

# Château de Gilly



Guided visit

## A turbulent history

### VIth century

A Benedictine abbey is built at Gilly. During the VIth century the immense territory of Gilly, crossed by the **Roman road** which linked Chalon-sur-Saône to Langres, belonged to Eleuther a **rich Gallo-Romaine from Autun, whose son was none other than Germain** (the future **Saint Germain**), bishop of Paris. As such, nothing extraordinary when on the death of the latter the land which he had inherited was given to the Benedictine monastery, which thus became the **powerful Saint Germain Abbey and which founded a priory in Gilly**. Germain has remained ever since the **patron Saint of the village** and his name was given to the **church**.

### XIIth century

In the XIIth century, Gilly priory passed into the hands of the Cistercians. Not far from Gilly, the **abbey of Cîteaux\***, founded in 1098 by Robert de Molesmes **expanded little by little to such an extent that the monks of Gilly found themselves encircled** (agricultural land, forests and vineyards) and **quarelling became constant** between the two communities. The estrangement of the mother abbey of St Germain des Prés and this precarious situation **obliged the Benedictines to sell their priory to the monks of Cîteaux**.

\* See page 14

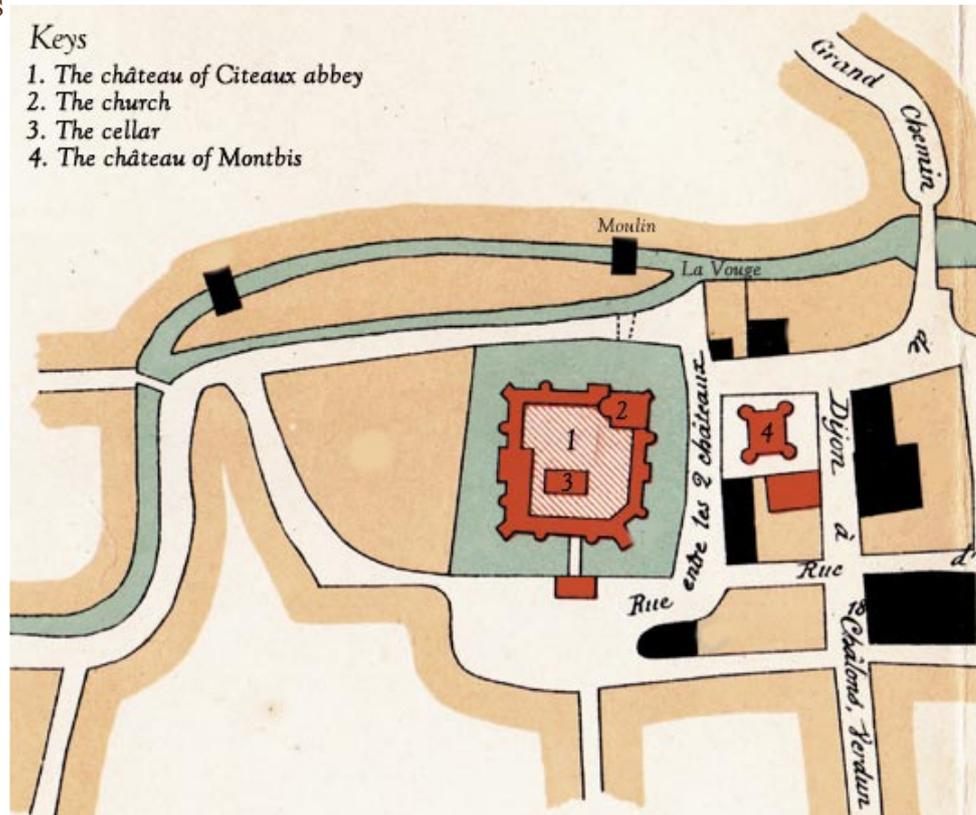
### XIVth century

The priory becomes a fortress

During the «hundred years war», **the ecclesiastics of Cîteaux decided upon the fortification of Gilly priory** in order to secure a refuge and to protect their chattels if the need be.

The Cîteaux abbot, **Jean de Bussières** undertook these **fortifications between 1367 and 1369**.

