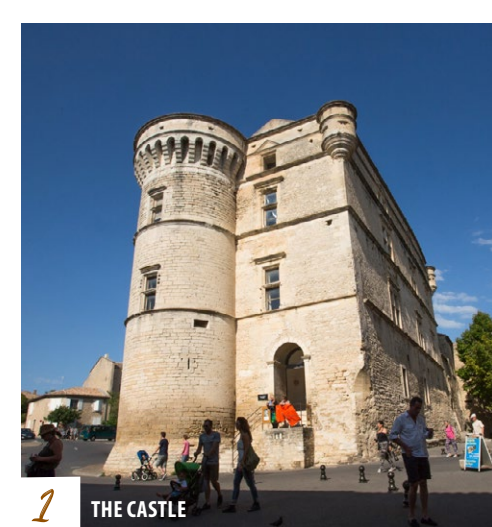


THE VILLAGE OF GORDES HAS LOOKED OUT FROM ITS TOWERING ROCK OVER THE HILLS AND VALLEYS OF THE LUBERON SINCE NEOLITHIC TIMES. OCCUPIED FIRST BY THE CELTO-LIGURIAN TRIBE OF THE VORDENSES, THEN BY THE ROMANS, THIS ANCIENT SETTLEMENT OCCUPIES A HIGHLY STRATEGIC LOCATION. THE VILLAGE ITSELF BEGAN TO DEVELOP AROUND ITS FORTRESS WAY BACK IN THE 11TH CENTURY. IT TAKES TIME TO GRASP THE FULL MAGIC OF GORDES AND THE RICHNESS OF ITS HISTORY. AS YOU STROLL THROUGH THE STREETS, STOP FOR A MOMENT TO IMAGINE THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF THE THRIVING VILLAGE, FROM THE FORTRESS DOWN TO THE LOWER FOUNTAIN. AND SLOWLY SUCCUMB TO ITS CHARMS, JUST LIKE SO MANY PAINTERS AND OTHER ARTISTS SINCE THE 1950S, WHO HAVE SINCE HELPED SPREAD THE FAME OF GORDES RIGHT AROUND THE WORLD.

1 THE CASTLE

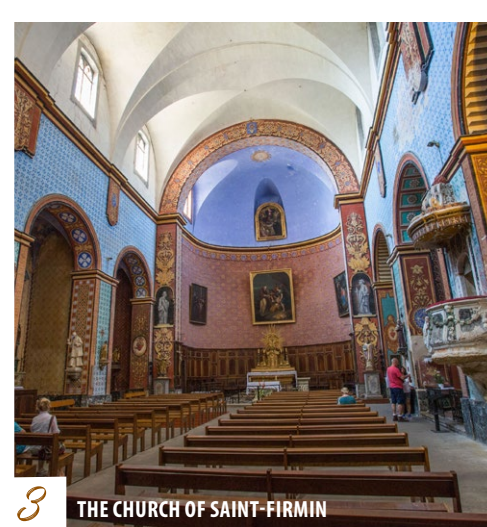
Listed as a historic monument in 1931, its construction took place in stages between the 11th and 16th centuries. It belonged to the Agout Simiane family, who ruled over Gordes for nearly 700 years, and turned the medieval building into an imposing Renaissance castle (1525). The original building (11th century) was modified and enlarged from the 12th to the 16th century. Its architecture combines medieval defensive art and Renaissance styles. Between 1971 and 1996, it housed



1 THE CASTLE



2 FOUNTAIN ON PLACE GENTY PANTALY



3 THE CHURCH OF SAINT-FIRMIN

the Museum of Victor Vasarely, then the works of Pol Mara from 1997 to 2011. Temporary exhibitions in season.

Accessible during guided tours and exhibitions.

2 FOUNTAIN ON PLACE GENTY PANTALY

The only village water source until 1956. It was reserved for drinking purposes. Washing clothes was restricted to the lower village in the Fontaine Basse district. Place Genty-Pantaly, once virtually walled off to the west, was the heart of the mediaeval village. It was named after a local cook from the early 20th century.

3 THE CHURCH OF SAINT-FIRMIN

The bell-tower, built on the site of an old Romanesque church, served as a watchtower over the plain. Inside, in the chapel on the left as you enter, a picture depicts St Crespian and St Crespinian, the patron saint of cobblers, whose sizeable guild numbered up to a hundred members working in shoemaking in the 19th century. In the choir, there is a visible crack, due to the earthquake of June 1909.

4 THE CHAPLAINCY OF SAINT-JACQUES

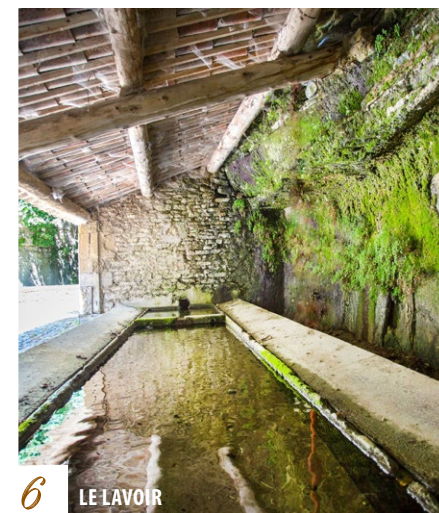
Once a resting place for pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela. However most of them passed through the Calavon valley along the Domitian Way linking Italy to Spain. *Closed to the public.*



4 THE CHAPLAINCY OF SAINT-JACQUES



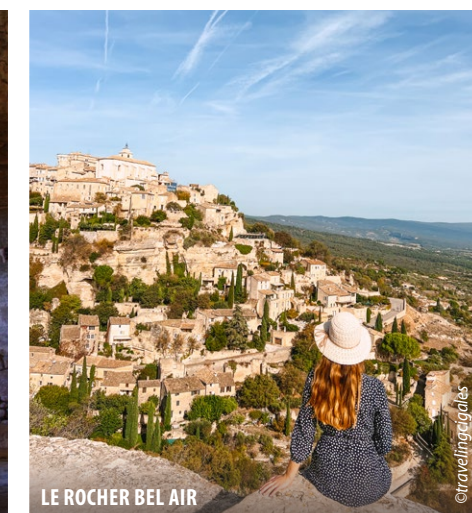
5 LA PORTE DE SAVOIE



6 LE LAVOIR



7 LES CAVES DU PALAIS SAINT-FIRMIN



LE ROCHER BEL AIR

5 THE PORTE DE SAVOIE

This door adjoining the chaplaincy was one of the main entrances to the village in the Middle Ages. Its porch is decorated with a bas-relief representing the Savoy coat-of-arms, commemorating the support lent by the Agout Simiane family to Béatrice de Savoie, Countess of Forcalquier, during the mid-13th century conflict between her and her son-in-law, Charles d'Anjou.

6 THE WASH HOUSE

This area was the economic heart of the village until the 19th century thanks to the streams which flowed at the time, with its tanneries, silk mills, artisans, merchants and cafés. To your left in the rock, note the traces of an old wine vat in which the grapes were trampled to make wine, and the cubic and rectilinear niches where racks were kept for the silkworms bred in the 19th century.

7 THE CELLARS OF THE PALAIS SAINT-FIRMIN

Life underground was a significant factor in Gordes. Every multi-storey house in the village had troglodytic cellars on several levels underneath its foundations, where craftsmen and farmers did their work. The work now being undertaken under the cellars of St Firmin gives us a glimpse into this extraordinary aspect of local life, which lasted for centuries.

www.caves-saint-firmin.com
Admission charge



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