PRESS KIT

Palace of the Popes 2014

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- ARKE (p6)
Avignon, a magnificent urban landscape
The Rocher des Doms, overlooking the City of Avignon and the Rhône River, is a superb architectural ensemble which includes the Avignon Bridge, the Ramparts, the Petit Palais, the Doms Cathedral and the impressive walls and towers of the Palace of the Popes.

The Palace of the Popes is the symbol of the Church’s position in the 14th century Christian Western world.
In the early 1300’s, the papacy experienced troubled political times. In Italy, a raging civil war and climate of danger created complex circumstances which led the pope to flee Roma and settle in Avignon as a temporary measure. In 1305 Pope Clement V was elected pope and made Avignon the new seat of the papacy. Construction of the Palace of the Popes was started in 1335 and took less than twenty years to accomplish. The Palace was primarily built by two strong “builder” popes, Pope Benedict XII and his successor, Pope Clement VI. The Palace of the Popes is the biggest Gothic palace in Europe. With 15,000m² of floor space, it has the volume of 4 Gothic cathedrals. Inside the Palace, visitors can tour over twenty rooms which echo with the important world events which took place. Visitors see the popes’ private apartments and magnificent frescoes left by the Italian artist Matteo GIOVANNETTI.

UNESCO has ranked the architectural ensemble in Avignon as World Heritage for all humanity. Once a flourishing Roman city, Avignon became the capital of the Christian world in the 1300’s. Referred to as the «Other Rome» Avignon was home to seven popes and two anti-popes, before the papacy definitively returned to Rome.
The Avignon Popes

SEVEN POPES and TWO ANTI-POPES

Pope Clement V: (1305 - 1314)
The bitter rivalry which pitted the King of France – Philip IV – called Philip the Fair, against Pope Boniface VIII led to the election of a French priest, Bertrand de Got, to the papacy in 1305. Bertrand de Got, who had been Archbishop of Bordeaux, took the name of Pope Clement V. Many different events, including the Knights Templar affair, led the pope to settle in Avignon in 1309. Avignon was a vassal to the Holy See, and bordered the Comtat Venaissin, church property since 1274. Pope Clement V stayed off and on in Avignon, and took up quarters in the Dominican convent.

Pope John XXII: (1316 - 1334)
French Cardinals then dominated the Sacred College, ensuring the election of a former bishop from Avignon, Jacques Duèse, who reigned as pope under the name of Pope Clement V. Many different events, including the Knights Templar affair, led the pope to settle in Avignon in 1309. Avignon was a vassal to the Holy See, and bordered the Comtat Venaissin, church property since 1274. Pope Clement V stayed off and on in Avignon, and took up quarters in the Dominican convent.

Pope Benedict XII: (1334 - 1342)
The Episcopal Palace was not to the taste of Pope Benedict XII (Jacques Fournier). He acquired the palace, demolished it, and had his architect, Pierre Poisson, build a powerful fortress instead. This palace, now known as the “Old Palace” was vast and austere, a reflection of the background of the pope, a former Cistercian monk.

Pope Clement VI: (1342 - 1352)
Pope Benedict XII’s successor, Pope Clement VI was an aristocrat with demanding taste. He deemed the Palace unworthy of pontifical majesty, and had his architect, Jean de Louvres, build a second Palace, called the “New Palace”, in a more ornate style. Pope Clement VI brought in a team of painters from Italy to embellish his new palace. The artists worked under the direction of Matteo Giovannetti, from Viterbo. In 1348, the pope bought the City of Avignon from Queen Jeanne of Naples, Countess of Provence.

Pope Innocent VI : (1352 - 1362)
Innocent VI (Etienne Aubert) focused on pacifying the Italian territories of the Holy See. He continued the construction work started by Pope Clement VI.

Pope Urbain V : (1362 - 1370)
Urbain V (Guillaume Grimoard) extended the papal gardens and planted an orchard below the palace. He added a gallery known as La Roma, which has disappeared since.

