



Marie-Antoinette's Estate

The creation of “Marie-Antoinette’s Estate” is part of the “Grand Versailles” project that aims most notably to show Versailles’ contrasts : Classical and Baroque, destitution and extravagance, male inspiration from Louis XIV and female inspiration from Marie-Antoinette to Madame de Pompadour, to name just a few. The Petit Trianon and its gardens are inseparably linked from Marie-Antoinette : she was the only queen who imposed her personal tastes on Versailles, scoffing at Court traditions. In the Trianon estate, which Louis XVI gave to her in 1774, she found a haven of privacy that allowed her to escape from the rigours of Court Etiquette. No one could enter without her personal invitation.



The reestablishment of the **enclosure** under Napoleon who took over the majority of the old layout (ramparts, portals, railings, and ha-has) means that today the **Petit Trianon estate** is still a unified area, private and preserved, centred on the palace in a wholly intimate setting. This layout shows the refinement and eclecticism of **Marie-Antoinette**, emphasises her way of living and freedom of thought that was inspired by **Enlightenment theories**.

#### Marie-Antoinette's Estate

- 1 Grand Trianon
- 2 Petit Trianon
- 3 French Garden
- 4 French Pavilion
- 5 Queen's Theatre
- 6 Rock
- 7 Belvedere
- 8 Grotto
- 9 Orangery
- 10 English Garden
- 11 Temple of Love
- 12 Refreshments Dairy
- 13 Marlborough Tower
- 14 Guard's House
- 15 Dovecote
- 16 Billiard Room
- 17 Queen's House
- 18 Warming Room
- 19 Boudoir
- 20 Mill
- 21 Farm
- 22 Porte Saint-Antoine

- Information and ticket desks for individual visitors
- Equipped for disabled visitors
- Refreshments
- Free Toilets
- Car park
- Bicycles
- Ice creams
- Confectionery
- Picnic area
- Mini-train
- Telephone



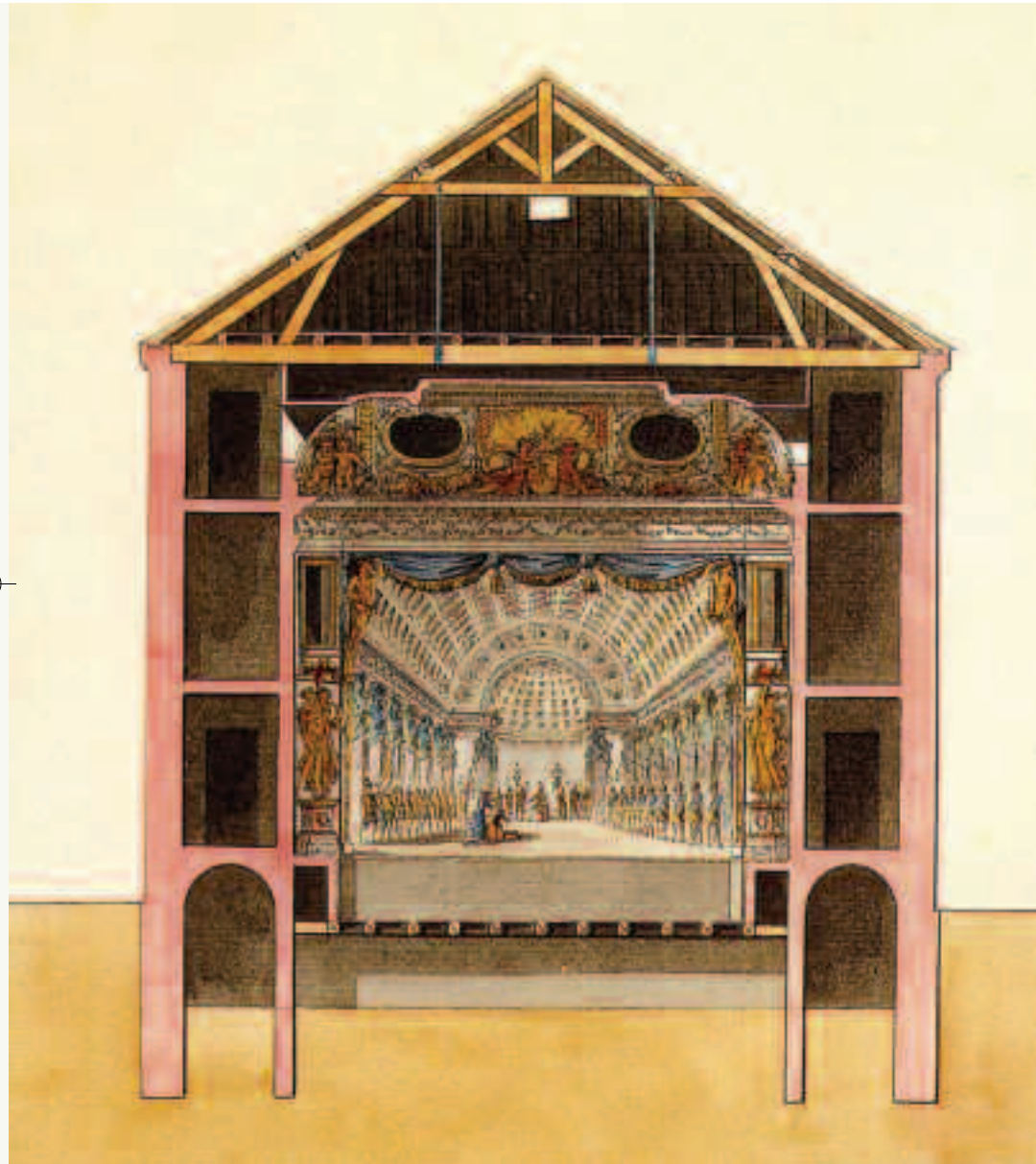
## The Formal Garden and the Petit Trianon

