



M
R

MUSÉE
RABELAIS
LA DEVINIÈRE

LA DEVINIÈRE: AN IMMERSION INTO THE WORLD OF RABELAIS

PROFESSIONALS AND GROUPS
2024

CONTENTS

- 3 INTRODUCTION
- 4 GENERAL PRESENTATION
A journey into the imagination of Rabelais
François Rabelais in 5 dates
- 5 THE HOME OF A MAJOR AUTHOR
On the ground floor: the great hall
On the first floor: the bedrooms
An exceptional dovecote
- 6 CAVE WORLD
The winegrower's house
Cave cellars, grapevines, and wine
- 7 4,000 BOTTLES PER YEAR...
CRÉMANT AND CHINON APPELLATION
The vineyards: a link between the house, the work,
and the landscape
- 8 IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF GARGANTUA
In the footsteps of Gargantua
New: sound trail, "Listening to the landscape"
Touchscreen table, "Geographies"
- 9 2024 CALENDAR
- 10 PRACTICAL INFORMATION
- 11 VISIT RABELAIS' HOME
- 12 SALES CONTACT



The Rabelais Museum at La Devinière, his birthplace, is a tribute to a key body of work in the history of French literature, the development of humanist thought in the 16th century, and literary representations of the cultural landscape of the Loire Valley, which is a World Heritage Site.



IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE WORLD OF RABELAIS

Sharpen your senses!

This is an iconic place in the life and work of Rabelais. François Rabelais was born in 1483 or 1494 at La Devinière, a country home located in Seuilly, 7 kilometres from Chinon. When he wrote *Gargantua*, the writer made his **native home** and the surrounding landscape the epicentre of the Picrocholine wars. The author is one of the few writers to have a place named after him: Rabelaisie.

La Devinière is **the only museum dedicated to this major figure** who was a humanist, epicurean, and writer. The museum is a registered historic monument. This constantly evolving site is made up of a group of remarkable and significant buildings: a 15th-century dwelling, a pigeon house, a cave habitat, vast cellars, a winegrower's house, and more. The grounds include a garden, an orchard, and vineyards.

The Rabelais Museum offers a panorama of experiences. Visitors can embark on adventures with the giants from Rabelais' works along a guided path and hiking trails.

In addition to rare editions, old engravings, and portraits (including one signed by Matisse), the museum offers a playful tour for children and "tasting tours" or "sweet and savoury readings" for adults.

An **emblematic place** in the preserved environment of the Loire-Anjou-Touraine regional natural park.

ATTRACTIONS:

- 10 minutes from Chinon and Fontevraud
- Landscapes that inspired the adventures in *Gargantua*
- In the heart of vineyards

NOT TO BE MISSED

- Guided tour
- Cave cellars
- Tasting the Clos de la Devinière (AOC Chinon)

FEATURES:

- The only museum dedicated to Rabelais
- Countryside museum (orchard, vineyards, truffle farm, beehives)
- Cave dwellings and caves
- Characteristic dwellings of the 15th century

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The adventures of Gargantua take place in the Loire region, which is listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The region encompasses the borders of Touraine, Poitou, and Saumur, and at the confluence of the Vienne and Loire rivers. The museum, which is located within this natural environment, at the heart of Chinon, retraces the highlights of Rabelais' life. The writer's childhood home is an ideal setting to present his rich and whimsical work, as well as to introduce visitors to new ideas emerging in the Renaissance.

A JOURNEY INTO THE IMAGINATION OF RABELAIS

François Rabelais' father, Antoine, was a lawyer at the royal seat of Chinon and seneschal of Ligné. He owned several properties, including this **"country home"** in Seully, which he inherited from his mother.

A tour of La Devinière can be self-guided or in the company of an on-site guide (at no extra charge). It takes visitors through the works of Rabelais, recalling characters that seem all too familiar: Grandgousier, Gargantua, Panurge, Pantagruel, and more. They all make their appearance, to make us laugh and reflect. The tour allows us to (re)discover a hilarious imaginary language featuring spoonerisms, verbal inventions, and expressions that have since passed into common parlance.

NEW AREAS

New areas have been added to the tour: the tenant farmer's house and the dovecote offer a complete reading of the biography of François Rabelais, as well as a presentation of the works of Gargantua, The Third Book and The Fourth Book.