XVth century plan of the Château of Gilly

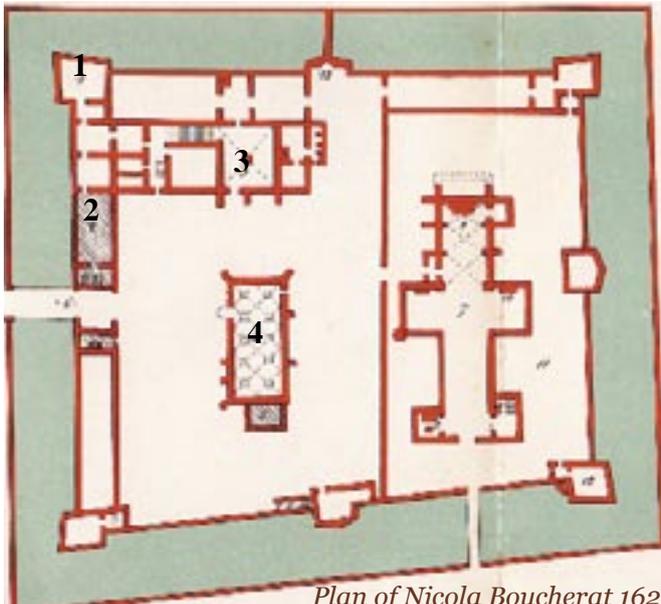


*The priory transforms into a château flanked by 6 square towers and a fortified wall at the feet of which were deep ditches filled by water from the river Vouge.*

## XIV and XVth centuries

Two fortified châteaux in Gilly  
(See n° 1 and 5 on the plan Gilly in the XVth century)

In the XIVth and XVth centuries, the village of Gilly had **two** equally important **fortified châteaux** : on the one hand the **Cistercian fortress** and on the other, just opposite, **the Montbis château which belonged to the noble Vienne family**. As relations were not the most cordial, the monks presented themselves as purchasers when **Guillaume de Vienne put his château up for sale** on the 20th January 1469 and totally **destroyed it** immediately afterwards. Thus, the Cistercian château remained the only one in Gilly.



Plan of Nicola Boucherat 1623

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Pavillion and appartments of the General Abbot of Cîteaux | 7. Parish church                         |
| 2. Great hall  | 8. Master altar                          |
| 3. Kitchen   | 9. Kitchen                               |
| 4. Cellar  | 10. Font                                 |
| 5. Small cellar, today destroyed                             | 11. Cemetary                             |
| 6. Draw bridge and square tower                              | 12. Confinement rooms                    |
|  | 13. Covered bridge leading to the garden |

## XVIth century

The fortress falls during the wars

In the XVIth century, the château was devastated, sacked, plundered and burnt. It was **finally demolished in 1591 on the orders of the Duke of Nemours** (only the kitchen survived as well as the cellar in the courtyard) then **razed** to the foundations in **1595**.

## XVIIth century

A peaceful abode

When peace returned, the 51st abbot of Cîteaux, **Nicolas Boucherat, decided to resuscitate on the vestiges of the fortress an agreeable retreat for the abbots\***.

He restored the moats and the draw bridge and, in place of the ramparts, built 7 square pavillions in the middle of which featured courtyards facing East, West and South. After his death on the 25th May 1625, his successor, **Pierre de Nivelles finished the work** and paid attention to enhancing the ornate interior decorations. In just a few years the **château became a spacious, delicately decorated and precious household**.

\*Abbey : from the Greek abba = father. The abbot is the monk elected by his brothers to manage the abbey.

## XVIIIth century

The château becomes a national treasure



After the French revolution, the properties of the Cistercian monks (Cîteaux abbey, Clos Vougeot, Gilly château) were declared as **national treasures on the 14th May 1790**. « The frontage of Gilly surrounded by deep ditches with retaining walls, having a draw bridge and other bridges, outhouses, stables, dovecoats, cellar, shop courtyard and other outbuildings, excepting the cemetery and the parish church of the aforementioned Gilly». The 17th January 1791 the members of the local administration adjudicate to the citizen Foucard, wood salesman in Paris, the Château of Gilly, the lands of Clos Vougeot and the farm of Bretigny.

## 1978

The home of the Burgundy theatre

During the 70's an acting company led by Michel Humbert proposed a programme of cultural decentralisation which fired the enthusiasm of regional and national representatives and finally the **ancient abbot's residence became the property of the Côte d'Or in 1974**.

A 220 seater hall (the actual salle des Tapisseries) was created in the building which houses the cellar and the granary. **The château theater was inaugurated on the 12th January 1978**. However little by little without success the presentations became less numerous and **the final performance took place with Beaumarchais on the 29th July 1985 with the Barber of Seville**.