Encouraged by Madame de Pompadour, Louis XV built a new leisure area that focussed on zoology and botany by extending the Trianon. Next to the new Formal Garden, one of the last of its style, A.-J. Gabriel introduced the “Menagerie”, farm that is now lost, and two pavilions for eating light meals : the **French Pavilion**, known as an area for light lunches, and the **Cool Pavilion**, a dining room in which to taste the products coming from the vegetable garden and Menagerie.

Also built by the architect A.-J. Gabriel, the **Petit Trianon** crowned the composition of the Garden. This pleasure pavilion, decorated by the sculptor H. Guibert, is situated in the middle of a plant garden created by the gardeners the Richards (father and son), and the botanist B. de Jussieu. Conceived as a private area for Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour, it was inaugurated in June 1769 in the presence of Madame Du Barry. It was Marie-Antoinette’s favourite place to visit and she transformed a part of the garden into the English-style. The Petit Trianon was restored and refurnished first during the Empire (1804-1815) for Pauline Borghèse the sister of Napoleon I, later for the Empress Marie-Louise, and finally for the July Monarchy (1830-1848) for the Duke d’Orléans the oldest son of Louis-Philippe. In 1867 the Empress Eugénie made it into a museum dedicated to Marie-Antoinette.

The Petit-Trianon marks the start of the Neo-Classical style. The ground floor is organised around a central vestibule and a staircase of honour. Originally this was divided into a billiard room, a guardroom, a warming room, and other service rooms. The first floor comprises : an antechamber, a large dining room, a small dining room, a living room, a boudoir or Cabinet “of glass”, and the queen’s room. The mezzanine is made up of an antechamber, a sleeping room and a cabinet. Finally, the second floor is grouped into three main rooms and five other apartments or “master” rooms.





## The Queen's Theatre

One of the most beautiful and historic buildings in Europe, now open to the public, reveals a little known side to the life of Marie-Antoinette.

To perfect her French, Marie-Antoinette took comedy classes, and she acted while still in Vienna with her family, from this came her taste for the theatre.

In 1777, Marie-Antoinette asked Richard Mique to take his inspiration for the auditorium from the Chateau de Choisy, which was built by Gabriel for Madame de Pompadour. The work began in June 1778 and was completed in August 1779.

Hidden between the mountain and the harbour of the English Garden the building seems dependant while lacking character. The only visible decoration is an ancient-style porch, flanked by two ionic columns on which a small pediment sculpted by Deschamps is mounted.

Inside the auditorium is hung in blue and the balcony consoles show lion skins, the symbol of kings. Two baths, enclosed by balustrades, and a balcony on the first floor, frame the parterre. The sculpted decorations are made from cardboard paste, giving cohesiveness to the fact that this was a non-official theatre. The only luxury decoration is a silk taffeta curtain with gold thread that was sold in 1794.

The theatre was inaugurated in 1780 when festivities were given at Trianon. Different performances were given, sometimes with the Queen as an actress, and at others a spectator. Notable plays are : *The Unexpected Favour* and *The Farmer King*, *The Village Medium* by Jean Jacques Rousseau. After the unexpected death of Maria-Theresa on 29 September 1780 the Queen stopped acting. Instead, she became a spectator of plays given by the French and Italian comedies as well as the Opera : *Iphigénie en Tauride* by Gluck was given in honour of Emperor Joseph II in 1781. In 1782 while the Tsarevich, son of Catherine II of Russia, was discretely visiting Versailles *Zemir and Azor* by Grétry was commended. On 15 September 1785, the Queen played her last role in the *Barber of Seville*, a comic opera by *Païsiello* taken from a play by *Beaumarchais*.



