

STEP BY STEP INSIDE THE BASILICA

THE NAVE

3 The walls and the vaults of this central nave are deliberately bare of decoration, to give the architecture its full impact: large arcades, a blind wall (without gallery), clerestory windows and arch ribs with simplified designs, lead the gaze directly upwards to the vault. The height of the nave is even more surprising.



The nave consists of seven bays. The first four starting from the choir were built prior to 1472. At the request of Louis XI, the nave was extended with a further three bays starting in 1482.

THE ORATORY Guided tour only

9 Above the sacristy's portal, a discreet skylight reveals the presence of a floor: it was in this small room that Louis XI came to attend services from the skylight overlooking the choir.



Like Louis XI, the room is sober: in the middle is a stately fireplace; on either side, two windows with a window seat let light into the oratory.



Guided tour only



THE STAIRCASE: HIDDEN TREASURE OF THE BASILICA

Behind the door of the current sacristy (Chapel of Villequier) hides a spiral staircase with an open well, an architectural feat which frees it of any superfluous support and gives it unusual lightness. The stairway leads to the oratory.



View of the choir from the skylight of the oratory.



Stained glass window of Saint James and Saint Andrew, 1891.



On the vault, the fine ribs form two scallops.

SAINT JAMES' CHAPEL: THE WORK OF A BUILDER FROM CHAMBORD

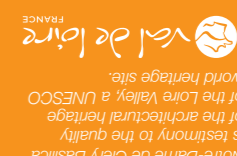
4 The Pontbriand brothers are behind this richly decorated funerary chapel, of which the décor is typical of the 16th century. François, whose travels had taken him to Italy, was commissioned by Francis I of France to work at Chambord. Based on this experience, he then came to show off his talents at Cléry, joined by his brother Gilles, who was the dean of the collegiate.



Statue of Saint James in coloured wood, 16th century.



HISTORIQUE
MONUMENT



Val de Loire
FRANCE



Loire Valley between the Loire and the Atlantic
UNESCO World Heritage Site

FREE ENTRY
Every day
from 9am
to 6:30pm



NOTRE-DAME
DE CLÉRY
BASILIQUE ROYALE DE LOUIS XI

VISIT
THE MASTERPIECE
OF A VISIONARY KING

BETWEEN ORLÉANS & CHAMBORD

GREAT NAMES IN HISTORY



The cenotaph of Louis XI

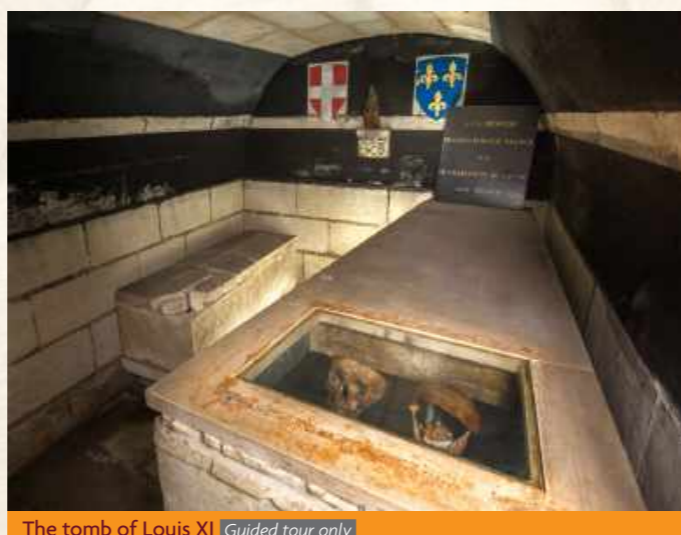
18 Louis XIII commissioned the Orléans artist, Michel Bourdin, to create a marble cenotaph to replace the one in bronze destroyed during the wars of religion on the tomb of Louis XI. The slightly off-centre cenotaph faces the Virgin Mary.