## XIX and XXth centuries

The château is passed from hand to hand

The proprietors follow one after another: M's Ravel and Tourton, Paris bankers, Gabriel Ouvrard, the Rochefoucaulds, the Grangiers...

**Successive farmers exploit the 100 hectares attached to the château's farm. The monks communal dwellings are used as stables, cows, cart horses, pigs and chickens take up occupancy.**

«The anonymous works of art above the doorways sculpted by the Cistercian brothers, the admirable frescoes and mural paintings disappeared beneath coats of modern paint or were effaced by time» we can read in the History of Chalmandrier written in 1894.



## 1987

A château-hôtel\*\*\*\*

After the theatre, a hotel. The county of the Côte d'Or sold the building, ideally situated to become a **hotel** to **René Traversac** founder of the group «**Grandes Etapes Françaises**» on the 22nd December 1987. He undertook gargantuan restorations and transformations. **The \*\*\*\* hotel opened its doors in 1988.**



Château de Gilly

# A guided visit



- ① The ancient common
- ② The reception
- ③ The father abbots dwelling
- ④ The confinement rooms
- ⑤ The Vouge river
- ⑥ The trout basin
- ⑦ The father abbots pavillion
- ⑧ The French garden
- ⑨ The reed basin
- ⑩ The draw bridge
- ⑪ The cellar building

## One facade, three periods



### ① The ancient common buildings

**This part housed the common buildings or outbuildings of the Cistercian abbots.**

Since, **improvements** have been made to transform them into **comfortable hotel bedrooms** : the creation of a corridor, an extra floor, new window openings, skylights in the roof, running water and sanitary installations...

The large rooms in the tower, near to the Vouge have conserved their **beautiful chimneys**.

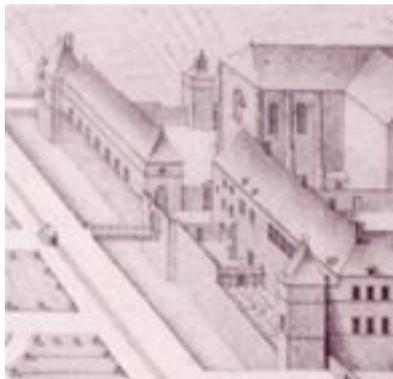


*The common rooms in yesteryear...*



*... and today.*

## ② The central reception



1719

**This central part did not exist during the period when the abbots were present.**

In its place was a wall housing a large door which also served to protect the small interior garden which is today the fountain terrace.



1988



*Until 1987 the common rooms were distinctly separate from the apartments*

**The construction, which today houses the reception** and which enables communication from one end of the château to the other, was built in the XXth century, on plans drawn up by Albert Archambault and **approved by the Historic Building administration** (the château was classed as a historic building in 1978).

## ③ The father abbots house



In the XVIIth century, the father abbots\* of Cîteaux installed their apartments in this part, embellished with a **beautiful staircase** which crossed the moat (the artistic wrought iron work, devoid of welding, was added in the XVIIIth century). Primitive austerity was slowly and discretely attenuated and if we are to believe the following description, the residence became luxurious : «The interior houses large rooms and bedrooms richly decorated and luminous thanks to their large windows. **This château according to me could be described as fit for a king.**» Description of de Mëglinger, Swiss delegate to Cîteaux in 1667. \*see definition p.2

## ④ The confinement rooms



The pavillion on the South-West angle away from the father abbots dwelling was the **courtroom of the Gilly tribunal**.

Above was to be found the «**lock-up**», that's to say, the prison.

## In the park

### ⑤ La Vouge



*The Vouge crosses the park of Château de Gilly*

**From the Celtic Voug, Wog, Vog** : a source, river coming out of a hill or rock.

The Vouge which crosses the château's park and **appears in the light of day** at an altitude of approximately 250 metres in the «**Clos des Amoureuses**» in Vougeot.

It traverses the village of Vougeot, followed by Gilly-les-Cîteaux, crosses the park, hugging the Cîteaux abbey further on.

The river **stretches for 33 km** in the Côte d'Or county before joining the Saône (right bank) which joins the Rhône in Lyon.