François Rabelais in 5 dates:

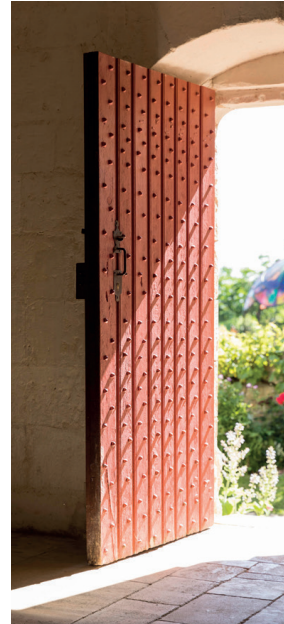
BORN IN 1483 OR 1494

1510: LEFT TOURAINE

1532: PUBLICATION OF *PANTAGRUEL*

1534: PUBLICATION OF *GARGANTUA*

DIED IN PARIS IN 1553



THE HOME OF A MAJOR AUTHOR

Rabelais' two-storey house was built in the 15th century from tufa stone. The great hall, with its monumental fireplace, occupies the first floor, while the bedroom is up the stairs. The layout of the home has not changed since Rabelais' time.

GROUND FLOOR: THE GREAT HALL

This single room served as a kitchen and features a large fireplace and sink stone. In Rabelais' writing, this room became the space for the banquets of Grandgousier, the master of the house. Today, the room houses **art collections (engravings, watercolours) and in particular a portrait of Rabelais by Henri Matisse** which the artist offered to the museum when it first opened to the public in 1951.

UPSTAIRS: BEDROOMS

The first floor can be accessed by an outdoor staircase under an awning and gutter that extend from the roof (two very steep slopes covered in slate). Here, there are two rooms of unequal size. Climbing the stairs, one's eyes are drawn to **the landscape of the novel.**

As visitors cross the threshold, they are greeted by a large room with a fireplace. This was François Rabelais' place of birth.

AN EXCEPTIONAL DOVECOTE

The pigeon house was built adjacent to the main residence in the 17th century. **The building has become emblematic of the site.** Together with its curved terracotta roof tiles (an architectural feature in this part of Touraine), it is the first thing visitors see when they arrive. The number of pigeonholes (288), each of which can accommodate a pair of pigeons, was a status symbol for the owner of the property, since the number of pigeons bred was directly linked to the surface area of one's land.



CAVE WORLD

THE HOME HOUSE

Outside the wine cellars, the “winegrower’s house” includes authentic features-- an oven, stone kitchen garden--which were used to cook soup.

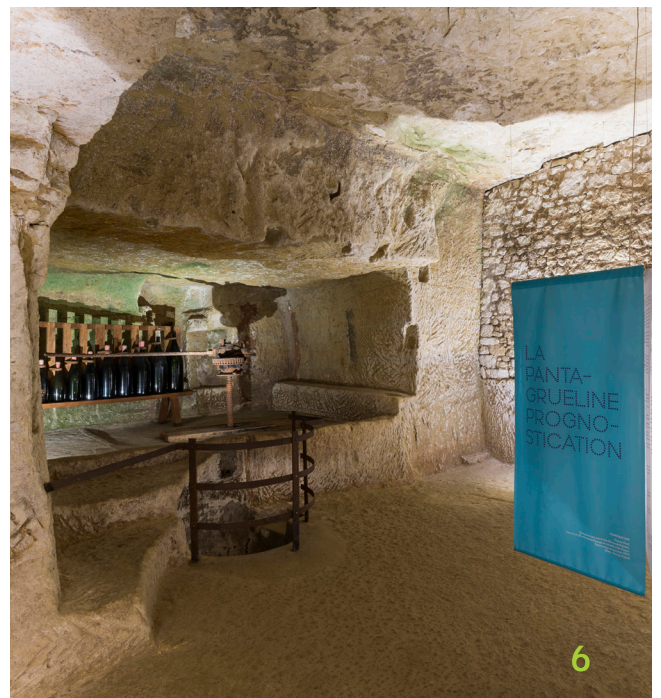


CAVE CELLARS, VINEYARDS, AND WINE

Six hundred square meters of cave cellars and galleries have been rehabilitated and opened to the public. Outbuildings close off the courtyard, while the true belly of the farmhouse, the wine cellars, abuts the winemaker’s house. The cellars form an extraordinary space, which is perfect for today’s temporary exhibitions. For its part, the vineyard has regained its place on the estate, thanks to the acquisition of an adjoining plot of land that is now used for producing wine.

Formerly quarries used to build houses on the estate, these underground cavities have been converted into a cave farm, with troughs carved in the rock. The window, which can still be seen, between the Rabelais residence and the animal cellar shows the extent to which people and animals (sheep, goats) lived in close proximity. At the time, animals were cherished for the warmth they could provide.