LOUIS XI

Louis XI was born in 1423 in Bourges, in the darkest hour of the Hundred Years' War. When he became king in 1461, he restored peace, took back the territories from his rivals and fundamentally modernised the kingdom. His attachment to the Virgin Mary and to Cléry became stronger throughout his reign. He had a house built (southern side, the current Notre-Dame school), embellished the collegiate and chose to be buried there.

An innovative king

Very attached to the Loire Valley and the collegiate, and certainly not lacking audacity in politics, Notre-Dame de Cléry was a natural choice for Louis XI to have his tomb. He is the only king from the house of the Valois not to be buried at Saint-Denis, as is tradition. His vault is in the ground of the nave.



The tomb of Louis XI Guided tour only

The tomb is accessed via a small staircase with six steps. Louis XI was buried on 7th September 1483. His second wife, Charlotte of Savoy, joined him a few months later.

DUNOIS & JOAN OF ARC

The bastard nephew of Charles VI and son of Louis of Orléans, Jean of Orléans, known as the 'Bastard of Orléans', became Count of Dunois in 1439 and then Lord of Cléry. He fought alongside Louis XI in Dieppe. It is certainly because of him that Louis XI was devoted to Notre-Dame de Cléry. Very attached to the collegiate, Dunois began to rebuild it in 1444. Joan of Arc, on her way to Orléans with Dunois, stopped at Cléry in April 1429. All she saw of the collegiate were the ruins, dominated by the bell tower, the result of pillaging by the English.



These stained glass windows decorate the chapel. Dunois is buried here, next to his wife, Marie of Harcourt and their descendants. Left, Dunois, right, Joan of Arc.

The Dunois Family Chapel

6 From 1464, Dunois commissioned the building, in the southern aisle, of a chapel dedicated to Saint John, where he was buried in 1468. This chapel, which has ingenious vaulting, is reminiscent of that of Châteaudun, the other residence of Dunois.

OUR LADY AT THE HEART OF THE BASILICA

THE STATUE OF THE VIRGIN MARY

The original statue, discovered in 1280, managed to escape the English troops the first time in 1428, but was destroyed by the Protestants in 1562. The one currently in the choir dates from the early 17th century and was restored in 1875.



The vows of Louis XI to the Virgin

During his life, Louis XI twice made promises to the Virgin of Cléry. In August 1443, during the siege of Dieppe by the English, he promised to devote his money to the place if he won the battle, and he did. His wish was granted once again in 1465 against the Dukes of Brittany and Burgundy in Montlhéry.

Pilgrimage to Notre-Dame

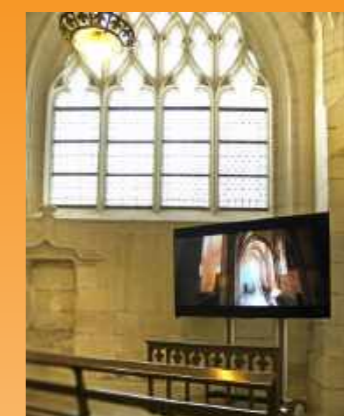
There are many hotels along the main road to welcome pilgrims. The most luxurious, the "auberge de la Belle Autruche", is opposite the Basilica. Still today, annual pilgrimages take place on 8th September, the day of Nativity of Mary, and the following Sunday.



The procession in front of the Basilica, for the Notre-Dame de Cléry festival, in 1903.



THE FILM « BASILICA » :
an aerial view of the architecture! **5**



Emotions and thrills are the key words to describe this film, produced with the use of drones. In less than 5 minutes, it gets you up close to the architecture to reveal the most inaccessible details and the majestic beauty of the Flamboyant Gothic style.

Film shown continually in the former sacristy (southern aisle), in French, followed by the English version.

www.entre-orleans-et-chambord.com

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GUIDED TOURS

Take part in our guided tours which will reveal the hidden treasures of the Basilica: the oratory and tomb of Louis XI, the splendid spiral staircase with open well.

From the 1st of may to the 30th of september
Booking and prices:
+33 (0) 2 38 45 94 33
+33 (0) 2 38 44 32 28

Ask for the brochure "Balade dans Cléry / Walk in Cléry", discover the pretty viewpoints of Notre-Dame Basilica and the ancient heritage of Cléry.

