



Versailles, more than a fiction



Follow in the footsteps of the Sun King

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## Follow in the footsteps of the Sun King

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### A man of the arts

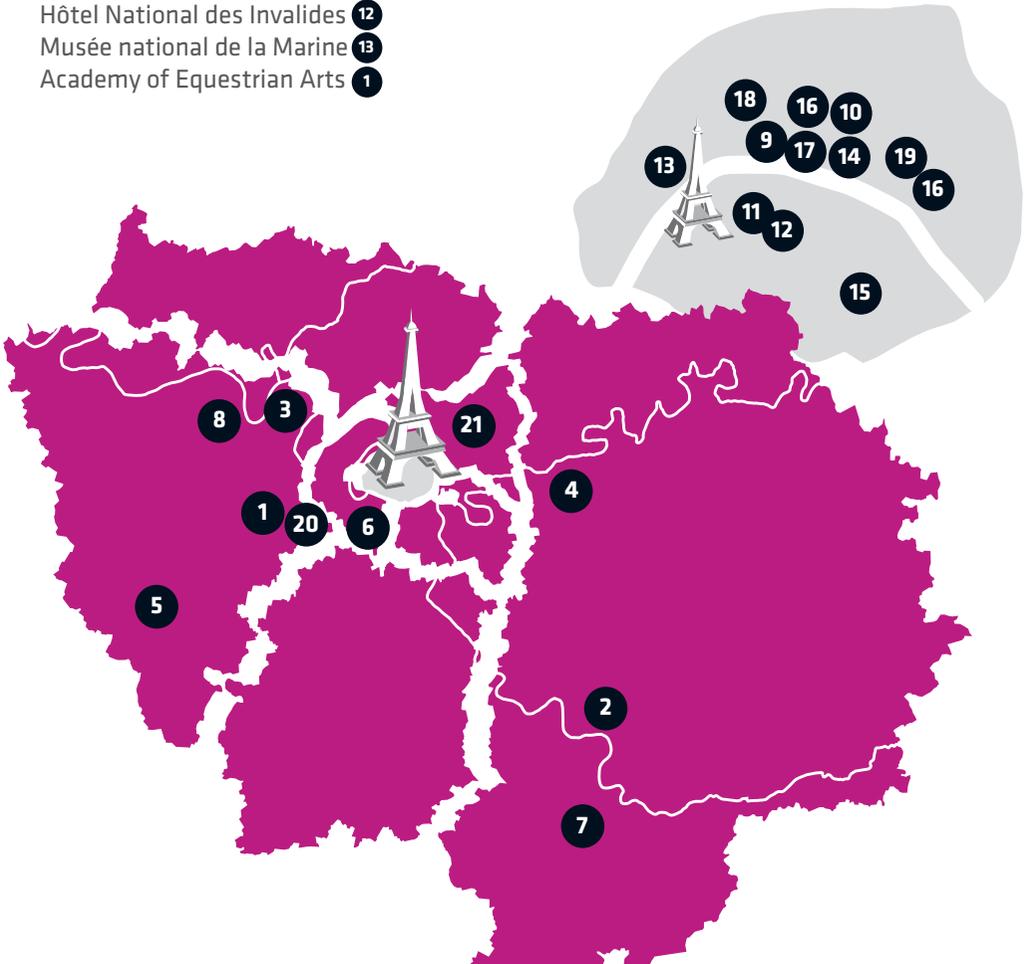
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'Versailles' was filmed entirely in the Paris region



Of the 14 sets featured in this series, six are open to the public. Of course, truth meets

fiction at the **Palace of Versailles** **1**,

but the same is also true for the

**Vaux-le-Vicomte chateau** which inspired it **2**,

and for the **châteaux of Maisons** **3**,

**Champs-sur-Marne** **4**, **Rambouillet** **5**

and **Sceaux** **6** - all just outside Paris.