### ⑥ The trout basin

**As water was essential for religious communities**, the monks were obliged to **master it**. They therefore installed a diversion in the river so that it partially fed this basin in which trout and other river fish were reared. **During the fasting period of Lent (which lasted several months for the monks) they relied on this source for their daily nourishment.**



### ⑦ The «desert» rebaptised Pavillion of the Father Abbot

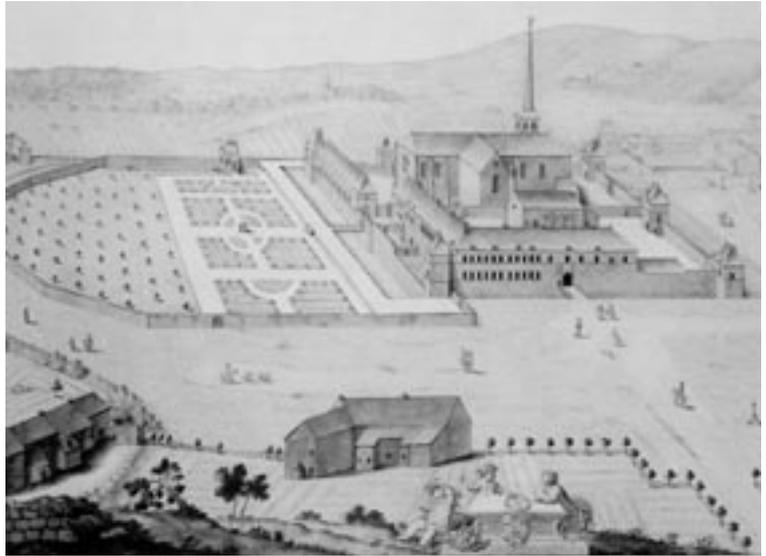


**On the 2nd November 1751**, Jean Caristie, businessman in Dijon signed a contract to construct a terrace above the basin alongside the Vouge and **constructed at its extremity a pavillion**, «with a vaulted greenhouse underneath and a pavillion above». It is said that the **father abbot retreated here for prayer and meditation**. It was thus called the «desert» or «solitary». A beautiful duplex apartment is on this site today enabling one to appreciate the peace and quiet near to the river, the view over the garden and to feel beyond the reach of the modern world.

## ⑧ The French Garden

Succeeding the **initial utility gardens** planted with aromatic herbs, medicinal plants and vegetables, an **ornamental garden** was created in the **XVIIIth century**.

A plan «birds eye view» dating from 1719 shows the geometric effect of the French garden which was used as model for the existing garden. We can see the well at the centre, replaced in 1988 by a fountain.



*Gilly «A birds eye view» - 1719 Lithograph by Sagot*

## ⑨ The reed basin



Contrasting with the harmony of the French garden, is the basin **envisaged by the abbots of Cîteaux** where humble reeds grow chaotically and which are always well irrigated by waters brought by the river.

The brotherhood decided to **honour the memory of the abbey's founders**, courageous and humble monks who cleared and cleaned the marshes. The reeds «**cistels**» from the latin *cistellum* = plant, effectively gave their name to **Cîteaux** abbey.

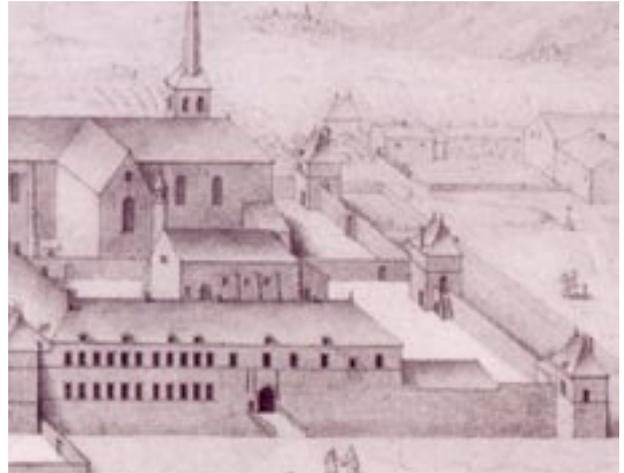


*The « cistels »*

## ⑩ The ancient draw bridge

**In the XIVth century, a draw bridge located at this spot afforded the only means of crossing the imposing moats filled with water from the Vouge to enter the fortress.**

The fortified château was defended by a palissade (hedge and fence of thorns) which protected the gate lodge. A second line of defence, a boulevard of stones and wood situated on the edge of the ditch. Behind this second line of defence the deep ditches were dug.



