

Exploring Cordes

Cordes is made up of four concentric enclosures, the first two dating from the bastide built in 1222, the others later. The suburb of La Boutellerie on the eastern side remained outside the protected perimeter. On foot, from Place de la Boutellerie take the no-entry to cars road, past the chapel of the old Hôpital St-Jacques, to the junction with the Escalier du Pater-Noster on your left—with as many steps as there are words in the Latin version of the Lord's Prayer. On the right is the Porte de l'Horloge, with a clock and a round tower. This was the eastern entrance to the fourth *enceinte*, built in the 16th century to enclose the four *faubourgs* that had surrounded the medieval fort since the 14th century. The route gets steeper here on.

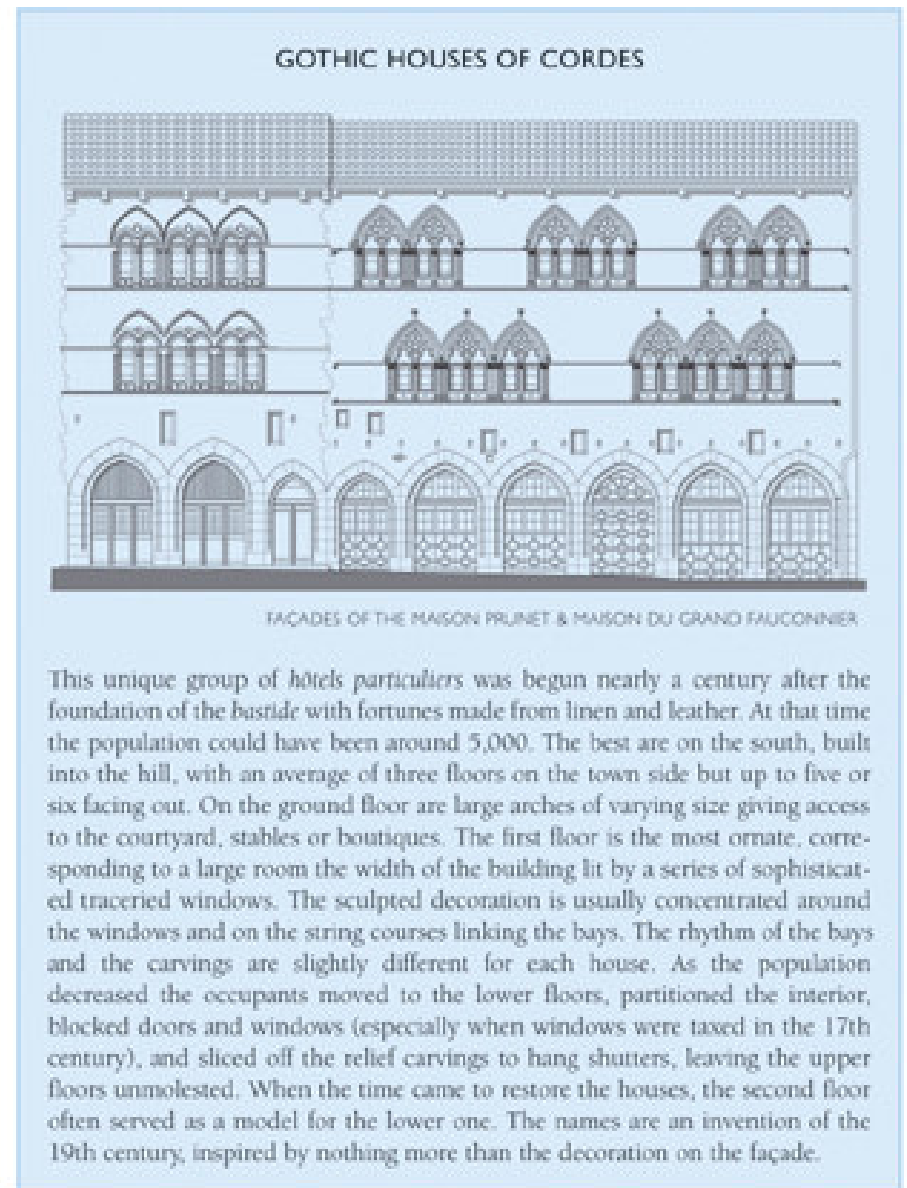
There was never a feudal castle at Cordes, but around the next bend the mighty bar-bican looms up on a cliff-like base which was part of the third enclosure, built at a time of great prosperity and population explosion at the end of the 13th century or early in the 14th century, when the first enclosures were outgrown. The road bends to arrive at Porte du Vainqueur (or Planol, 1222–29; pictured below), parallel with the wall, with a semi-circular tower engulfed by the buildings around it. Opposite is the late 13th-century Maison Gorse, with early Renaissance windows. The street then turns left to pass through the barely altered Portail Peint (13th century), which originally had two portcullises and a wooden door, to the heart of the upper town. Immediately on the right is the entrance to the Musée Charles Portal (open July–Aug 11.30–1 & 4–7; June, Sun 3.30–6.30; Sept–April Sun 3–6; T: 05 63 56 00 52), a private museum of local archaeology and history with a remarkable and eclectic collection.