Palace of Versailles

[chateauversailles.fr](http://chateauversailles.fr)

Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte

[vaux-le-vicomte.com](http://vaux-le-vicomte.com)

Château de Maisons

[maisons.monuments-national.fr](http://maisons.monuments-national.fr)

Château de Champs-sur-Marne

[champs-sur-marne.monuments-nationaux.fr](http://champs-sur-marne.monuments-nationaux.fr)

Château de Rambouillet

[chateau-rambouillet.monuments-nationaux.fr](http://chateau-rambouillet.monuments-nationaux.fr)

Domaine de Sceaux

[domaine-de-sceaux.hauts-de-seine.fr](http://domaine-de-sceaux.hauts-de-seine.fr)

## Palace of Versailles

More than a story, **Versailles** is first and foremost a monument to the glory of one man, the sole master of his kingdom. He transformed a simple hunting lodge into a royal residence that now stands in tribute to the grandeur of this warrior king, arts enthusiast and privileged witness to the grand siècle, whose legacy is preserved throughout the Paris region.

Palace of Versailles > [chateauversailles.fr](http://chateauversailles.fr) | [chateauversailles-spectacles.fr](http://chateauversailles-spectacles.fr)



Palace of Versailles



Fountains Night Show, Versailles

## Louis XIV and the gardens

During the reign of Louis XIV, a lover of gardens, the 'French-style garden' came into its own. It was André Le Nôtre, the landscape artist responsible for the **gardens at Vaux-le-Vicomte**, who designed the **Versailles gardens**. Here, the gardens - where nature has been completely tamed to reflect absolute royal power - become an extension of the architecture itself. With pools, fountains and other features, water is ever present and emerges as one of the hallmarks of French-style gardens. **The Musical Fountains Show** and the **Fountains Night Show**, featuring music and fireworks, allow contemporary visitors to relive the celebrations of which Louis XIV was so proud... A visit to the estate would not be complete without a stop at the **King's Kitchen Garden**, a cradle of delicacies that Louis XIV wanted to evoke heaven and to supply the royal table with fruits and vegetables. It preserves old-fashioned pruning traditions with over 60 different shapes of fruit trees and is open to the public. **The gardens at Fontainebleau, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Sceaux and the Tuileries in Paris** also illustrate the discipline of French-style gardens.

Gardens at Versailles > [chateauversailles.fr](http://chateauversailles.fr)

Gardens at Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte > [vaux-le-vicomte.com](http://vaux-le-vicomte.com)

Palace of Versailles Shows > [chateauversailles-spectacles.fr](http://chateauversailles-spectacles.fr)

King's Kitchen Garden > [potager-du-roi.fr](http://potager-du-roi.fr)

Gardens at Château de Fontainebleau > [chateaufontainebleau.fr](http://chateaufontainebleau.fr)

Gardens at Saint Germain-en-Laye > [saintgermainenlaye.fr](http://saintgermainenlaye.fr)

Estate at Domaine de Sceaux > [domaine-de-sceaux.hauts-de-seine.fr](http://domaine-de-sceaux.hauts-de-seine.fr)

Tuileries Gardens > [louvre.fr](http://louvre.fr)



Vaux-le-Vicomte

## A man of the arts

Painting connoisseur, lover of literature, dancer, musician, theatre patron... over the course of his reign, Louis XIV never failed to promote the arts. He surrounded himself with the best artists of his time, including Le Vau, Le Brun and Le Nôtre (who worked at Vaux-le-Vicomte, then Versailles), plus Molière, Lully and Racine. He is responsible for creating the **Comédie Française**, which just observed its 335<sup>th</sup> birthday, the **Gobelins tapestry factory** and the Royal Academy of Dance that evolved over the years to become the modern-day **Ecole de Danse de l'Opéra National de Paris**. Baroque music concerts, ballets, operas... the kinds of grandiose performances that the Sun King would admire are still performed in the majestic space of the Royal Opera House at the Palace of Versailles. To round out this artistic pilgrimage, head to the **Apollo Gallery at the Louvre**, a magnificent creation by Le Brun, who was then the young king's first painter. This one-of-a-kind masterpiece features 41 paintings, 118 sculptures and 28 tapestries embedded in the ceilings and wall decorations. The Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles was modelled on this gallery. It was first designed as a receiving hall for Louis XIV at the Louvre palace before he moved to Versailles; now it is the sumptuous setting for the French Crown Jewels display.

