

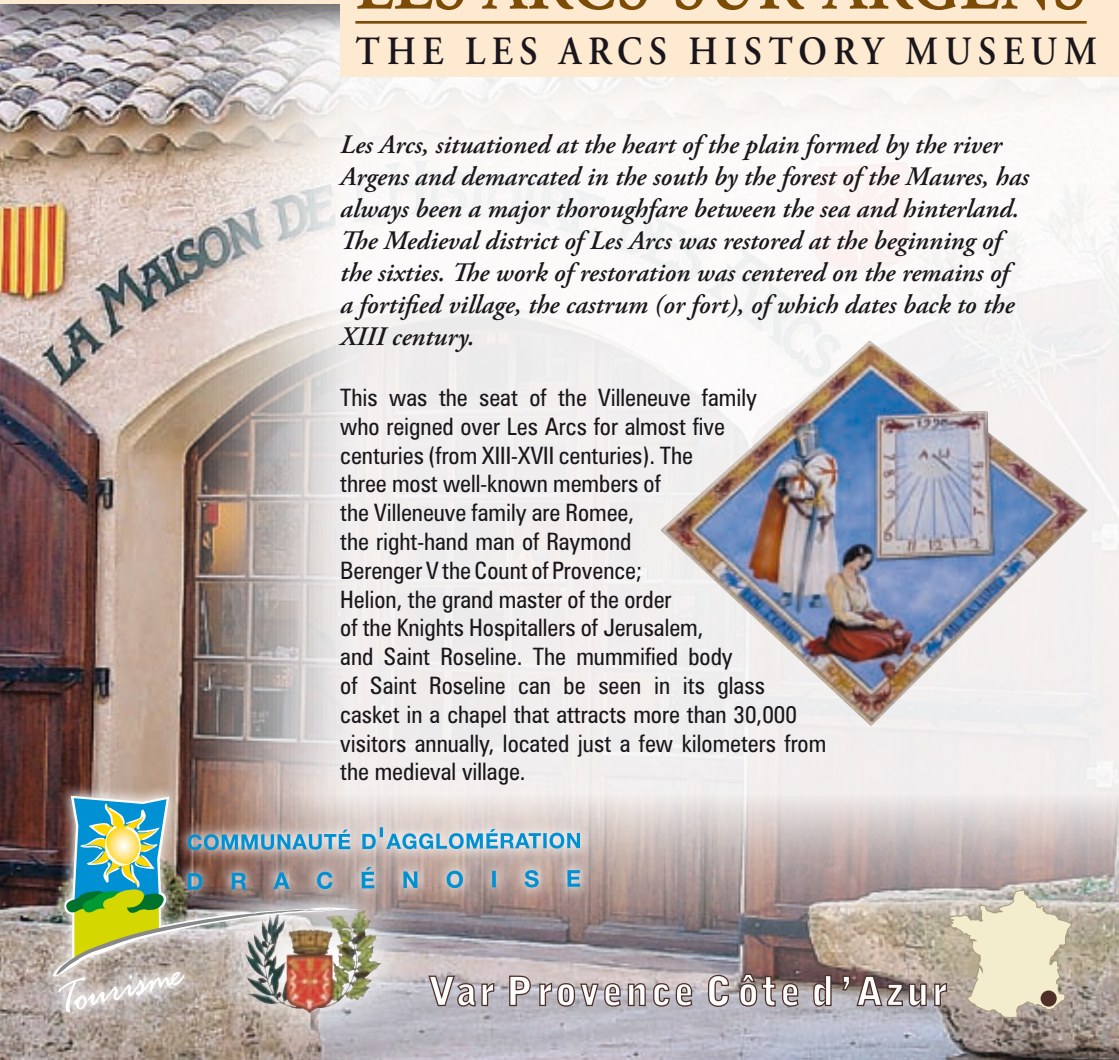
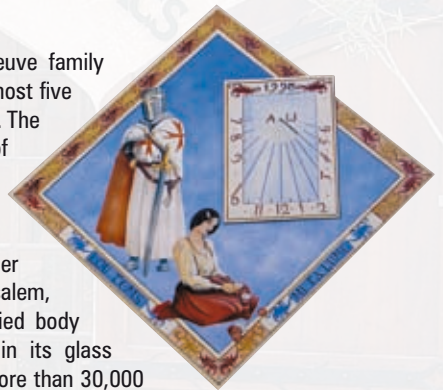


LES ARCS-SUR-ARGENS

THE LES ARCS HISTORY MUSEUM

Les Arcs, situated at the heart of the plain formed by the river Argens and demarcated in the south by the forest of the Maures, has always been a major thoroughfare between the sea and hinterland. The Medieval district of Les Arcs was restored at the beginning of the sixties. The work of restoration was centered on the remains of a fortified village, the castrum (or fort), of which dates back to the XIII century.

This was the seat of the Villeneuve family who reigned over Les Arcs for almost five centuries (from XIII-XVII centuries). The three most well-known members of the Villeneuve family are Romee, the right-hand man of Raymond Berenger V the Count of Provence; Helion, the grand master of the order of the Knights Hospitallers of Jerusalem, and Saint Roseline. The mummified body of Saint Roseline can be seen in its glass casket in a chapel that attracts more than 30,000 visitors annually, located just a few kilometers from the medieval village.