*The draw-bridge was the only means of access to the château*

**These ditches**, which still exist today, were incessantly **filled with running water from the Vouge. They were crossed by a draw bridge** which ended in a portcullis. Description according to the historian J.E. Chalmandier  
The draw bridge was destroyed in 1868.

## ⑪ The cellar building

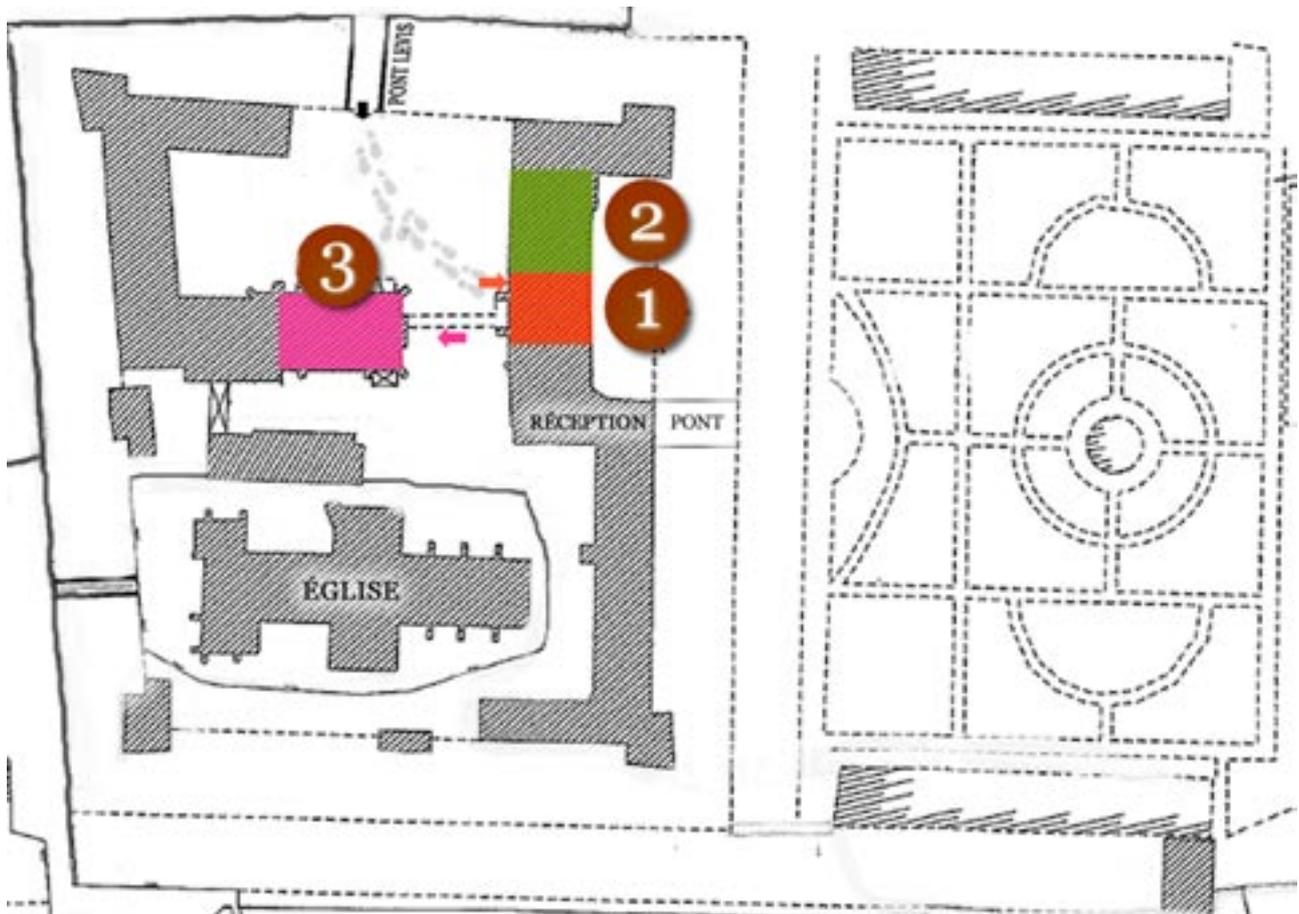


*One enters the granary by the door on the left and the cellar by the vaulted door*

The building reinforced by high retaining buttresses randomly placed and covered by an imposing and beautiful roof framework.

