

# guided tour #2

# Enghien-les-Bains

[www.ot-enghienlesbains.fr/en](http://www.ot-enghienlesbains.fr/en)

WALK  
AROUND  
THE LAKE

## // Office de Tourisme //

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### Opening times:

Mondays from 14:00 to 18:00,  
 Tuesdays to Saturdays from 10:00 to 13:00 and 14:00 to 18:00,  
 Sundays and bank holidays from 15:00 to 18:00

## GROUP VISITS






Are you in charge of an association or work committee or just leading a group of 20 people or more? Would you like to organise a stay in or excursion to Enghien-Les-Bains?

We can arrange or provide support in the planning of your trip, including meals, accommodation and professional tour guides, etc.

+ Please contact us for a quote :  
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ENGHIEEN-LES-BAINS  
TOURISME & CONGRÈS

-  Tourist Office
-  Car parks
-  SNCF train station
-  Public toilets
-  Viewing points across the lake



**GUIDED TOUR #2**  
**WALK AROUND THE LAKE**  
 1H30  
 3.3 KM

## 1 THE LAKE

Enghien-les-Bains Lake was converted from marshlands in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. At the time, it was known as 'L'étang-neuf-sous-Montmorency' («New pond under Montmorency»). It was wild and visited only by a handful of fishermen, who had to pay a fee to the seigneur of Montmorency.

The area of the lake has become smaller since this time, now measuring just 43 hectares. It is relatively shallow (between 2 m. and 2.55 m. deep), with a circumference of around 3 km.

It has two extensions: the Lac Nord (in Soisy-sous-Montmorency) and the Bassin de l'Ouest (in Saint-Gratien).

The Île-aux-Cygnets was created in 1860 from the mud on the lakebed. The Société Nautique rowing and sailing club and the Municipal Sailing School can now be found there.

The lake and its shores have been a listed and protected site since 1942.



## 2 THE 'PAVILLON DU LAC' (FOUQUET'S)



The first structure built on this site came from the 1867 World Fair. It was called the 'Chinese Pavilion'. It was very different from the modern building: an exotic, Asia-inspired pagoda, as was the fashion in spa and seaside resorts at the time. It was the iconic image of the town until it was pulled down in 1911.

The building opened into a restaurant, linked directly to the casino by a footbridge.

The current building also takes the form of a rotunda. In the 1960s it lost both the dome that had originally covered it and its boat garage. Today, it is the only restaurant situated directly on the edge of the lake.

## 3 THE CASINO AND THE ROSE GARDEN

Gambling first came to Enghien-les-Bains in little summer cottages found in the Rose Garden between the Chinese Pavilion and the site of the casino.



The 1<sup>st</sup> municipal casino, designed by Edouard Autant, opened in 1901 and was designed to look like a sailing boat whose bow was setting sail onto the lake. It was replaced by a new casino in 1909 with a theatre that opened the following year. Transformed into a military hospital during the war, its activities were suspended in July 1920 following a ministerial decree forbidding its operation. This ban was lifted by law in 1931 and the casino was able to open its doors once again.

The most recent major restoration of this building by the architect, Louis Soors, and decorator, Jacques Garcia, took place in 2005, under the direction of the Barrière Group.

## 4 'NORMAN' VILLAS AND 'SUMMER HOUSES'

A faux timbered villa at 15 Avenue de Ceinture harks back to traditional Normandy architecture. Some stylistic elements have also been borrowed from other regions such as the Basque and Flemish regions, and even other countries like Switzerland, Italy and Russia.

A little further down the street, at number 19, are three buildings sharing a façade with faux timbering and pink rendering. The overall style is inspired by Russian izbas, with sloping roofs and bay windows decorated with pelmets (wooden mouldings with latticed motifs).



## 5 A 'CLASSICAL' VILLA (IN THE STYLE OF LOUIS XIII)

At number 23 Avenue de Ceinture, you can see a true pastiche of the style of Louis XIII. The stone structure is adorned with a variety of classically inspired decorative elements. However, the skylight in the roof appears oversized, reminiscent of the exuberance of the Baroque style.

## 6 A VILLA OF GRITSTONE AND GLAZED BRICK

The villa at number 34 Avenue de Ceinture, on the corner of Rue Pilloy, is a beautiful demonstration of the interplay between materials of different colours, likely dating from the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Gritstone is used as the foundation, covered by a layer of red brick and two layers of glazed green bricks, topped with rubble stones. The window surrounds are made of red brick with 'eyebrows' of glazed green brick brightening up the façade. The ironwork elements, while not spectacular, still add to the overall appearance of the building.



*Over the years, villas in various styles have been built at the edge of the lake by the richest holidaymakers, who have been gradually moving here.*

*This walk around the lake, passing by small streets, gardens, jetties and promenades by the side of the water, allows you to take a glimpse of this remarkable heritage.*

## 7 'MY DREAM' VILLA

At number 2 Rue Pilloy (or 43 Rue de l'Arrivée) you can find a creation of the firm of architect Thion et Fils, whose work can be seen extensively in Enghien-les-Bains. The villa dates from 1903.

It is very eclectic overall, presenting an accumulation of parts that have virtually no connection with each other in terms of stylistic influence! It falls within the category of villas with an Italian belvedere tower that were so fashionable between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was particularly true in holiday resorts, where the view determined how and where villas were built.

## 8 ART DECO BUILDING

43 Avenue de Ceinture was originally a hotel designed for spa clients. It was then transformed into an investment property.

The decoration of the façade is characterised by vertical lines, with five rows, each topped by a skylight. This vertical movement is accentuated further by the three projections that adorn the façade and from which the central part stands out.

