**Musée national de la Renaissance**

It is Anne de Montmorency, High Constable of France and chief minister under both Francis I (1515-1547), and Henri II (1547-1559), who had this château, a gem of French Renaissance architecture, built from 1538 onwards. This is why his arms and emblems, the upright sword and the motto ‘Aponos’, meaning ‘Unwerving’, are ubiquitous in the painted and sculpted décor. The château remained the property of the Montmorency family until 1632, and then belonged to the Bourbon-Condé.

While Napoleon I entrusted the château to the Légion d’Honneur (1806), André Malraux finally had it turned into the Musée national de la Renaissance (1977) with a view of nurturing a fertile dialogue between the architecture and décor on the one hand, and the collections of decorative arts from the Musée de Cluny in Paris on the other hand.

We suggest you follow a tour on this trail. In each room, some printed sheets provide further details on the collections. Please put them back in the rack when finished reading them.

Enjoy your visit...

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**VISITOR’S TRAIL**

This printed trail suggests a quick tour of the museum’s highlights, yet you will also find a wealth of European Renaissance creations – including gold and silverware, clocks, painted enamels from Limoges, majolica, wrought iron, wooden, bronze and stone sculptures on the ground and second floors.

**Other highlights**:
- 2 tapestries from the famous set of the Story of Diana (1st floor)
- A clockwork ship called the ‘nef of Charles V’ and other scientific instruments (ground floor)
- Daphnis, a masterpiece of silverwork featuring an immense coral piece (2nd floor)
- The collection of Iznik pottery (2nd floor)
- The tile-floor from the château de Polisy, once displayed next to Holbein’s ambassadors (2nd floor)

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**ground floor**

Chapel 1
Arms and armour 2
Former kitchens 3
History of the château 4
Wooden panelling 5
from the château de Gaillon
Leather paintings: the ‘Roman Heroes’ after Goltzius 6
Wood sculpture: I. Renaissance (1500-1550) 7
Wood sculpture: II. Mannerism (1550-1650) 8
Small sculptures 9
Metalwork 10
Scientific instruments 11
The Goldsmith’s workshop 12
Leather paintings: the story of Suspen after Tornielli 13
Bathing suits (in the basement) 14
Restaurant: ‘la Plaine de France’ 15

**first floor**

The High Constable’s apartment 1
Madeleine de Savoie’s antechamber 2
Madeleine de Savoie’s bedchamber 3
Pavilion of the story of Abigail 4
Gallery of Psyché 5
Tapestry of ‘David and Bathsheba’ 6
King’s inner room 7
King’s bedchamber 8
Stairway from the Paris Audit Office 9
King’s great hall 10
Leather paintings: the story of Sципион after Tempesta 11
Stained-glass windows 12
from the château 13
Embroideries from the Hôtel de l’Arsenal, Paris (made for Sully) 14

**second floor**

Iznik pottery 1
Stained-glass windows 2
French ceramics 3
Cassoni (Italian wedding-chests) 4
Limoges enamels, glass and maiolica 5
German stoneware 6
Gold and silver work 7
The High Constable’s library 8
Textiles 9

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**Château d’Écouen**

.open Wednesdays to Mondays 9.30am to 12.45pm and 2.00pm to 5.45pm (5.15pm in Winter)
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Guided tours
on Saturdays and Sundays
The collection tour: 11.00am and 3.30pm
Focus on a theme: 2.15pm
The Renaissance represented a major change in the civilisation of 15th- and 16th-century Europe. A cultural movement based on a rediscovery and emulation of classical Antiquity, it also spread across the first globalised world thanks to modern technologies such as printing and navigation. Art in this period reflected a taste for challenges and sophistication. In this field, Italy, of course, blazed the trail.

**ground floor**

The CHAPEL OF THE CHÂTEAU still has ogival vaults painted with Anne de Montmorency and his wife Madeleine de Savoie’s coats of arms. Yet the original marquetry and stained-glass windows are preserved in the château de Chantilly today. In this period, especially thanks to an early copy of Leonardo da Vinci’s Last Supper painted in Milan between 1516 and 1519 by Marco d’Oggiono, one of the master’s disciples. Archives from the time of Montmorency reveal that this very picture hung in his chapel.

Like other prominent rooms in the château, the HIGH CONSTABLE’S HALL features a painted fireplace portraying a scene from the Bible, The Queen of Sheba meeting Solomon in this case. Its style is quintessential mid 16th-century School of Fontainebleau. New documentary evidence has enabled to establish that they had been made by painters from Jean Cousin’s workshop, especially Bonaventure Navarte. The collection of weapons is displayed in three sections according to their function: war (far end), hunting (left) and parade (right). They were often adorned to become works of art, as testify the salamander-bedecked bronze stirrups (far end) that were part of Francis I’s parade equipment.

The scale model in the next room devoted to the HISTORY OF THE CHÂTEAU D’ECOUEN, shows the appearance of the building by 1576, when published by du Cerceau. It includes the now missing entrance wing and jou de paume against the North terrace.

**1st floor**

Step back into the château through the same door and climb the ceremonial staircase to the HIGH CONSTABLE’S APARTMENTS, to your right at the top. The story of Jacob and Esau on the painted fireplaces recalls that like Jacob in the Bible, Montmorency inherited the family’s property and titles although he was not the firstborn son. Original decorative paintings, called grotesques, adorn the windows and coffering. As for the furniture, it has been gathered to give the proper sense of opulence for such an apartment.

The large triumphal-arch shaped cabinet with Cardinal Alessandro Farnese’s coats of arms (ca. 1580) and the wardrobe with monochrome golden biblical scenes from the atelier of Hugues Sambon, a well-known artist from Dijon, Burgundy, are two of the highlights.

Walk back across the landing to the APARTMENTS OF MADELINE DE SAVOIE, one of Francis I’s cousins and Anne de Montmorency’s wife. Most of the décor of these two rooms is preserved, yet the painted fireplaces were damaged by stove systems that were part of the 19th-century modernisation. Most of the furniture is French, yet there are a few exceptional pieces from Venice, including a 1570 splot – a variant of a harpsichord, and a cassone – a wedding chest adorned with sculpted, mythological couples on a golden background.

In the room at the far end and to your left, in the PAVILION OF ABIGAIL, (after the painting on the fireplace), you will find the first two wall hangings from an eminent set telling the story of David and Bathsheba. These tapestries, one of the museum’s most precious pieces, were designed and woven in Brussels ca. 1520-1525, and once belonged to king Henry VIII. A scholar opens his book to tell us a story that begins when the Ark of the Covenant enters Jerusalem.

**2nd floor**

The KINGS CABINET prolonging the gallery, is lined with chests as it also served as a wardrobe. The monumental plaques on the walls are painted enamals from Limoges. The small panelled room that is now cordoned off was where the sovereign held confidential talks; it has unfortunately lost its gilding.

After crossing the former KING’S ANTECHAMBER, which now houses a wooden staircase dedicated to Maria de’ Medici and Henry IV, head for the GREAT HALL OF THE KING. This room features a sumptuously carved and marble-inlaid, monumental fireplace dated 1594, and the wall and ceiling paintings underwent extensive refurbishing work in the 19th-century. The polychrome tile-floor in the centre was made for Anne de Montmorency in Rouen by Massenet Aquains; it originally covered the entire story.

The collections on display at the Musée national de la Renaissance in the château d’Ecouen recreate the atmosphere of a French Renaissance palace, encompassing its furniture and tapestries as well as its consistent wall, floor and ceiling tones and stained-glass windows.