On the Grand Rue are the best of the outstanding group of Gothic houses. On the south side, the Maison Carrié-Boyer, is considered to be among the earliest built (1295–1320). On three floors, the façade aggressively altered, it remains an example of how most of the houses were left in the 19th century. Next door is Maison Prunet, of about the same date, with three arcades on the ground floor and three two-light windows with a circular oculus outlined by deep mouldings, and carvings at the apex. It houses the Musée de l'Art du Sucre (open July–Aug 9–7; Feb–June, Sept–Dec 10–12.30 & 2.30–6.30), containing sugar fantasies conjured up by local restaurateur and master pastry cook Yves Thuriès (see p. 277). The next house, Maison du Grand Fauconnier, is one of the three masterpieces, probably dating from the first half of the 14th century.



On the south side, the Maison Carrié-Boyer, is considered to be among the earliest built (1295–1320). On three floors, the façade aggressively altered, it remains an example of how most of the houses were left in the 19th century. Next door is Maison Prunet, of about the same date, with three arcades on the ground floor and three two-light windows with a circular oculus outlined by deep mouldings, and carvings at the apex. It houses the Musée de l'Art du Sucre (open July–Aug 9–7; Feb–June, Sept–Dec 10–12.30 & 2.30–6.30), containing sugar fantasies conjured up by local restaurateur and master pastry cook Yves Thuriès (see p. 277). The next house, Maison du Grand Fauconnier, is one of the three masterpieces, probably dating from the first half of the 14th century.

Two of the original birds of prey from the façade are in the Musée Charles Portal. This is one of the most carefully executed façades, with five arcades at ground level and series of traceried windows on the first and second floors, arranged in different rhythms with high-relief carvings.



TARN-ET-GARONNE

The Département du Tarn-et-Garonne was created only in 1808, rather than in 1790 like most others, with its *Préfecture* at Montauban. It encompasses the Bas Quercy, part of the Lomagne (which it shares with the Agenais and Gascony) and a slice of the Rouergue. It takes its name from the major rivers which run almost parallel just south of Montauban. The Tarn, swelled by the Aveyron, then turns west to meet the Garonne between St-Nicolas-de-la-Grave and Moissac. This was a wide and dangerous confluence in the Middle Ages but is now transformed into a tranquil boating lake.

MONTAUBAN

Montauban, a pink brick town on the banks of the Tarn, is an attractive, lively, and slightly dusty place with a number of museums and gardens and big markets. At the heart of the town is the old Place Nationale. From river level, alongside the Tarn south of the Pont-Vieux, there are steps or a lift up to the town centre and the Musée Ingres. At the head of the bridge is Bourdelle's epic *Monument to the Dead* of 1870 (1893–1902), at first considered too controversial for a public monument (see below, p. 324).

The Pont-Vieux (1304–35) and Bourdelle's *Monument*, beneath the tower of St-Jacques, and (right) the Musée Ingres, Montauban.