**The construction of the lower part**, the ancient monks cellar, was sometimes dated from the XIIIth century but it was also attributed to the Abbot Jean Vion in the XVth century. **The upper part** of the building, the ancient granary with leaded windows was built after the lower part. The windows of the cellar were very narrow. They were enlarged in 1988.

## Interior guided visit



- ① **The medieval kitchen on the ground floor**
- ② **The Saint Pierre de Nivelles room on the 2nd**
- ③ **The Clos Prieur, take the underground corridor from the medieval kitchen**

The interior decoration has been dated thanks to the Coat of Arms which Pierre de Nivelles had placed on the ceilings and walls during his governance of Cîteaux Abbey from 1625 to 1635.

## ① The medieval kitchen

**Built in the XIVth century** during the reconstruction of the abbey by Jean de Bussières and **completed in the XVth century by Pierre de Nivelles**, this was the only room which miraculously escaped destruction in the period between 1591 and 1595.



We can still admire the four vaulted traverses which are supported by a central octagonal base, and the two gigantic chimneys which leave one to imagine the numerous important persons who ate at the château : the father abbot and his guests, the convert brothers\*, the cellarman, the industrial labourers...



The ornamental decorations on each archway are all different and do not appear to be of any particular significance.

*\*The convert brothers differed from the pronounced brothers in that their vows were simple and non solemn. It was they who the Cistercians could choose with the permission of the diocesan bishop. They were chosen from labourers and craftsmen. However they wore religious attire and ate at a communal table in the refectory.*



*The personal coat of arms of Pierre de Nivelles : «Azure meeting a golden hind above which a cross or a five fingered star». On the ground, on the varnished terra cotta tiles, we use the stars to avoid slipping at the foot the holly cross of Christ.*

## ② The Pierre de Nivelles room

**This superb room**, where breakfast is served today, is where **the ornaments of Pierre de Nivelles, Cîteaux's abbot from 1625 to 1635 have best survived**. It is in the great sitting room that the two interior allèges\* and the two painted doorway heads are still visible.

\*Allège : *The small supporting wall beneath a window*



The small adjoining room is a **former office**. It has retained its very **interesting paint decoration** : two allegories dominated by a picturesque landscape, panels which form a false boarding.



*A frieze with the number «LA» which doubtless refers to Louis XIII and Anne of Austria...*



*Here, Jean Petit (abbot of the abbey from 1670 to 1692) mixed his coat of arms on the right with those of Cîteaux on the left. They appear beneath the large brimmed hat and the looped cord (the number of loops indicated the importance of the abbot) reserved for ecclesiastics. The mitre, the two outward turned crosses, which indicate pastoral authority, were often used by abbots as ornamentation on the exterior of their coats of arms.*



*The superb painted beams were restored in 1988 by Joël Oliveres, Véronique Legoux and Elisabeth Evangelisti under the guidance of an architect from the Historic Monuments.*

### ③ The dining room «le Clos Prieur» the former monk's cellar

The word «priory» is a reminder of the **origin of this Cistercian cellar, most probably constructed during the XIIIth century**, unless the historians Chalmandier and Rodier are correct in attributing the origins to Jean Vion, 40th abbot of Cîteaux between 1440 and 1458.

This ancient monk's cellar originally housed **wines from Clos Vougeot, from Morey, Chambolle and Flagey**. This vast room is divided into three naves on two rows of simply dovetailed cylindrical crossed vaulted supports. A few are crowned with large water leaves.

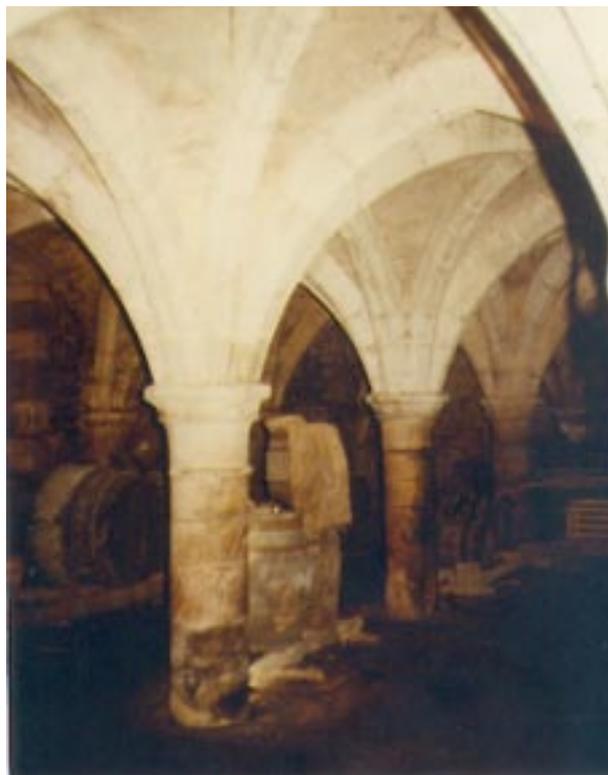
Throughout the centuries, the wines were received here by the convert monks and cellermen. **The presses of Clos Vougeot and the huge wine butts\* of Gilly provoke admiration.**