## The English Garden

Sacrificing a part of the botanical garden of Louis XV, Marie-Antoinette asked her architect Richard Mique and the painter Hubert Robert to create a more picturesque garden, in the English-style. It is made up of an undulating stream, punctuated with follies, lawns, perspectives and serpentine paths. Perched on an artificial island, the **Belvedere**, or **Music Room**, and the **Grotto** overhang a small lake and give a broad panorama of the English Garden. The **Temple of Love** is built in the middle of another island and completes the landscape.

The storm of 26 December 1999 most affected this part of Trianon. The gusts of wind were extremely violent and caused irreversible damage to the ancient trees, most notably including some of the “outstanding” ones originally planted in the garden from its creation in 1780 like the famous Tulip tree from Virginia. Facing this destruction of the tree heritage, a general program of restoration was determined and begun from the beginning of 2002, in order to recreate a unified composition, this time keeping more strictly to the designs of Marie-Antoinette in the 1780s.





## The Follies of the Rustic Garden of Trianon

The different follies that punctuate the rustic garden create, through their diversity and dispersion, many centres that order the decoration formed by the trees, lawns, rocks and areas of water. **These miniature constructions, scaled according to the site and the vegetative decoration**, were all built between 1777 and 1787. The various follies can be grouped into the four categories used for such architectural works and picturesque gardens, they are :

### Classical follies inspired by Antiquity

The Temple of Love, The Belvedere, The Porte Saint-Antoine

### Exotic follies

“Chinese” Ring Game (now lost)

### Natural Follies

The Rock, The Grotto, Rip-rap

### Rustic Follies

Villagers’ houses from the Queen’s Hamlet

**Originally each folly was accompanied by its own specific decor of greenery** : a curtain of poplar trees forming the backdrop to the Belvedere, the generous silhouettes of weeping willows setting off the Temple of Love, screens of tall trees backing the houses with their small enclosed gardens in the Queen’s Hamlet.



## The Queen's Hamlet

Following the example of the Prince de Condé at Chantilly, the Queen wanted her own village to provide country amusements for herself and her children. From 1783 to 1785 R. Mique built the **Hamlet**, in the Norman-style, taking his inspiration from the drawings of the painter H. Robert. Twelve cottages encircled by vegetable and flower gardens were originally arranged around the **Grand Lac**. A short distance away was the **Farm** from where the Queen received milk that she served in Paris porcelain in the **Refreshments Dairy**, which housed a beautiful marble table, renovated under Napoleon. The Refreshments Dairy is situated at the foot of the **Fishery**, also known as the **Marlborough Tower\*** which was the first construction in the Hamlet (1783). There was also a Preparation Dairy (now demolished).

Empress Marie-Louise tastefully refurnished the **Hamlet** (1811) during the Empire. The buildings were restored thanks to the generosity of John D. Rockefeller Jr. and his children, at the start of the twentieth century. **The Farm** was to be given up until 1993 when the association "Assistance aux Animaux" began work to restore and enliven it.

Marie-Antoinette had her own house, which was the only one to be roofed with tiles. The ground floor comprised a single dining room, while the first floor was made up of a guardroom, a living room and a games room. Georges Jacob and Jean-Henri Riesener luxuriously furnished this house. It was connected to the **Billiard Room** by a wooden gallery. On the stairs were placed flowerpots with the Queen's monogram created by Saint-Clément (a Lorraine manufacturer). Marie-Antoinette's close friends that were invited to the little village also enjoyed all the amenities. The Barn (now demolished) was used as a ballroom and there was even a **Boudoir** close to the Queen's house. Still standing are, the **Mill**, with its waterwheel, the **Guard's Room**, the **Dovecote** and the **Warming Room** (kitchen).

\* On the death of the Duke of Marlborough, an English general, in 1722, a song (Marlborough s'en va-t-en guerre) which Beaumarchais had Chérubin sing in *Le Mariage de Figaro*, became extremely popular. Made known at Court by the Dauphin's nurse, it was so famous that the tower in the Hamlet was named after it.



## Information

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et du domaine national de Versailles  
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**for people with limited mobility**  
partial and difficult access  
[handicap@chateauversailles.fr](mailto:handicap@chateauversailles.fr)

## Opening Times

Open **every day** except bank holidays  
and for official ceremonies

**3 April – 31 October**

From 12pm to 7.30pm  
access inside until 6pm,  
tickets sold until 5.45pm

**1 November – 31 March**

Petit Trianon Gardens  
open for walks all day



This magnificent ensemble is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.  
This listing recognises the universal and exceptional value of cultural and natural  
heritage sites so that they may be preserved for the benefit of humanity.

Design : Vasco © lebreton.illustrations@wanadoo.fr ; Biblioteca Estense, Modène



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patrons :**

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**and**

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the important restoration project of the Petit Trianon,  
French Pavilion, Belvedere and its Rock, to take place.**