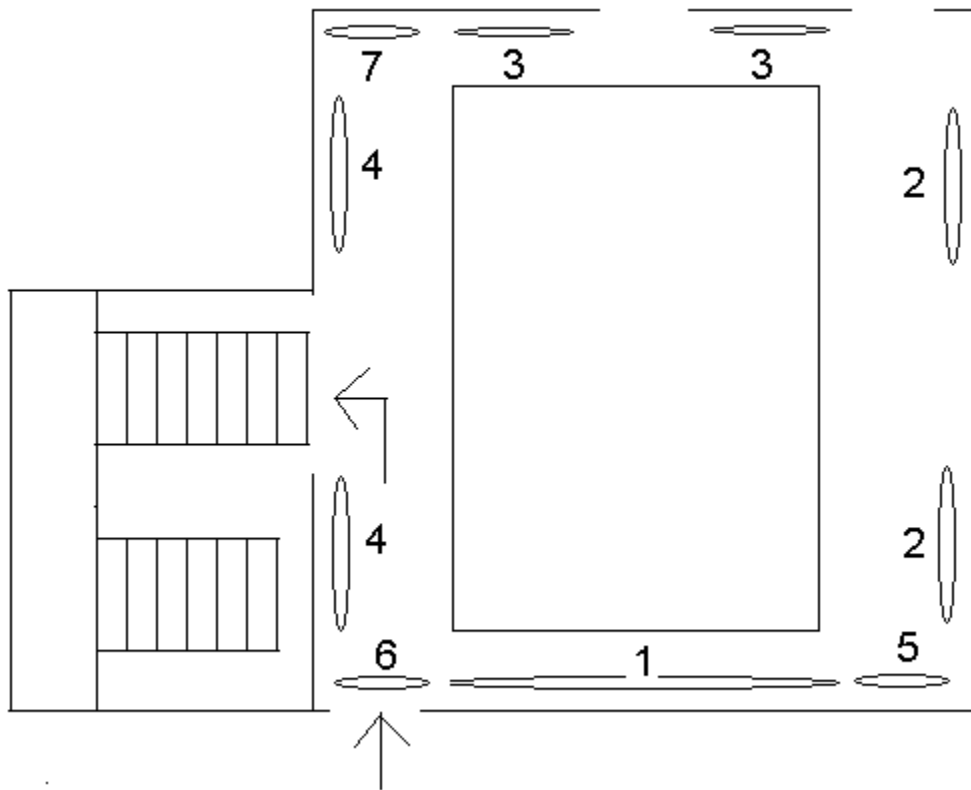


MAIN HALL : First Floor (18 E).



The hall was added during the Rococo period (18th century). It is the only room in the house that is ostentatious. The Beaufort-Spontins were already Marquises, on the way to becoming Dukes. By adding the hall they sought to impress their visitors - both by the size of the room as well as by its decor - and to base their social legitimacy by flaunting their castles, their coats of arms and those of their ancestors.

Two very different styles coexist in this hall:

The Franco-Italian Rococo style, in vogue at the time of the work, evokes lightness. The staircase out of centre is hidden on the side, so as not to clutter the hall. Removing the ceiling between the ground and first floors has created a large volume. The wrought iron railing and the ceiling frescos are also in Rococo style.

The second style, Flemish Baroque, is present in the hunting scenes covering the walls. These paintings (17th century) are mostly the work of Franz Snyders (Antwerp 1579-1657), a contemporary and friend of Peter Paul Rubens. Covering up the walls of hunting scenes was a way for the Beauforts to show both their fortune and their culture, because the purchase of such works required pots of money and good taste!

Upon their installation at Freÿr (17th century) some paintings had to be shortened because of the small size of the rooms at that time. During their removal to the hall, they were enlarged in a

hurry because they were too small for their new destination. Other paintings were grossly altered to conceal certain elements that recent restoration enabled us to rediscover.

- (1) Look at the bear hunt: Before the restoration a forest occupied the background of the composition. In wiping it out, a hazy landscape, a river, rocks and a castle in the fog were rediscovered: Freyr as it was in 1637, a quadrilateral.
- (2) Children will have fun identifying the various animals. Some of them have vanished from our area such as the wolf, the bear and the wild ox. Meanwhile others, such as the lions, were never hunted in our forests.
- (3) Other paintings feature exotic birds.
- (4) The paintings on both sides of the stairs are copies of the original, which were covered in the 18th century with local birds. They are now located in the Chapel Hall (*Artemis and Actaeon*).
- (5) One can see Freyr around 1740 in a reproduction of a painting by Remacle Le Loup (1694-1746) for *the Delights of the Liège Area*.
In 1740 the castle, with its enclosed courtyard and Renaissance gardens, was completely outdated. But a wind of renewal began to blow: on the far right of the painting, 24 orange trees recently purchased from Francis of Lorraine (1736) are properly set before the new orangeries. A few years later (1755) extensive work to transform the house and the gardens began.
- (6) The former castle of Beuraing, also a Beaufort house. One can recognize feudal walls (3 meters thick) above which a Renaissance brick floor has been added. It was burned down during the French Revolution. Then it passed through marriage to the Osuna family and was restored by Mariano (the dandy) in a style that would have pleased Walt Disney. The castle burned down again in 1889. Today only the three towers remain (one of which is threatening to collapse).
- (7) Farm-Castle of Wasseiges, another Beaufort house, was sold during the Napoleonic era to buy property in Austria in order to protect Frederic of Beaufort at least partially from possible seizure of his goods located in Belgium by Fouché.

The lack of smoke above the chimneys of these three houses indicate that Remacle Le Loup was not received as well as he had hoped.