The «Clos Prieur» is also a **prestigious 1st growth appellation** of Gevrey-Chambertin.

*\*The great vat*



*«It is without doubt the most beautiful Gothic cellar in the whole of Burgundy and is perhaps the most beautiful edifice in the whole province.» Pierre Léon Gauthier*



*When the hotel group took possession of the Château de Gilly in 1987, a layer of 80cm of earth, leaves and branches was discovered covering the floor and this served as a bar for the Gilly Theatre. This rubbish had to be excavated in order to reveal the pillars.*

## Bonum Vinum : the monks cultivate the vine

For these ascetics, **wine is above all indispensable for mass** and the communion of the faithful. The monks planted therefore vines to respond to their need for wine for mass, then, little by little for commerce.

**The monks were particularly competent in vine growing, planting vines** wherever they went.

### In Burgundy

In the Côtes de Nuits and Beaune, the Cistercians took the Burgundy vineyard to the top of the tree. The monks observed that for each parcel of land, **the soil, the exposition, the situation, gave different characteristics** to each wine. They picked the grapes and vinified different parcels of lands individually and they gave them the name of «**climats**».



## Dom Goblez last cellarman

### The wine of Clos Vougeot

The château of Clos Vougeot, built by the Cistercians on a vineyard of 51 hectares did not have a cellar. The wines stocked initially then transferred for storage to the cellar of Gilly for ageing in optimal conditions. The monks organised the transport of the barrels from Vougeot to Gilly (2km) where under the responsibility of the cellar monk, the wine was kept in the dark and away from variations of temperature.



*«This illustrious gourmet, said the Baron de Cussy, brought tears to the eyes when leaving his precious cellars which he had looked after so well and which he did not want to leave without taking with him a large sample of the sacred fire.»*



Clos Vougeot - Crédit photo :  
Alain Doire Bourgogne Tourisme

The **wines of Clos Vougeot** were put up for sale after the French revolution, when Gilly became a national asset.

**Dom Goblez, last cellarman of Gilly and Vougeot,** accepted to guide vineyard experts charged with valuation of the stocks in the two châteaux. He remained in Gilly until the end of July 1791, then retired to Dijon where he died in 1813.

# To know more about Cîteaux abbey

## Founding of Cîteaux abbey : a new monastery

In the XIIth century, the Benedictine monk **Robert de Molesmes**, disappointed to note that the **rule of saint Benoît\*** was no longer being respected in its original pure state, decided to **found a new community** in order to **come back to the original sources** of the monastic state : prayer, solitude, pauperism, austerity and manual labour. With the authorisation of the archbishop of Lyon, he and his companions **cleared with ardour** the unwelcoming lands, covered with forests and deep impenetrable marshlands which the Count of Beaune and the Duke of Burgundy had conceded to him.



*The abbey got its name from the cistels, the marsh reeds which welcomed the Cistercians.*

They constructed **fragile cabins** and **retired there in 1098**. These poor huts in the marshes were the **forerunners of the powerful Cîteaux Abbey**.

In 1109 the faithful Etienne Harding became abbot and deemed that the monastery be transferred 2km to the confluence of the Coindon and the Vouge because : «the monastery should as much as possible dispose of all vital resources : **water, a mill, a garden, workshops**» saint Benoît.



**Since 1898** Cîteaux abbey is occupied by Cistercians - **Trappist monks of the Order of Strict Observance** - which perpetuates this tradition.



*Representation of saint Benoît*

**\*The rule of saint Benoît** (about 480 or 490 - 547).

Coming from a noble family in Nursia in Italy, Benoît established the idea of monks living in a community ruled by an abbot, a rule of life in which the **stone** and **work** held the preponderant place : «*Lazyness is the enemy of the soul*» The rule recommended the respect of 4 essentials : moderation, seriousness, austerity, softness. The celebration of 8 liturgical offices set the rhythm of the monastic day.