Pope Gregory XI: (1370 - 1378)
Gregory XI worked to return the papacy to Rome, and achieved his ends in 1376. Upon his death in 1378, Rome exerted violent pressure to ensure the election of an Italian pope, Urbain VI. A second pope was also elected, creating the Great Western Schism, This divided the Christian world into two conflicting rivalries.

Pope Clément VII (1378 - 1394)
Pope Benedict XIII (1394 - 1423)
During the second Western Schism (1378 - 1417), two “anti-popes” lived in the Palace, Pope Clement VII (Robert of Geneva) and Benedict XIII (Pedro de Luna), who fled Avignon in 1403, after a gruelling 5-year siege laid against him.

Portraits of the Avignon Popes
as imagined by Henri Serrur in 1839-1840.
Palace key dates and numbers

The Palace of the Popes is the biggest Gothic palace in Europe. There is 15,000 m² of floor space – equivalent to 4 Gothic cathedrals!

Pope Benedict XII had the old Palace built between 1335 and 1342. His successor, Pope Clement VI began the construction of the new Palace in 1343. The Palace of the Popes was built in less than 20 years!

The Honour Courtyard has been a prestigious venue for the Avignon Festival since 1947, when Jean Vilar founded the “week for art”. In 2013, Avignon will be celebrating the 67th year of the festival.

The Grand Tinel was the setting for papal banquets, great feasts where 5 courses of 4 dishes per course were served.

The papal table stood on a raised dais. The pope dined alone seated on a throne under a canopy. Guests were seated on benches along the walls, and the food was served from the centre of the room.

The Great Chapel is a very impressive room 52 meters long, 16 meters wide and 20 meters high. Here, sumptuous ceremonies were held, including papal coronations and funerals.
The Palace of the Popes keeps pace with the Avignon cultural scene. Many special events take place in the palace throughout the year:

**Avignon Festival**

*4th to 27th July*

For 60 years now the Honour Courtyard has served as a true open-air stage every July. Since the very first Festival in 1947, the Honour Courtyard resounds with eclectic programming of classics and contemporary theatre.

**Alterarosa - 10th edition**

*May 29th to June 1st*

Every Ascension holiday weekend, the Benedict XII Cloister is home to the “Alterarosa” rose show, an event featuring newly-created, exclusive roses presented for the very first time by their breeders.

**Les Luminessences**

*Every night from August 11th to October 11th*

Sound and light show in 3D in the Palace of the Popes.

[www.lesluminessences-avignon.com](http://www.lesluminessences-avignon.com)

**Over one century of exhibitions:**

The City of Avignon took over the ownership of the Palace of the Popes in 1907. Major restoration work was started and the palace was immediately opened to the public, becoming a vital part of cultural and tourism activity, as it is today.

Among the major events at the Palace of the Popes:

*. 1947: The start of the Avignon Theatre Festival: A Week of Art in Avignon. Exhibition of contemporary paintings and sculptures (Picasso, Matisse, Braque, Klee, Miro...)*

*. 1970: Picasso exhibit (works from 1969 to 1970), 165 canvasses and 50 drawings*

*. 1973: Picasso (works from 1970 to 1972), 200 works*

*. 1993: Botero in Avignon*


*. 1996: Deux Palais pour Rodin*

*. 2000: La Beauté in Fabula – part of Avignon European City of Culture – contemporary art*

*. 2010: Miquel Barceló*

*. 2011: Bridges*

*. 2013 : les Papesses*
Audioguide in 11 languages and accessible to hearing and sight impaired
Visit the Palace on your own with the AUDIOGUIDE in 11 languages: French, English, German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Portuguese, and Polish).
Discover the Palace at your own pace and learn as you visit (2 €).