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This operation is co-funded by the European Union. Europe invests in rural areas.

HISTORY OF A CHAPEL THAT GREW INTO A BASILICA*

FROM THE CHAPEL TO THE FIRST CHURCH

The discovery of a statue of Mary in 1280, in the parish of Saint-André-lez-Cléry, was the start of what would later become the Notre-Dame Basilica.

In a small chapel in which the statue is housed, pilgrims gather to pay their respects to the Virgin of Cléry, who has miraculous powers. In 1302, Simon de Melun, Seigneur of La Salle à Cléry, founded a cathedral chapter and the collegiate of Cléry. A few years later, Philip IV of France undertook construction of a larger church. It was Philip VI from the House of Valois who laid the first stone in 1339, while the pilgrimage intensified.

THE COLLEGIATE IN TURMOIL

The Hundred Years' War reached Beaugency, where Salisbury settled in 1421 with his troops. This troubled climate of the first years of the reign of Charles VII led to the words of the famous "Carillon de Vendôme". In 1428, the English ravaged the collegiate, leaving just the bell tower **2**.

THE RECONSTRUCTION

Dunois, Seigneur of Beaugency, initiated the collegiate's reconstruction in 1444. In 1449, the nave was ready for the roof and the northern portal was finished. To the south, the first chapel was built in around 1454. André de Villequier, chief guard of Charles VII, was buried there one year later **8**. Dunois then ordered a funerary chapel, building of which began in 1464 **6**.

LOUIS XI'S DEVOTION TO NOTRE-DAME DE CLÉRY

From 1459, Louis XI multiplied his donations. In 1465 he went to Cléry following the victory of Monthléry and proclaimed the building a "royal chapel" in 1467. He chose the collegiate for his tomb and had a vault dug into the ground. He ordered a cenotaph representing him on his knees **13** and extended the nave with three bays, starting in 1482. It was not finished when he died in 1483.



DIRECTION OF VISIT RECOMMENDED USING THE LECTERNS



- ① Northern side portal
- ② The bell tower
- ③ Notre-Dame de Cléry: a pilgrimage site and royal building