These underground stables extend to the lower cellars where a bread oven and a fireplace are located. Finally, the large wine cellars preserve traces of four winepresses and “grape harvest castings”, reflecting the house’s dedication to producing wine until the late 19th century.



4,000 BOTTLES PER YEAR... CRÉMANT AND CHINON

Nearly 4,000 bottles are produced on the estate, which bears the name Clos de La Devinière. Barrel-aged cabernet (red) and chenin (white) are produced on the estate. And a rosé crémant was introduced, completing the offering, in 2014. The production became listed as an AOC chinon with the 2016 harvest. That was the year the chinon appellation area was extended to include the Clos de La Devinière and the house of Rabelais. This is a strong symbol of the unique relationship between this author and his native land!

Visitors can enjoy a panoramic view of quintessential places in the author's work from the vineyard.



THE VINEYARDS: A LINK BETWEEN THE HOUSE, THE WORK, AND THE LANDSCAPE

The vineyard appears in an old 1699 engraving surrounded by a wall, which is why "clos" has been included in the wine production name. In the novel *Gargantua*, this is where the fight between the shepherds of Grandgousier and the **fouaciers** (bakers) of Lerné have their fight. The refusal on the part of the **fouaciers** to sell **fouaces** – small loaves – would lead to the Picrocholine War.

In order to reconnect with the wine history of the house and the spirit of its illustrious author, a vineyard was planted in 2004. A true link between the house, the work, and the landscape that inspired the novel *Gargantua*, the vineyard is composed of three parcels: one dedicated to Chenin, another to Cabernet Franc, and finally a conservatory of old varieties and table grapes.

Surrounded by hedges, the vineyard forms an exquisite natural setting for this country home, providing additional outdoor experiences for visitors, including readings of the landscape from the perspective of Rabelais' adventurous giants.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF GARGANTUA

The writer places his house at the heart of the novel. The Château de Grandgousier, Gargantua's birthplace and the seat of Rabelais' dynasty of giants, is modelled after La Devinière. It is the epicenter of a fantastic epic and a central place for the Picrocholine war, which was inspired by the day's current events: the conflict between Francis I and Charles V. The book ends with the foundation of the abbey of Thélème and the words of its motto: *"Do what thou wilt!"*



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF GARGANTUA

♦ A Walk:

- Walking tour starting from the museum: allows you to discover the castles of Coudray-Montpensier, La Roche-Clermault, the village of Seuilly, and the abbey of Seuilly. A must-see: the country home in the former tithe barn.

- Hiking trails: "The World of Rabelais" (8 km) around La Devinière and "Picrocholines wars trail" (17 km/4.25 hours) covering Seuilly-Lerné, La Roche-Clermault, and Cinais.

♦ By bike:

- Cycling tour "In the footsteps of Rabelais" (No. 42), 28 km, departing from Chinon, to discover villages, the banks of the Vienne, and the Richelieu-Chinon greenway.

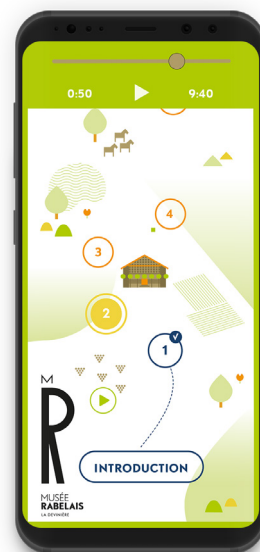
The Rabelais Museum has been awarded the "Accueil vélo" and "Loire à vélo" labels.



SOUND EXPERIENCE "A LISTENING LANDSCAPE" RABELAIS AND THE RENAISSANCE

A digital listening journey using innovative technology to introduce visitors to the spaces of Rabelais' world: from La Devinière to the Abbey of Seuilly located a few hundred meters away. Sound stations are activated as visitors move through the experience thanks to a mobile application that can be downloaded **free of charge**.

Recordings enhance the atmosphere and include readings of *Gargantua* and texts by current writers in residence at La Devinière.



Walking visitors will enjoy a sensory and literary experience as they follow the trail linking the two symbolic spaces. The trail is a true contemporary reading of the landscape, which is listed as a World Heritage cultural landscape Site by UNESCO.

DIGITAL TABLE "GEOGRAPHIES"

Installed in the Rabelais residence, this multimedia exhibit offers an interactive and interesting reading of the *Geographies* of Rabelais' and of Gargantua's worlds. A pair of entrance doors immerse visitors into the heart of the Picrocholine wars, beckoning them to follow the path of Rabelais, a great Renaissance traveller.