Tours:
Reservations: 04 32 74 32 74 and on-line at www.avignon-tourisme.com

. Secret Palace: an off-the-beaten path tour of the Palace of the Popes
See the Palace of the Popes like never before! A special behind the scenes look at the residence of the Sovereign Pontiffs: private apartments, baths, wardrobe tower, chapels and gardens. Hidden stairways, secret corridors will take you from the cellars to the rooftops. This special tour comes with lunch and a discovery tasting of Côtes du Rhône wines from the Bouteillerie on the Grands Dignitaires terrace.
  . Visit in French with brunch: Saturdays at 12.30am and Sundays at 10.30am, March to October
  . Visit in English (no brunch): Fridays at 3pm from April 18th to May 30th and September 5th to October 24th.

. Stories about the Palace of the Popes for all ages
This tour is specially designed for families, with an approach adapted for children and emphasis on anecdotes and interesting details about the Palace... Daily life in the time of the Popes...
Visit in French.
   At Easter, May, Pentecost, August and November.

. Avignon at the time of the Popes
A guided tour of Avignon that takes you back to medieval Avignon by exploring the streets, the Cardinals’ palaces, chapels, square and streets which evoke the architecture and daily life in the Middle Ages.
Our itinerary of course includes a tour of the Palace of the Popes, the biggest Gothic palace in the world.
We describe the life of the popes, their political and religious power, their habits, court, cuisine and gardens.
Starts from the Tourism Office.
Visits in French
   April to June

. Once upon a time at the Palace of the Popes
Lecturer-guide tours of the Palace – the residence of the Sovereign Pontiffs in the 1300’s, the biggest Gothic palace in Europe. See 25 rooms – ceremonial rooms, chapels, cloister, private papal apartments with priceless frescoes. UNESCO World Heritage.
Step into the universe of the Popes and discover daily life and prestigious events in the 14th century.
Visit in French.
   At Easter, May, Pentecost, July, August, October / November holiday.
2014 Events and Projects

The multi-media visit at the Palace of the Popes

Relive the splendour of the papal court and go back in time to the 14th century thanks to the new multimedia tools which animate and add to your palace tour. A new audio-guide in 11 languages is synchronised to 7 films in various rooms on the tour. This combination presents a very dynamic and fun view of the construction of the palace and shows the frescoes and furnishings that were once in the rooms. Audio guide commentary now has music, and a screen to show certain paintings and illuminations in 11 languages. (2 €).

www.palais-des-papes.com

Palace of the Popes: restoration of St Martial Chapel

The Saint Martial chapel at the Palace of the Popes is a true masterpiece of 14th century painting. The painted decors in the chapel were commissioned by Pope Clement VI, and executed by the Italian painter Matteo Giovannetti. The chapel has long been closed to the public for preservation reasons. Today, the current major restoration project is scheduled to end in July 2014. Keep up with the work site on the blog which reports on the restoration.

avignon-saintmartial.blogspot.com

Photo ARKE
Altera Rosa
May 29th to June 1st 2014

10th edition – all about roses.
Throughout the entire Ascension Holiday week-end, over 2000 rosebushes fill the Benedict XII Cloister with their fragrant blooms, and the general public has the chance to discover the great rose growers’ latest creations. Alterarosa continues its commitment to handicapped audiences by facilitating access to the exhibition and providing communication and awareness-raising. Pruning demonstrations, conferences, floral art workshops for all ages, advice and recommendations await you. The event is sponsored by Jardiland. For more information: www.alterarosa.com

Les Luminessences
Every night from August 11th to October 11th
How much do you think you know about the Popes’ Palace and its fantastic history? This special place, a site listed World Heritage of Humanity, still conceals certain secrets and harbours unexpected revelations. Now – for the first time ever – enjoy an experience like no other involving your senses, heart and imagination: Avignon Luminessences, a monumental 3D video show that will fly you across the centuries on a dreamlike voyage. On this magic night the very stones of the Palace, witnesses of a time when Avignon was the capital of Christendom, will vibrate with life and plunge you into 360 degrees of sound and images!
www.lesluminessences-avignon.com

