mixed styles. Louis Cahen d'Anvers purchased statues, both originals and copies, and had them installed to adorn the grounds. The central axis comprises a grand perspective almost 900 metres long, featuring two pools. There is also a 5 km waymarked footpath.

## Practical information

Average duration of visit to the château: 1¼ hours

Visit of the grounds: 2 hours

### Gift and book shop

A guide to this monument is available in the "Itinéraires" collection in the book and giftshop.

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- 1 **The boxtree 'embroidery'** is comprised of foliage and coiling, imitating patterns of an oriental carpet.
- 2 **The flowerbeds** are subtly delineated by two broad avenues in the shape of a cross. In their centre stand copies of old statues: to the west, the Apollo Belvedere, and to the east, Diana of Versailles.
- 3 **The Scylla pool** is the first circular water mirror in the perspective. Copied from a design by Le Brun, the lead sculpture represents the nymph Scylla being transformed into a monster.
- 4 **The copses** on either side of the great perspective, which are arranged like the Union Flag when seen from above, enhance the overall symmetry of the garden.
- 5 **The meadows**, bordered by trees around the formal garden, constitute a landscaped garden.

- 6 **The great pool** contributes to the freshness of the garden.
- 7 **The horses of Apollo**, introduced during the Cahen d'Anvers era, mark the end of the 865 metre-long perspective. This group, sculpted in stone and measuring 9 metres in height, is a reproduction on a much larger scale of the Versailles original.
- 8 **The Popes' well** is an attractive copse with an intimate atmosphere. In its centre sits a 16<sup>th</sup>-century baptismal font adorned with 11<sup>th</sup>-century portraits of Popes and angel musicians. Around stand busts of ancient philosophers, statues of Flora and a young hunter.
- 9 **The Lady's salon** is a copy of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century fabrique – a construction intended to lend a picturesque quality to a landscape design. The central section forms an open-air salon, and is delineated by trellises. Four busts symbolising the seasons, and statues of Apollo and Mercury complete the composition.
- 10 **The orangery** was created by Walter Destailleur. It faces east, rather than south as is customary, in order to follow the axis of the transversal avenue. Next to it is the vegetable garden.



# Champs-sur-Marne château and grounds

## A country retreat



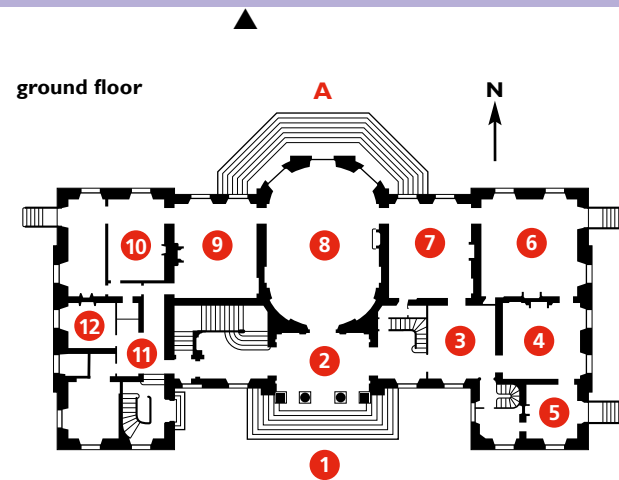
The façade facing the garden

The architect Jean-Baptiste Bullet de Chamblain constructed this country residence for the financier Paul Poisson de Bourvillais between 1703 and 1707.

After the latter's arrest, the estate was sold and attributed in 1718 to the Princess de Conti, who gave it to her cousin, the Duke de la Vallière. His son Louis César undertook extensive decorative work, including the *Chinoiseries*\* painted by Christophe Huet (1700-1759). He rented the residence to his friend the Marquise de Pompadour from 1757 to 1759. During the Revolution, the estate was seized and the furniture sold. The property passed through various hands before the banker Louis Cahen d'Anvers, a great enthusiast of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, acquired it in 1895.

Cahen d'Anvers had the château restored by the architect Walter André Destailleur (1867-1940). He purchased the furniture and completed the 18<sup>th</sup>-century decor, while adapting the residence to the lifestyle of the *grande bourgeoisie*. The gardens were brought back to life by Henri Duchêne (1841-1902). Charles Cahen d'Anvers, son of Louis, donated the property to the State in 1935, and sold the furnishings to it. From 1939 to 1974, the château was used to receive foreign Heads of State, after which the estate was opened to the public. The current layout of the rooms and furniture represents the life of the Cahen d'Anvers family around 1930.

\* Chinoiseries: decor very much in vogue in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, expressing the taste for ornamental Far Eastern artwork.



### I The façade of the main courtyard

Typical of the architecture of grand 18<sup>th</sup>-century houses, this façade is restrained and harmonious. It has two superimposed, almost equal levels and is accentuated by three avant-corps; those on the sides are the most prominent, and are decorated with quoins\*. The central avant-corps is composed of a Doric portico which may have inspired that of the Élysée Palace.