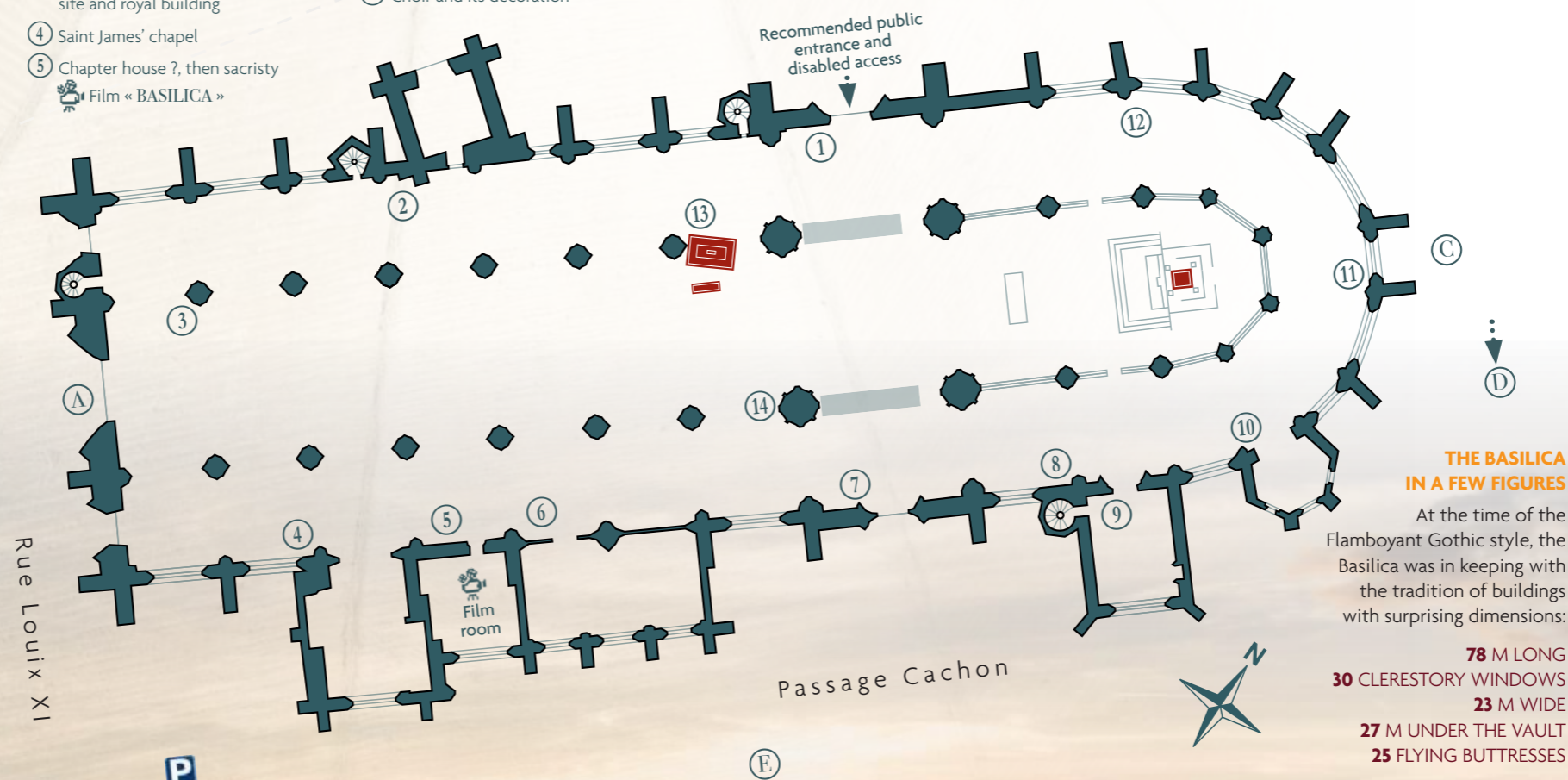
- ④ Saint James' chapel
- ⑤ Chapter house ?, then sacristy
- 🎬 Film « BASILICA »

- ⑥ Longueville chapel
- ⑦ The southern side portal
- ⑧ Villequier chapel - current sacristy
- ⑨ "Library" (upstairs)
- ⑩ Saint Barbara's Chapel
- ⑪ Saint Andrew's altar
- ⑫ Stations of the cross
- ⑬ Tomb of Louis XI
- ⑭ Choir and its decoration

* Basilica: honorary title granted by the Pope to a religious building that welcomes a pilgrimage.

DON'T MISS ALSO

- A The western façade
- B Historic panels of the Basilica
- C The chevet
- D Way of Saint James marker point
- E The house of Louis XI



THE BASILICA IN A FEW FIGURES

At the time of the Flamboyant Gothic style, the Basilica was in keeping with the tradition of buildings with surprising dimensions:

- 78 M LONG**
- 30 CLERESTORY WINDOWS**
- 23 M WIDE**
- 27 M UNDER THE VAULT**
- 25 FLYING BUTTRESSES**



Way of Saint James marker point, made by Orléans artist Yann Hervis **D**

A SEVENTY-DAY WALK BETWEEN CLÉRY AND SANTIAGA DE COMPOSTELA

Pilgrims who used the "chemin de Tours" used to stop in Cléry. They would enter via the northern porch, which until 1820 was separated from the main building. Pious medallions and candles were sold under this porch, which was called "candle sellers' gate. Its rich decoration contrasts with that of the southern portal, access to which was for the canons only.



THE CHIME

Make sure you're on time to hear the bell chime every day at 7.05am, 12.05pm and 7.05pm. "My friends, what is left, to the Dauphin, so kind? Orléans, Beaugency, Notre-Dame de Cléry, Vendôme, Vendôme" are words which depict the sad reality of the Dauphin Charles in 1420.

