

a history...

SOSIACUM

In 1124 the monks of Saint Jean de Sens started to build **the most ancient monument in the village: the church**. It took two centuries to build.

SOISY AUX LOGES

The first known Lord for Soisy aux Loges was **Nicolas Braque**, treasurer to King Charles V **who ordered the edification of the keep in 1376**.

CHOISY AUX LOGES

In the 16th century, one of the descendants of Nicolas Braque was Jacques de L'Hospital who decided **to build the outer bailey of the château**, made up of farms and barns, and the **'Captain's tower'** (used as a dovecote).

BELLEGARDE

In 1676, after buying the estate from the L'Hospital family who was in debt, **the Duke of Bellegarde gave his own name to the village**.

In 1692, Louis Antoine de Pardaillan de Gondrin, **legitimate son of the Marquise of Montespan who was second favourite to King Louis XIV**, became Marquis of Bellegarde. **Later he was named superintendant of the King's buildings** and became the Duke of Bellegarde. This role allowed him to make a number of modifications to the château of Bellegarde including **improvements to the stables and the construction of several buildings** around the keep.

MME DE MONTESPAN



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its Economy...

Bellegarde is a dynamic, **forward-looking village made up of 1,841 inhabitants and more than 80 shops and businesses**. It provides an exceptional working and relaxing environment.

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

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

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

Events...

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

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

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

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



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BELLEGARDE in the Loiret...

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

a Heritage...

THE CHURCH

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

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

A number of the paintings show the Marquise of Montespan and also Louise de la Vallière, the first favourite of Louis XIV. In what is known as, the 'President's' Chapel, added in the 18th century to house the Duke of Antin's vault, you can view a very beautiful Deposition from the Cross.



THE ICEHOUSE

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

Allowing the duke and his guests to eat sorbets even in summer; the ultimate luxury of the times. With the invention of the refrigerator, however, the icehouse became redundant and, so, it was filled in.

THE KEEP

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

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

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



THE WEDDING ROOM

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

THE COLLECTION OF CHARLES DESVERGNES'S SCULPTURES

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

In order to thank Bellegarde Desvergnès left a large collection of the models for his sculptures to the village. Come and discover this museum...

For further information please address enquiries to the culture and communication department of Bellegarde.



THE KITCHENS

The château's kitchens were **built by the Duke of Antin in 1720**. They are situated in the middle of the château complex, between the keep, the Salamander pavilion and the pavilion d'Antin. At this time dining rooms did not yet exist and so meals were taken according to 'appetite' in the different rooms of the château.

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

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

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