This building is an excellent example of the influence of Art Deco, which developed out of the Art Nouveau style, simplifying and geometrising plant forms.



## 9 'MAISON NEU'

At number 45 Avenue de Ceinture stands the 'Maison Neu', a villa constructed in 1913 for the Neu family on the plot of the summer cottage that the actress Alice Ozy had had built. As befitted a star actress in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, she had one of the first lakeside properties constructed.

The architecture of the building was adapted to the unusual shape of the plot: the villa sits sideways on a narrow strip of land with a large garden. Terraces and verandas looked over the lake to make the most of the view.



The 'movements', created from elements such as the curve above the front door and the various balconies, canopies and bay windows, make the façade particularly original.

## 10 THE LAKE VILLA AND ITS GARDEN

The villa and garden at number 45 of the same street belong to the town. The building houses various associations and the garden is open to the public.

The contrast between the styles of the two façades is especially marked. The red-brick façade facing the street is very much 'urban'. It is not original, but was added subsequently to the 1928 construction as an extension.

The style is completely different on the lake side, being more 'villa-château' style. The rendering is white and the façade is decorated with classically styled elements. This villa demonstrates one of the requirements of the elite inhabiting the lakeside residences: the façade overlooking the lake is of greater importance than the façade facing the street.



## 11 THE SCOTTISH CHÂTEAU

At number 3 Avenue du Château Ecosais, you can catch sight of a building, built around 1845, behind a huge wrought-iron fence.

It was nicknamed the 'Scottish Château' or the 'Citadelle du Lac' by Emile de Girardin, who purchased it in 1860.

This 19<sup>th</sup> politician and journalist, considered the 'father of the French press', acquired the land from Jules Robin, a wealthy dignitary in the town who was also the second mayor of the commune.

The influence of the Gothic style is evident, with a tower with machicolation, crenels, arrow slits, pediments and decorated with pinnacles in the pediments and windows with mullions.



## 12 A BRICK AND TIMBERED 'RURAL' VILLA

The villa at number 9 Avenue Régina takes its inspiration from rural architecture. A dovecote placed at an angle with the building emphasises its picturesque character.

The sash windows give an Anglo-Saxon feel to the villa. This type of window is made up of two parts, with the opening in the lower part of the frame, and is particularly widespread in Britain and the Netherlands.



## 13 THE CHÂTEAU LÉON

At number 71 Avenue de Ceinture (or Rue du Château Léon), you can find the second 'château' of Jules Robin, who also owned the Scottish Château.



The residence was originally on an estate of 5,500 m<sup>2</sup>. A landscaped garden formed a peninsula, bordered by a strip of water on one side and a small lake and river on the other.

The building is in a Neo-Gothic style, with high roofs, uncovered gables, large chimney stacks, latticed moulding and bay windows with mullions.

Located in the grounds of the Lycée Gustave Monod secondary school, it now houses several administrative departments.

## 14 THE CHÂTEAU D'ENGHIEN

The third 'château' can be found at number 71 Avenue de Ceinture. It is also part of the grounds of the school and similarly houses administrative offices.

Built in 1845 like the other 'châteaux', again by Jules Robin, it was in the same park. The building was enlarged in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with a side wing in the original style.



## 15 THE GUSTAVE MONOD SCHOOL

It was built between 1953 and 1958 and owes its exceptional decor to one of the first applications of the '1% artistique' scheme, first established in 1951 in the buildings of the Ministry of National Education and then expanded to the construction of all other ministries in 1970.

In order to prioritise the presence of art created by young people and develop public contracts, 1% of the total budget had to be dedicated to financing works of art. Painted murals and remarkable bas-reliefs can still be seen on the façades and walls of the establishment.

Founded on the initiative of Gustave Monod, initially as an experimental secondary school, from 1979 it became a conventional secondary school. It was the first to deliver the baccalauréat (equivalent to A-levels in France) and the Abitur (the German equivalent) at the same time. Lucie Aubrac, a resistance fighter during the Second World War, taught there as a history teacher.

## 16 PRESQU'ÎLE-AUX-FLEURS

Before continuing to explore the villas, take a few moments to wander round the garden of the Presqu'île-aux-Fleurs peninsula. It provides an excellent view over the lake and allows you to enjoy the riverbank in a natural green setting.

The location is beloved of fishermen and you can admire the Île-des-Cygnets, which was formed from cleaning out the bottom of the lake. Today, the island is a safe haven for biodiversity and houses solely the Société Nautique d'Enghien and the Municipal Sailing school.



## 17 'LOUIS XV' PAVILIONS

In the neighbouring commune of Saint-Gratien, located on your right past the Bassin de l'Ouest (or the Lac de la princesse Mathilde), three small pavilions provide examples of architecture inspired by the time of Louis XV. Of a classical appearance, they all have the same type of façade with white rendering, a central axis enhanced by a balcony or a canopy and a terrace roof embellished with a balustrade.

## 18 TERRACED VILLAS



The façade of the two villas at numbers 29 and 31 Boulevard du Lac form a strange composition. The first has a type of crow-stepped gable, displaying its inspiration from Flemish architecture. The different mouldings located above the bay windows bring to life an otherwise simple façade and give the whole building an Art Deco feel.

The second façade is much more a fantasy pastiche of a medieval castle with its turrets and high, fish-scale slate roofs, for example. The rest of the décor is closer to a Renaissance style.



If you want to know more about the history of Enghien-les-Bains and its heritage, themed guided tours are offered by the Tourist Office from April to October.