Stefan Szczesny
June 7th to October 26th
In 2014, the exhibit of the work by Stefan Szczesny, “Mediterranean Metamorphoses” takes place at the Palace of the Popes and in the City of Avignon. Internationally-renowned artist Stefan Szczesny was born in Munich in 1951 and drew wide attention in the early 1980’s as one of the Nouveaux Fauves (“Neue Wilde”), a group of young figurative painters. The Stefan Szczesny exhibition continues the tradition of famous exhibits at the Palace of the Popes, going back to Picasso in 1973, and more recently Miquel Barceló, followed by “Les Papesses” in 2013. Stefan Szczesny’s paintings on canvas and ceramics will be displayed, as will be his sculptures.
www.avignon-tourisme.com
The International Meeting and Convention Centre

The International Meeting and Convention Centre is located in the very heart of the Palace of the Popes, the biggest Gothic palace in Europe, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The International Meeting and Convention Centre is a prestigious venue for meetings. There are 14 different meeting and exhibition rooms in the city centre. Easy transportation (airport, TGV train station), excellent parking and every category of hotel contribute to the attraction.

A team of professionals provides you with every service required for a successful meeting. The International Meeting and Convention Centre is one of the first in France to be certified AFAQ ISO 9001, a reflection of the high standards and savoir-faire.

Turn-key events:
Management of Delegate Accommodations: we provide free management of hotel reservations for your delegate. We take options, follow through, and confirm.
Preparation of registration forms and Internet posting
Reception of registrations and on-line payment
Hotel assignments
E-mail confirmations sent to participants
Room list management
Administrative and financial management
.Events (excursions, tours, receptions, leisure...):
- The guide department organises private tours and theme-visits: Palais secret, vin and divin, Palace of the Popes and Bridge, excursions in Avignon and throughout Provence....in 11 languages.
- Prestige Soirées at the Palace of the Popes
- Architectural decor
- Theme dinners with related entertainment in the ceremonial rooms in the Palace of the Popes – the Benedict XII Cloister, Grand Tinel, Grande Audience...an absolutely unforgettable experience for your clients.
Tailor-made quotes on request, for 50 to 700 persons.

. Incentive Events:
Team building (with games and challenges in Avignon and in the Palace of the Popes; sports activities in Provence), private cocktail parties, private dinners, cooking classes...
Boutique
At the Palace of the Popes, the visit ends in one of the most beautiful rooms in the Palace – the Theology room. Here is where the Boutique is now located. Browse among the specialised books on the Middle Ages, the games and decorative objects which reflect the Palace and your visit.

Café terrace
The Grands Dignitaires terrace now holds the Palace of the Popes café. Chilled beverages, warm drinks, snacks, regional products, sandwiches, pastries and other goodies are served during the high season.
OPENING HOURS

The Palace of the Popes is open every day of the year.
Last tickets are sold one hour before the Palace closes.

| 1 to 31 March | 9- 6:30 |
| 1 April to 30 June | 9 – 7 |
| 1 to 31 July | 9 – 8 |
| 1 to 31 August | 9 – 8:30 |
| 1 Sept to 1 Nov | 9 – 7 |
| 2 Nov. to 28 February | 9:30 -5:45 |

Discount prices apply to the following:

- Children between 8 and 17 years old
- Cézam card
- Student card
- Carte vermeil
- Handicapped - 80% card (free over 80%) – French “famille nombreuse” card
- “Show your card/ARC” card

Entrance fee Palace of Popes and bridge

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<th></th>
<th>Full price</th>
<th>Reduced price</th>
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<tr>
<td>Palais des Papes</td>
<td>11 €</td>
<td>9 €</td>
<td>5,50 €</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palais des Papes + Pont</td>
<td>13,50 €</td>
<td>10,50 €</td>
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<td>Pont St Bénézet</td>
<td>5 €</td>
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Audioguide multimedia

11 languages: FR, GB, DE, IT, ES, DE, NL, RU, JP, CH, PO

Supplément +2 €, groups & reduced prices : +1 €

On-line sales on
www.avignon-tourisme.com