2024 CALENDAR

MAY TO DECEMBER EXHIBITION

GARGANTUA, QUE GRAND TU AS! NEW

The giant is a common figure in the collective imagination, and Rabelais is now part of the legend.

This exhibition explores it in root and branch, from the origins of the myth (mythological, biblical) to current popular culture.

Objects from films and TV shows will be featured on the tour, which takes visitors back to the origins of the giants and introduces them to the real Gargantua!

SEPTEMBER

♦ EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS

NOVEMBER

♦ FESTIVAL OF ELEMENTARY FOOD

A free and festive event presenting an idea from the work of Rabelais, with a new modern twist every year. See you in Rabelaisie, whose borders overlap with those of the AOC Chinon, in various places, including the Rabelais Museum.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Dramatised readings, theatre walks between La Devinière and Seuilly Abbey (summer), children's activities, intimate concerts, a festival: the whole programme of events at the Rabelais Museum will be dedicated to the figure of the great giant Gargantua, an emblematic character inseparable from his author. "I'd rather write about laughing than crying, for laughter makes men human."



YOUTH

Visit with your family!

GARGANTUA AND LIFE AS A GIANT!

FUN TOUR OF THE MUSEUM AND GARDENS

In the company of Gargantua the Giant, children are introduced to the giant's extraordinary birth, his unusual language (invented by Rabelais), funny expressions, mysterious games, plants, and more. (ages 7 and up).

Events and workshops

Afternoons for children.

French school holidays: Winter, Spring, Autumn.

Extra charge according to age and activities.

Reservations recommended.

The Rabelais Museum offers a year-round program of activities and events. View the entire program on our website, www.musee-rabelais.fr

TOUR OPTIONS

♦ Language FR/ENG  

INDIVIDUALS

SELF-GUIDED TOUR with FR/ENG brochure

The visit of the site includes all the buildings of La Devinière as well as the cellars.

The vineyards and gardens are spaces for relaxation, where visitors can take their time and enjoy reading and strolling.

(1-1.5 hours)

GUIDED TOUR - (1 hour)

Guided tours of the Rabelais Museum (in French only) are offered every day (guided tour times depend on the site's opening hours).

Included in the ticket price.

GROUPS

SELF-GUIDED TOUR with FR/ENG brochure

The visit of the site includes all the buildings of La Devinière as well as the cellars.

The vineyards and gardens are spaces for relaxation, where visitors can take their time and enjoy reading and strolling.

(1-1.5 hours)

GUIDED TOUR - (1.25 hours)

- ♦ Reservations required
- ♦ Groups of 15 people or more
- ♦ Experiences can be adjusted for smaller groups, with a supplemental fee. Please inquire for more details.

Included in the ticket price.

TASTING VISITS

Guided tour introducing visitors to the Chronicles of Gargantua, followed by a tasting of the wines of the Clos de La Devinière and the famous **fouaces** mentioned in the novel **Gargantua**. These tasty buns are what sparked the famous Picrocholine war between Grandgousier and Picrochole.

Price: museum entrance fee + 2.50 euros

Time: 1 h guided tour + 30 min. tasting

Reservations required

SWEET AND SAVOURY READINGS

Savoury readings of Rabelais: spicy, cheeky, unseemly, surprising, followed by a tasting of a small sweet dessert to cleanse the palate. A delicacy: the P'tit Gousier was created in honour of the Rabelais Museum. Its recipe is inspired by the fruits that can be found in the gardens of La Devinière.

Price: museum entrance fee + 2.50 euros

Time: 1.25 hours reading tour + dessert.

Reservations required

RABELAIS UNFILTERED NEW

A tour that reveals aspects of Rabelais and his work that usually go unsaid or unread. A few well-chosen and often licentious bravura pieces.

Open to adults only, booking required, for groups of 10 or more.

Price: museum entrance fee + 2.50 euros

Time: 1 h 15

Booking required

A GARGANTUAN DAY: FROM RABELAIS TO CHINON

Seuilly: guided tour of the Rabelais Museum, followed by a wine tasting of the Clos de La Devinière and the famous **fouaces**.

Chinon: quick and delicious meal options inside the Fortress.

- from 1 April to 15 September - followed by a guided tour of the Royal Fortress of Chinon or an experience with the HistoPad.

Fee: 14 euros per person

Lunch not included

*Reservation +33 (0)2 47 95 91 18 or
museerabelais@departement-touraine.fr*

EXPERIENCES FOR SCHOOL GROUPS

Kindergarten to high school.