Comédie Française > [comedie-francaise.fr](http://comedie-francaise.fr)

Gobelins Royal Tapestry Factory > [mobiliernational.culture.gouv.fr](http://mobiliernational.culture.gouv.fr)

Opéra National de Paris > [operadeparis.fr](http://operadeparis.fr)

Apollo Gallery at the Louvre Museum > [louvre.fr](http://louvre.fr)



Apollo Gallery at the Louvre Museum

## A man of war

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Louis XIV was the most powerful ruler in Europe. The Paris region still has many displays of this grandeur and power, starting with several paintings on display in the **Battles Gallery at the Palace of Versailles** and the **Place des Victoires in Paris** with its statue of the Sun King. These two sites symbolise the king's diplomatic and military successes. Jules-Hardouin Mansart engineered the Place des Victoires and also built the stables at the Palace of Versailles. Today these stables are home to the **Academy of Equestrian Arts** overseen by Bartabas, the famous horseman and stage director. The shows performed there are a true ode to the grand siècle. In Paris, the **musée des plans-reliefs** and its unique collection of historical scale models, including those commissioned by Louvois, Minister of War under Louis XIV, retrace 200 years of military history. Another historic artefact is the spectacular stern from the galley 'La Réale' which was miraculously spared from the ravages of the sea and time. It is typical of ship decorations in the age of the Sun King and a must-see gem in the collections of the **musée national de la Marine**. The **Hôtel des Invalides** was built by Louis XIV in 1670 to host officers and soldiers who were wounded, elderly or poor, but it is now home to the **Army Museum**, one of the world's largest museums of military art and history.

Battles Gallery, Palace of Versailles > [chateauversailles.fr](http://chateauversailles.fr)

Academy of Equestrian Arts > [bartabas.fr](http://bartabas.fr)

Musée des plans-reliefs > [museedesplansreliefs.culture.fr](http://museedesplansreliefs.culture.fr)

Musée national de la Marine > [musee-marine.fr](http://musee-marine.fr)

Hôtel National des Invalides > [musee-armee.fr](http://musee-armee.fr)



La Réale, musée national de la Marine

## The grand siècle and gourmet foods

The 17<sup>th</sup> century was also a great time for culinary arts. Legendary companies like **Dalloyau** and tea purveyor **Dammann** are symbols of France's expert skills and art of living which have perpetuated tradition and good taste since the days of Louis XIV. Other brands are reviving or putting twists on recipes from the Sun King's era. In Versailles, for example, **La Varenne** offers delicious treats passed down from the court of the kings of France. Did you know that Master François Pierre de La Varenne, a private chef to Louis XIV, is responsible for inventing the 'mille-feuilles' ('napoleon' pastry) that we still eat today?

### Dalloyau

101, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, Paris  
[dalloyau.fr](http://dalloyau.fr)

### Dammann Frères

15, place des Vosges, Paris  
[dammann.fr](http://dammann.fr)

### La Varenne

7, rue des Deux-Portes, Versailles  
[lavarenne.fr](http://lavarenne.fr)

## Did you know?

Born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Louis XIV is enshrined at the final resting place of the kings of France, the **Basilica Cathedral of Saint-Denis**. This splendid specimen of Gothic art houses more than 70 sculpted tombs and recumbent statues.

**Basilica Cathedral of Saint-Denis** > [saint-denis.monuments-nationaux.fr](http://saint-denis.monuments-nationaux.fr)