COMMUNAUTÉ D'AGGLOMÉRATION
D R A C É N O I S E



Var Provence Côte d'Azur



Tourisme



Dated 909 A.D., the oldest document referring to Les Arcs speaks of a Carolingian villa; an agricultural estate of several thousand hectares called Arcus which was situated on the plain to the west of the modern village.



It takes its name from an arched bridge that crossed the Argens river to the south of the village.



If a castle existed at that time, it had no connection to the existing remains which date back to the XIII century. The Count and Lords resided in the Castrum. This is the origin of the word "Parage", which was the name of the district where the nobles lived, as opposed to the lower land, where the peasants lived.

The clock tower is was built into the ramparts in 1358; it is square. Topping this tower is a smaller, round tower built of volcanic tuff (stone) mounted by a wrought iron bell tower dating back to 1662. The ramparts form a continuous wall broken only by four entry gates: The Real Gate: The Low Gate, The High Gate, and The Milante Gate.

The castle and the superb tower which dominated the plain were the scenes of many historical events such as the birth place of Saint Roseline and the signing of important acts concerning Provence.

The creation of the History Museum of Les Arcs was the work of the association "Les Amis du Parage."





La MAISON DE L'HISTOIRE des Arcs

The aim of this museum is to bring to life the rich historical past of the people of Les Arcs which is not very well known.

Two periods have been studied in depth: the Middle Ages and the French Revolution. Exhibits feature reconstructions of scenes from the Revolution and a large source of documentation. The exhibition starts on the ground floor with the Middle Ages, and we can see a model of the Carolingian village of 909 which is the origin of the village of Les Arcs.

Numerous exhibits give information about the historical context of Les Arcs; the main dates, and the origin of the armorial bearings blazon in use. Various life size scenes of historical events are to be seen such as Romée de Villeneuve, High Constable in the service of the Count of Provence Raymond Bérenger V, who is dictating his will to a scribe. Romée was a clever diplomat and was instrumental in bringing about the marriages of the four daughters of the Count with four kings one of whom was Saint Louis.

In the next scene we can see Hélión de Villeneuve, Grand Master of the Order of the Knights Hospitaller of St Jean of Jerusalem and brother of Saint Roseline, knighting a young lord.

Engravings and a tapestry of The Lady and the Unicorn decorate the walls.

There is also a framed list of grievances of the people of Les Arcs dated 1366.

The last scene deals with the subject of torture. Archeological finds in the old town and documents in the local archives are the source of this tableau.





Masque d'infamie On the first floor, three prominent figures in the French revolution, Barrs a member of the National Convention (1792-1785), Victor Grand and Antoine Turc are waiting for the people to come and sign the Book of Grievances.

They are talking about destroying the tower because it is a symbol of Royalist power. Wall display panels give information about the insurrection in the Var of 1851 and other important historical facts. Valuable objects and documents are on display. The brotherhood of penitents is shown to the visitor.

The silk industry of the 19th and early 20th century, mining and urbanization bring the visitor up to the present day. A large scale map of the old town, The Parage, showing the sights of the town can be found near the exit.

The St Pierre chapel which is next to the museum has an exhibition called Les Arcs



through the Ages and shows minerals, fossils and Stone Age and prehistoric artifacts.

A big scale model of The Parage as it was in the XIV century is a masterpiece and was created by Alain Durdu.

The Les Arcs History Museum has been so popular that a project to extend its scope has been adopted.



This project is to create a museum of Medieval Arms in the St Pierre Chapel and to connect it with The Les Arcs History Museum.

The region of PACA has given a grant for this project. Guy de Villeneuve, architect and a direct descendant from the nobility of Les Arcs is leading the project. He has been impressed by the scope of the historical vision of this project. The third phase will see the restoration of the tower of the castle of the Villeneuves which will be home to the historical archives of our village.

The rehabilitation of this exceptional medieval heritage in the old village will lead to the demand by the town council for a new zoning classification. This classification, ZPPAUP, will help to protect this unique area.

At this stage the area will be composed of The Les Arcs History Museum, The Chapel St Pierre and the tower of the castle of the Villeneuves.

Our commune has an ambitious project for the revitalization of tourism and aims to develop all the architectural and natural beauty spots available.

30,000 visitors come every year to gaze at the mummified body of St Roseline in her glass casket. St Roseline was the daughter of Giraud II of Provence, lord of Les Arcs in the XIIIth century.

The Domaine of St. Roseline is only a few kilometers from Les Arcs, however, most





Miracle des Roses, chapelle saint Jean Baptiste



Chasse de sainte Roseline

tourists leave our area without having visited this exceptionally beautiful, old village; a jewel of medieval architecture where Saint Roseline spent her childhood and where the miracle of the roses took place.

The old village of The Parage possesses a rare charm while the Les Arcs History Museum adds an extra, emotionally-charged dimension to this remarkable place.

*Mosaïque "Le Repas des Anges"
Marc Chagall*



From a cultural point of view, access to three sites that are home to the History of the Arcs, the museum of medieval weapons at the chapel of Saint Peter and the dungeon of the castle of Villeneuve, will be given the wealth collections of a major historical interest.

The medieval heritage in Les Arcs sur Argens is of great wealth. The village has always been a place of transition between sea and land, which we won an important prehistoric heritage in our community forests.

Maître Retable