THE MIDDAY ANGELUS

Louis XI, a pioneering king, generalised the Midday Angelus prayer all over France in 1471.

BETWEEN ORLÉANS AND CHAMBORD...

VISIT BEAUGENCY AND MEUNG-SUR-LOIRE, TWO MEDIEVAL CITIES, TO DISCOVER OTHER MUST-SEE RELIGIOUS HERITAGE



NOTRE-DAME ABBEY IN BEAUGENCY

This building, which dates back to the late 11th century and has the Loire as a backdrop, was restored in the 17th century after the wars of religion. The chevet and the story-telling capitals, the discreetly decorated portal, the barely protruding transept and the arches of the choir are witnesses to a particular Romanesque architecture.

Information from the Tourist Office in Beaugency
3 place du Dr Hyvernaud
45190 Beaugency • **+33 (0)2 38 44 54 42**

🕒 Don't miss Beaugency castle, the splendid residence of Dunois, and in July/August, the surprising "plant maze" at Beaugency.

➤ *Tour of the town organised by the Tourist Office from 1st July to 31st August, Thursday at 10am.*

SAINT-LIPHARD COLLEGIATE IN MEUNG-SUR-LOIRE

The magnificent 11th-century bell tower, crowned with a 13th-century stone spire, stands close to the castle. The transept and the choir, the ends of which end in an apse, are unique in the region.

Information from the Tourist Office in Meung-sur-Loire
Moulin de la Poterne, 1 rue Emmanuel Troulet
45130 Meung-sur-Loire • **+33 (0)2 38 44 32 28**

Don't miss Meung-sur-Loire castle, 🕒 residence of the Bishops of Orléans, the «Roqueulin» gardens, "Arboretum d'Ilex" and the toue cabane's traditional river fishing boat.

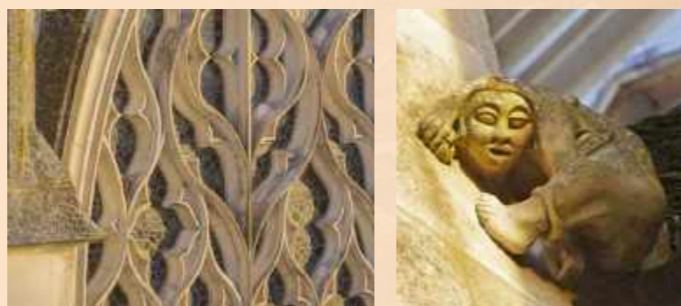
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MASTERPIECE OF THE FLAMBOYANT GOTHIC STYLE

SYMMETRY AND FANTASY

The outside of the Basilica features a series of buttresses, flying buttresses and clerestory windows, the regularity of which is broken only by the primitive bell tower and a few chapels. The symmetry of these elements and the purity of their lines are the reflection of rigour and master in the art of sculpting stone.



Discreet elements of fantasy are expressed in the decoration of stones, the stained glass windows or the presence of a few sculpted figures, placed on the buttresses.



THE WESTERN FACADE

A Around thirty years separate the construction of the western facade (around 1483) and the transept doors. The decorations in the Flamboyant Gothic style are widely used on the tympana and the moulding arches on the three portals.



Southern portal



Northern portal

The swallows, whose nests are in the portal arches, are perfectly in line with the flamboyant décor.



THE BELLTOWER, GUARDIAN OF THE SITE

2 The only witness of the first 14th-century church, the bell tower is adjoined to the northern facade. Its robust and sober silhouette contrasts with the flamboyant style of the Basilica.

A vaulted guard room communicates via a door with the northern aisle. The upper two floors, which open onto the outside with a simple arrow slit, lead to the upper room which houses the bells.



The last floor of the tower opens with twin openings through which the sound of the bells filters. A spire built in 1487 once topped the bell tower. It collapsed in 1710 following a storm.

THE CHEVET

C Its beauty is best discovered from the town hall courtyard. An aisle which goes behind the chevet leads to the former perimeter wall.