### An innovative layout

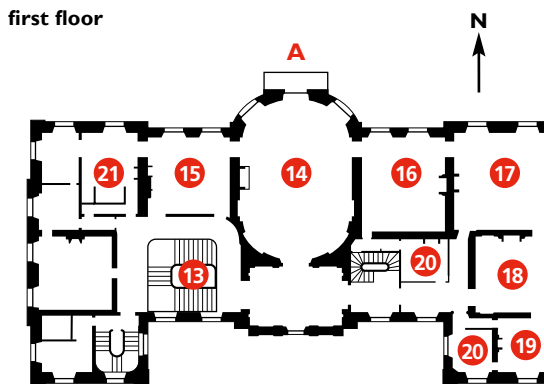
The arrangement of circulation and reception areas, designed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was clearly organised around the mansion's central axis. On the courtyard side, the vestibule provides access to the service areas and to the staircases. On the garden side, the reception rooms all lead off the grand salon.

### Ground floor

- 2 The restrained and imposing **vestibule** is tiled, as are all hallways and corridors.
- 3 **The library and billiard room** is decorated in the same style as the smoking room. The French oak billiard table from 1906 is presented with its accessories.

- 4 **The red salon** was converted to an office by Charles Cahen d'Anvers around 1928. The red silks are identical to those that decorated this former bedchamber of Louise Cahen d'Anvers.
- 5 **The camaïeu cabinet** was originally a dressing room. The panelling, dating from 1707, was painted around 1748 with *Chinoiserie*\* decor by Huet, in shades of blue.
- 6 **The Chinese salon** is a major reception room. The woodwork is painted with Chinoiserie decor created by Huet around 1748, representing an imaginary Far East. Wishing to coordinate the furniture with this decor, the Cahen d'Anvers family introduced a set of Louis XV chairs covered with tapestries illustrating the fables of La Fontaine.
- 7 **The smoking room** was an area reserved for men adjoining the billiard room. The tapestry, woven in Beauvais in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century, represents the Chinese Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722) on his travels; the sculpted overdoors from the same era were fitted by Destailleur.
- 8 **The grand salon** overlooks the garden through three large arched windows. In the middle of the room stands an 18<sup>th</sup>-century marble basin from Italy.
- 9 **The dining room** is an early example of a space devoted solely to this purpose. The consoles and basins are made of Minervois marble. The overdoors are by Oudry and Desportes, 18<sup>th</sup>-century animal painters.
- 10 **The bedchamber of Gilbert Cahen d'Anvers**, grandson of Louis, was originally decorated in around 1898 by Destailleur to serve as a guest room.
- 11 **The service corridor** was reserved for the circulation of servants. The call board showed the staff which occupant of the château was calling for them.
- 12 **The children's dining room** is a reminder of the lifestyle of the *grande bourgeoisie*, whose children were brought up separated from their parents. A former bathroom, the imitation marble stucco decor was ordered from Gabriel and Louis Mansiaux by Madame de Pompadour.

first floor



### First floor

- 13 **The main staircase** is a grand ceremonial space. The banister is decorated with the initials "LC" for Louis Cahen. A portrait of his son Charles, who donated the estate, is displayed on the landing that provides access to the apartments.
- 14 **The music room** offers an exceptional view of the landscaped gardens. Twenty pilasters alternate with windows, doors and mirrors. The space was first used for music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as indicated by the frieze decoration. The portraits of Louis and his wife symbolise the importance of their social status and are today displayed on easels.
- 15 **The blue bedchamber** and the two other rooms leading off it form an apartment for a couple. It is named after the colour of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century panelling.
- 16 **The grand bedchamber** was reserved for distinguished guests. Decorated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to resemble an 18<sup>th</sup>-century ceremonial bedchamber, the room is fitted with a balustrade delineating the space reserved for the alcove. The wall is hung with yellow silk, and a Duchess bed\* has been reproduced. The sculpted panelling dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

- 17 **The corner salon** was a bedchamber in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Louis Cahen made it his office.
- 18 **The master bedchamber** was that of Charles Cahen d'Anvers and his wife, breaking with the aristocratic custom of separate bedrooms. The cornice decoration represents mythological couples. General de Gaulle and his wife spent the night in this room in 1962.
- 19 **The Lady's boudoir** retains a large console table in front of the window, which was used as a dressing table.
- 20 **The bathroom of the Lady's bedchamber** enjoys the modern conveniences of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This former wardrobe was given its floral decor in line with 18<sup>th</sup>-century fashion. **The corridor** illustrates the preference of the Cahen d'Anvers family for covering the walls entirely with fragments of Aubusson tapestries. These 17<sup>th</sup>-century works depict natural landscapes. **The bathroom of the grand bedchamber** is reached via a door hidden in the wall hangings, and a short corridor.
- 21 **The grey bedchamber** retains its 18<sup>th</sup>-century panelling and adjoins a bathroom.

### A The façade facing the garden

Of the three avant-corps, the central one, embellished with false jointing\*, projects in a half-moon shape, as it houses the oval rooms.

\* Quoins: vertical visual element formed by superimposed bosses.

\* Duchess bed: a ceremonial bed without pillars, whose canopy is attached to the ceiling.

\* False jointing: lines of varying depth highlighting or simulating the horizontal and vertical outline of the stone joints on façades.