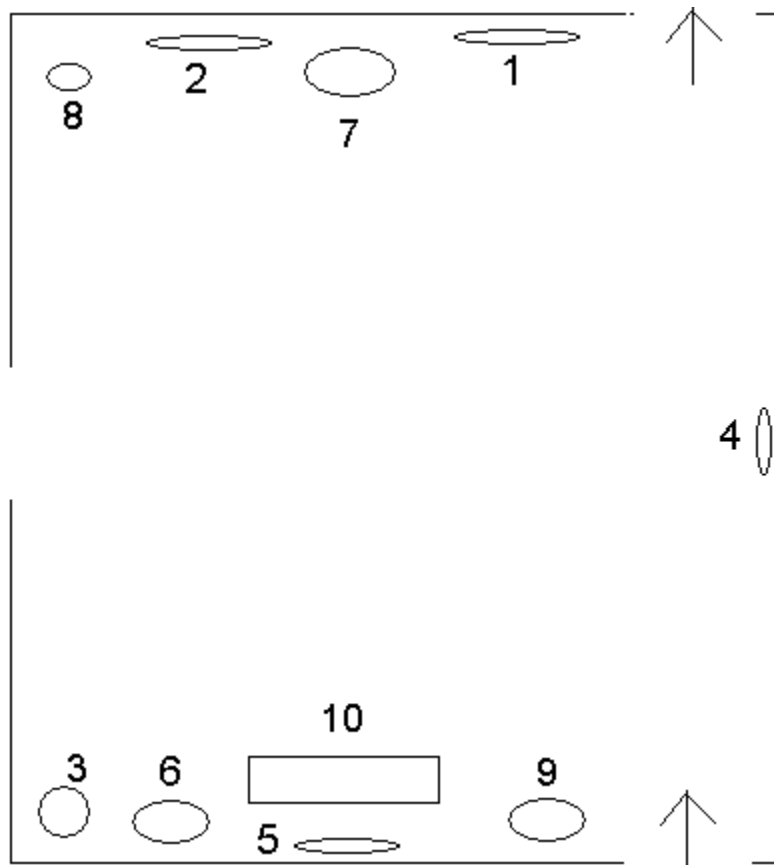


DUKE's SITTING ROOM (06 E)



The absence of a fireplace, the walls adorned with flowers, and the brightness of this room give us an indication of its function. In winter one does not stay in a room that cannot be heated. This 18th century summer dining room became in the 19th century a billiard room in all senses of the word. Indeed, during the Great War, the Germans requisitioned the castle to turn it into a military hospital, and set up here an operating room, where soldiers “passaient sur le billard”, which means to undergo an operation (literally, to be laid out on the billiard table) !

Take a look at the stuccowork of the ceiling, the oldest in Freÿr, in the Louis XIV style. It dates from the early 18th century. Don't miss the view out on the parterre gardens. The windowsills overlooking the garden were lowered to enjoy the view all the more. The gardens are oriented towards the North, so one can look at them, even at noon, without being dazzled.

The 18th century canvas paintings with garlands of flowers tied up with pink ribbons and vases overflowing with flowers are typical of the Louis XVI style. They accentuate the summer-like character of this room.

The portraits form a chain of the 8 last generations who lived here from 1755 to the present day:

- (1) The first generation is represented by two teenagers: on the right, Charles, the last Marquis of Beaufort-Spontin (1750-1766), and
- (2) on the left: Frederic, his younger brother, the first Duke of Beaufort-Spontin (1751-1817). As orphans, they were brought up by their uncles William and Philip of Beaufort, who redesigned the gardens. The author of the paintings was as good a painter as a psychologist. The look and postures of the brothers reveal their personalities. The older one, dreamy, lost in his thoughts, is holding his gun by his fingertips. His younger brother, standing solidly on both legs, is looking very self-confident, swelling out his chest while cleaning the barrel of his weapon.
- (3) Bust of Leopoldina of Toledo (1760-1792), daughter of the 13th Duke of Infantado, first wife of Frederic (2).
- (4) Their daughter, Francesca of Beaufort-Spontin (1785-1830), spouse of Francisco of Osuna, and mother of Mariano the dandy.
- (5) Portrait of Gilda of Beaufort-Spontin (1813-1880), daughter of Frederic (2) and his second wife, Ernestina von Starhemberg (the loose woman).
- (6) Third generation: Theodule of Laubespain (1848-1935), son of Gilda (5), and his spouse Louise of Coulonges (1855-1952).
- (7) On the semi-circular inlaid work we discover later generations: Odette Lagarde (1890-1956) with her eldest child, Mary-Ghislaine, who died at the age of 3 (1917), her second daughter Gilda of Laubespain buried in the chapel (1987); and the latter's daughter-in-law, Maria of Yturbe.
Observe also the country scene covering up the bottom tray of the inlaid work: a shepherdess listens to a gentleman chatting her up; on the right her herd is being watched over by a dog; and in the background you discover a wealthy residence. This scene recalls the ideal village created for Maria-Antoinette in the park of Versailles.
- (8) And the last two generations: Eleonor Desclée with her eldest child, Alban. You can add to these 8 generations the 7 to be seen on the ceiling of the Main Hall and the 6 that preceded them. It constitutes a chain of 20 generations since 1378.
- (9) Finally, a picture of Frederic, the current Duke of Beaufort-Spontin, doctor of nuclear medicine and professor at the University of Graz. The relationship between some of these people is detailed in the two frames on the table.
- (10) The sofa and chairs that decorate this room are a good example of the Directory style (late 18th century).