

AVON VALLEY IN 6 STEPS

On a hill of Avon, **the Bel-Ebat estate** overlooks the valley. Its big park and its building make a charming combination. In the middle of the 19th C it belonged to the Marcotte family who came back from America. Later, the Durand family also contributed to its enlargement. Auguste, the founding father of a musical publishing company, and his son James, a pianist and Marie Marcotte's husband, extended and embellished Henry IV's former hunting place. The young Durand couple received great musicians of their time: Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Ravel, Fauré and many others, also performers like Nadia Boulanger, Robert and Gaby Casadesus. In 1979 Lola Dommange, heiress and latest owner, bequeathed this high place of French musical creativity to the town of Avon.

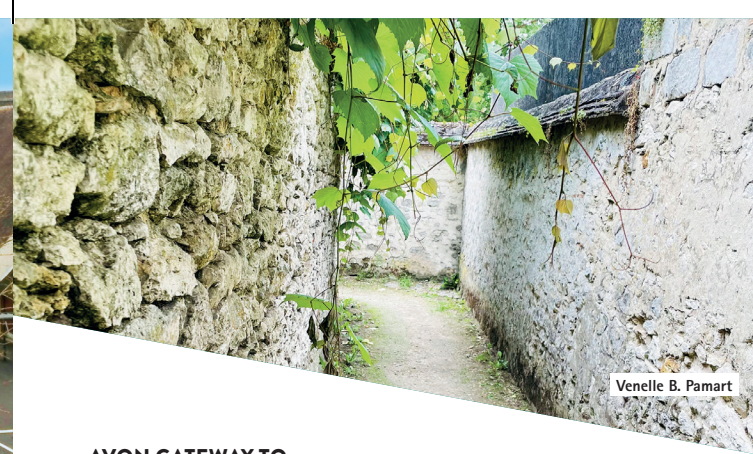
Its park [1], which is open all year round offers its natural resources: large outstanding trees, rare plants, fresh water from its springs. The town has asked the bird protection league for its official certification so that it can become a place of refuge. It also offers outdoor music with summer concerts from the American music school on the bandstand. Some other concerts playing renowned composers' music are held at **the mansion [2]** which received "the Heritage Ribbons award" (an award for the renovation of old buildings) and finally some pleasure can be shared at the tavern **"Pavillon de l'érable" [3]** in summer time, a former mill that became Mrs Macotte's painting workshop. , ancien moulin puis atelier de peinture de Mme Marcotte.

The dairy farm [4], separated from the estate following a donation of land to Avon from Mrs Durand, is inspired by the Norman Revival style, and is open during European Heritage Days.



The viaduct [5], a work of art of 30 arches spans the valley floor, which used to be filled with vegetable garden plots. From 1850 this Paris-Lyon Mediterranean line made Fontainebleau a fashionable place to stay. The viaduct overlooks the media library "les eaux vives", which was awarded a prize by the Seine et Marne council of architecture, town planning and environment.

The Val du moulin landscaped park [6], which is the second large green space of the town, along with the Bel-Ebat park, is suitable for walking and recreation. It is accessible by the track "la liaison douce Avon-Seine" which goes through the Carmelite woods then the Gautier wood.



AVON GATEWAY TO:

- > The forest of Fontainebleau, classified as "Exceptional Forest" and "World Biosphere Reserve" by marked walking tracks from Fontainebleau-Avon station.
- > The port of Valvins by the connection "Avon-Seine" to join the Scandiberian long distance cycling circuit.
- > The Grand Canal of the Chateau of Fontainebleau by the White gate, Red gate or Changis gate.

AVON GATE of the Gatinais natural regional park "country of the thousand clearings and sandstone".

HOW TO GET TO AVON

BY CAR

A6 towards Lyon, then take the exit for Fontainebleau, then continue towards Avon.

BY TRAIN

From Paris Gare de Lyon, Line R (for Transilien) towards Montereau/Montargis: the Fontainebleau-Avon stop is 40 minutes from Gare de Lyon (buy a Navigo card or Mobilis ticket).

BY BICYCLE

Cycle rental shop "cycl'hop" at Avon station, or Carnot square and the old Avon market square. Eurovélo 3 (Scandiberian cycling circuit) going through the Seine et Marne County.



www.avon77.com
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AVON

A TOWN OF HISTORY AND NATURE



www.fontainebleau-tourisme.com



Photos : Avon town hall | Model : Maricthebird

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Avon is situated between the Seine River and a forest, near Fontainebleau Chateau and close to Paris. This former Royal parish of the Bière forest, which became the cradle of French 19th C and early 20th C music, has kept its character in a welcoming, peaceful environment with echoes of the past. Its history has also been built gradually around its underground springs which are spread over the Bel Ebat park and the area of Avon. The word “Avon” comes from “abon” meaning water. In 2020, Avon took part in the French capital of biodiversity competition and was awarded the dragonfly label which symbolizes its commitment to biodiversity. Avon belongs to the network of “Villes et Villages des Justes de France” (a network of towns and villages that dedicated a place or memorial as a reminder of their support given to the Jews in World War II).

HISTORICAL CIRCUITS

“AVON VILLAGE” IN THREE STEPS

Avon's church [1] dating from 11th C , has been granted the title of “Historical Monument” since 1840, and falls within the Roman and Gothic styles. As a royal church until 1661, it welcomed Blanche de Castille (Queen of France, mother of Louis IX) and Kings who came to hear mass during their stay at Fontainebleau Chateau. The fleur de lis – a royal attribute - and the keys of saint Peter, patron Saint of the parish, are both represented on the coat of arms of the town.

The church displays a beautiful collection of over fifty gravestones. (Open Wednesdays to Saturdays. Winter time: November-March from 14h30 to 17h30 and summer time from 15h to 18h)



The Carmelite monastery [2] occupies the former hospital called “Saint Anne la Royale” or “La Charité d'Avon”. It was founded in 1662 by Ann of Austria in large wooded grounds that included a water-mill. After various events, “La Charité” returned to its role as a monastery in 1920 when the Carmelite brothers moved in. Lucien Bunel, Father Jacques of Jesus (his religious name), nicknamed Father Jacques (born 29-01-1900 died 02-06-1945), set up and managed Avon's small secondary school named Petit-Collège Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus. Member of the resistance and blamed for hiding Jewish children, he was arrested by the Gestapo, jailed in Fontainebleau and deported. He is recognized as “Un Juste parmi les Nations” (title given to those who helped the Jews in World War II). Louis Malle, former student of this school, tells father James's story in his film “Au revoir les enfants”.

Access to the memorial of Father Jacques (his life, work and message) at the small churchyard where his remains are buried and access to the chapel are both through the (always open) door opening onto: 1 rue Père Jacques. The memorial and the chapel are both open and free all year round (memorial open from 14h15 to 17h45). Under the German occupation, Mayor Rémy Dumoncel and his councillors were actively involved in the resistance. Seven of them were deported. The town of Avon was decorated by “La Croix de Guerre 1939-1945” (award for military during in World War II).

The alleys [3] are part of Avon's authentic heritage. Some fall under the communal estate and others under private estates. They essentially crisscross Avon village. Narrow and mainly bordered by sandstone walls, they are perpendicular to the main streets such as rue Rémy Dumoncel, rue du Souvenir and rue des déportés . They can open onto little squares or private gardens.