Geared towards primary through secondary school students, the Rabelais Museum's educational activities are an invitation to discover the author and the places of his childhood, as well as to imagine and create texts or other art projects.

See our "Discovery Brochure", for information about educational and cultural experiences designed with educators. More information at www.musee-rabelais.fr to plan activities on Rabelais and his work.

USEFUL INFORMATION

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Open all year round, every day (except Tuesdays from 1 November to 31 March, 1 January, and 25 December)

- ♦ **2 January-31 March:** 10 am-12.30 pm / 2 pm-5 pm
- ♦ **1 April - 30 June:** 10 am-1 pm / 2 pm-6 pm
- ♦ **1 July - 31 August:** 10 am to 7 pm, open all day
- ♦ **1 September - 30 October:** 10 am-1 pm / 2 pm-6 pm
- ♦ **1 November - 31 December:** 10 am-12.30 pm / 2 pm-5 pm

PRICES

- ♦ Full price: 6 euros
- ♦ Professional rate: 4 euros
- ♦ Discounted price: 5 euros (youth ages 7 to 18, groups from 15 people, clubs, corporate programmes, organisations)
- ♦ Free for children under age 7
- Thematic tour:: 2.5 euros in addition to the entrance fee
- ♦ School groups: from 1.50 per student
- ♦ Privilege Pass: 16 euros (unlimited access to the museum for 1 year)
- See programming for other events (+ supplemental fee)

SERVICES

Free parking  
 Gift shop
 Nearby restaurants in Cinqis, Chinon (10 min)

GETTING HERE AND PARKING

- ♦ 2.5 hours from Paris (A10) / 2.5 hours from Nantes (A85)
- ♦ 35 minutes from Tours/Saumur
- ♦ 15 minutes from Azay-le-Rideau/Abbaye de Fontevraud

PREPARE YOUR STAY:

www.azay-chinon-valde Loire.com
www.touraineloirevalley.com

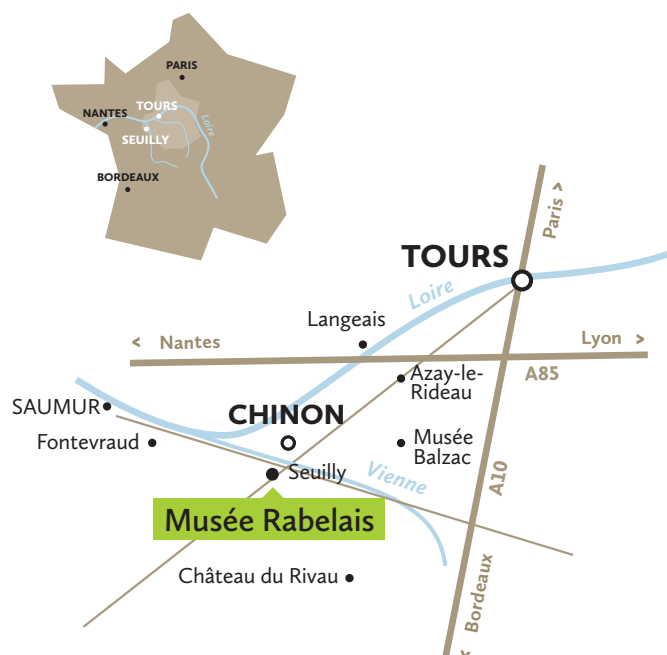


E-TICKETING FOR PROFESSIONALS

Please visit our special platform for purchasing e-tickets for groups at our professional rates.
 Log in to
www.musee-rabelais.fr
 Payment by credit card or bank transfer.

**For more information on programming,
visit the website www.musee-rabelais.fr**

ACCESS



10 minutes from Chinon, 15 minutes from Fontevraud Abbey, 30 minutes from Saumur, and 40 minutes from Tours.

Nearby attractions: Chinon Fortress, Château du Rivau, Fontevraud Abbey, Château d'Azay-le-Rideau, Balzac Museum/Château de Saché, Château de Langeais, tourist cellars, Domaine de Candé, and Ronsard's Home, the Priory of Saint Cosmas.

SALES CONTACT

Muriel Varin
mvarin@departement-touraine.fr
02 47 31 48 59

BOOKINGS

Rabelais Museum: La Devinière
37500 SEUILLY
TEL: +33 (0)2 47 95 91 18
museerabelais@departement-touraine.fr



M
R
MUSÉE
RABELAIS
LA DEVINIÈRE

www.musee-rabelais.fr



Alcohol abuse is dangerous for your health.

Photos: Stevens Fermon - Christophe Rambault - J.C. Coutant - Printer: Printed by C037 - No. 270