The **Benedictine** order includes «all the monastic communities which respect the rule of saint Benoît».

The reformation of Cluny and of Cîteaux during the Xth and XIth centuries contributed to maintaining the Benedictine ideal.



*Abbaye de Cîteaux - 1722*

*In the XVIIth century, Cîteaux is presented as a small town huddled inside a vast town wall. This was largely demolished in 1791.*

### **Spectacular growth**

In the spring of 1112, a young 22 years-old man full of ardour, **Bernard de Fontaine**, asked to enter Cîteaux along with 30 other recruits from the best families in Burgundy. **Right from his arrival, the colony underwent prodigious progress** thanks to his amazing drive and action. The charismatic personality of Bernard, **the uncontested spiritual leader of Cîteaux**, was stamped on the history of the order. The order of Cîteaux **spread throughout Europe** where it consisted of 762 monasteries built thanks to **donations** from princes or rich merchants, latterly kings.

**Bernard was elected abbot of the new abbey in Clairvaux** (clear valley) and remained there until his death in 1153.

### **The white monks**

The nickname of «white monks» given to the **Cistercians** comes from the cloak and tunic made from **untreated and uncoloured wool** (converted monks reserve the colour of brown). Until then the **Benedictine monks** were nicknamed by their opposite numbers «**the black monks**» because of the dark habits.

**In the epoque of Bernard de Clairvaux**, the habit of a Cistercian monk was limited to that of only **a tunic, a cloak, an scapulaire, a belt, stockings and shoes, the whole being simple and inexpensive. The tunic** was made up of a solid woolen shirt which covered the body from the shoulders to the ankles with long sleeves and a high collar. The clauk is traditional, **the scalupaire** a long black apron.

### **Sources :**

To complete this document we have referred to several sources :

«Histoire du village de Gilly-Les-Vougeot» J.E. Chalmandrier

«Entre Vougeot et Cîteaux, Gilly, un village de Bourgogne» Jean Clerc

«Le décor peint du château de Gilly» Martine Plouvier

«Nos belles églises méconnues» Albert Colombet, extraits de la Revue de Bourgogne (n° 50, 51, 52) aimablement transmis par le Père Frot



*«White monks»*

*Aquarelle de Micheline Reboulleau*

# The village of Gilly-les-Cîteaux

## Gilly...

The name Gilly, occasionally latinised (Gilliacus, Villa-Gillensis) comes from the celtic : **Guil**, **Gwil**, **Gil** which signifies horse, pasture, plain and **Ly**, water, river. Gil-ly, Gilly thus designated a land, fertile with lush grass where herds could graze beside the river.



## Saint Germain church

The large church of Saint Germain belonged also to the neighbouring villages of Vougeot and Saint Bernard. It is named after Bernard, bishop of Paris in the VIth century (see p.1), the patron saint of the village.

In the middle ages, the Cistercians were authorised to include the parish church within their fortifications, which created numerous conflicts between the church and the villagers. It is said that in 1500 the villagers took the abbot Jean Cirey to court and that he was condemned to remove the obstacles that stopped villagers having free access to their church.

Following fires and destruction due to wars, the church was changed several times but nonetheless remains typically Cistercian : flat chevet\* and important transept\*.



\*Chevet : the extremity of the nave (the nave which links the choir to the main door)

\*Transept : transversal gallery of a church which forms the arms of the cross

We invite you to stroll through the village of Gilly to discover its houses and remarkable sites and to meet the «Gillotins».

### The wash house on the Vouge

One can almost still hear the sounds of the scrubbing boards and the laughter of the washer women.



### The «Chevalier» bridge

Constructed on the Vouge in 1679 and restored in 1770 by the state of Burgundy, it linked Gilly-les-Cîteaux to Flagey-Echezeaux.

### The pavillion with the tower

Originally destined to house the officers of the château, then the postmasters, it was built by the Cistercians at the end of the XVIth century after the destruction of the Château of Montbis (the communal parts of the château partially remain today). The gracious spiral tower is decorated with 3 low reliefs which represent galloping horsemen.



### The house of Saulx

The house of Saulx still partially exists, but its grange with its fine façade and monumental roof architecture is one of the prides of the village.

***For an amusing discovery of the village, there is a trail quiz available at the reception. Do not hesitate to ask for it!***



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