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867)

Born in Montauban in 1780, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres studied in Toulouse, then in Paris in 1797 at Jacques-Louis David's studio. He won the *Grand Prix de Rome* in 1801, but only got to Italy in 1806, where he remained for 18 years. Exposure to the works of the Italian masters, especially Raphael, had a profound influence on his work. During the early years in Rome he painted his first large turbaned nude, *Bather of Valpinçon* (1806–10) and established the portrait style for which he became acclaimed. *The Vow of Louis XIII* (see p. 326) was well received at the Salon of 1824 which proved a turning point. It also established him as the last of the great history painters; he went on to open an extremely well-patronised studio in Paris and by 1826 was Director of Museums of France. A consummate draughtsman, he maintained that 'drawing is the proberly of art' and Montauban regularly mounts exhibitions of his drawings. Ingres' idiomtic linear style combined with formal composition gives an impression of surface calm that belies a disturbing underlying tension. He returned frequently to the same subject or even the same painting. He barely modified his style during his successful career, adhering to a strict Neoclassicism



which has been seen as making its own distinctive contribution to the course of French Romanticism. In 1851 Ingres donated 54 paintings and antique vases to the museum, and at his death in 1867 more than 4,000 drawings, his personal collection of paintings and memorabilia. Here his pupil Armand Cambon was the first curator, and there are several quite charming works of his own on display.

Ingres: *Male Torso* (1800).



Jean Alaux: *Ingres' Studio in Rome* (1818).

Musée Ingres

Open July, Aug 9.30–6; mid-April–June, Sept–mid-Oct 10–12 & 2–6, closed Mon; mid-Oct–mid-April 10–12 & 2–6, closed Mon and Sun morning; T: 05 63 22 12 91.

The Museum is installed in the former episcopal palace, a brick building of 1664, on the site of Alphonse Jourdain's castle. In 1360 the English started to build their garrison here, and it was incorporated in the defences during the Wars of Religion; the English guardroom is the lower basement of the museum.

Etienne (St Stephen) is 844. At the time of Gregorian reform, Bishop Isarn, who was elected in 1071, stimulated moral and physical improvements including the rebuilding of the cathedral. The Romanesque church, transformed during the episcopates of a Cistercian, Foulque de Marseille (1205–31), and a Dominican, Raimond du Fauga (1232–70), is a prototype of the aisleless, rib-vaulted meridional Gothic church. When Bertrand de l'Isle-Jourdain (1270–86) was elected to the episcopate he planned to build a cathedral twice as large as the previous one to the east and north of the earlier nave. (When work began in 1272, the Rayonnant cathedral of Narbonne was under way; de l'Isle had been involved in settling a dispute in Narbonne over the site of the new cathedral, and was undoubtedly influenced by the work going on there.) After his death in 1286 the work was further slowed down when Pope John XXII reduced the size of the diocese, and it came to a halt at the end of the 14th century due to lack of funds. By this time the choir, up to the level of the triforium, and 15 chapels had been completed and were protected by a provisional wooden roof. Work did not take off again seriously for over a century, and it was not until a fire in 1609 devoured the timber roof and all the choir furnishings that the stone vault was begun in 1611 by Pierre Levesville, with money donated by Cardinal de Joyeuse. The work was not completed until the 20th century, when the north door was built.

The exterior

The earlier church seems to lean against the brick belfry but is in fact supported by two enormous brick buttresses at right angles to the façade. Between these, under a slightly pointed relieving arch, is a large rose window inserted when the façade was almost complete. The Flamboyant portal, inserted c. 1450, is decidedly off-centre because the architect, Martin Baudry, was at pains to save the baptismal chapel **A** north of the entrance. The belfry **B** is composed of a Gothic portion on Romanesque foundations, capped by the 16th-century gable belfry. From the gardens on the north you can see the large rectangular buttresses of the later Rayonnant building. Round the chevet, the south courtyard is where, until 1811, the Romanesque cloister and monastic buildings stood. The south buttresses are more elaborate than on the north. The south door entrance is midway between the two structures.

The interior

The effect of the interior is as disconcerting as the exterior because the two sections are not on the same axis and juxtapose two styles of Gothic architecture. They were separated by a wall until the beginning of the 16th century when Archbishop Jean d'Orléans attempted to begin the transept by building the massive round pillar **C** now standing incongruously between the two parts. On it is a memorial to Pierre-Paul Riquet, designer of the Canal du Midi (see p. 555).

Only three bays of the early 13th century church remain and anything that previously existed further to the east has been consumed by the great late 13th-century choir. To the west is the rather dark and cavernous section known as Raymond VI's nave **D** because of the east boss, carved with 12 pearls in the shape of the Cross of

ST-ETIENNE CATHEDRAL

