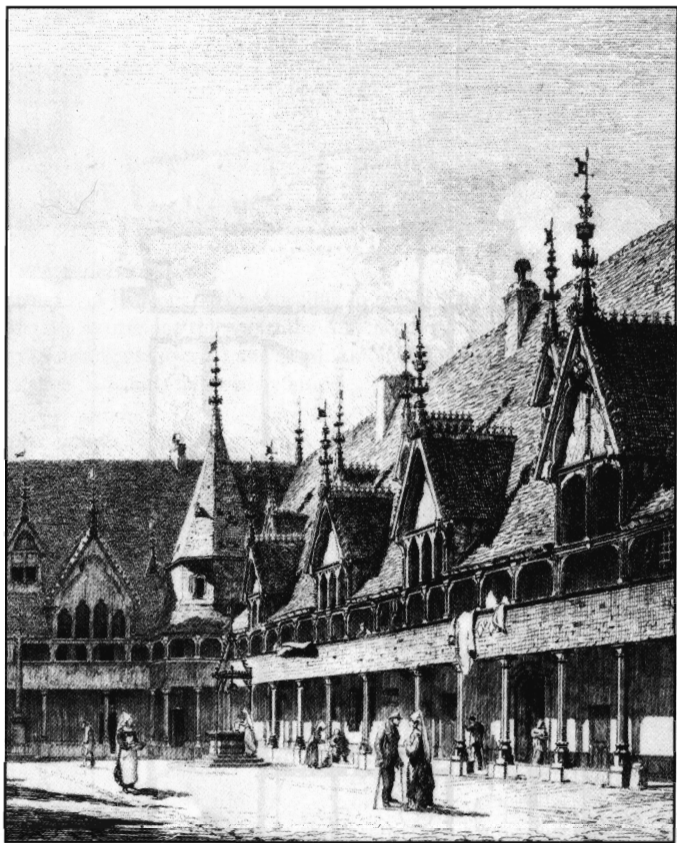
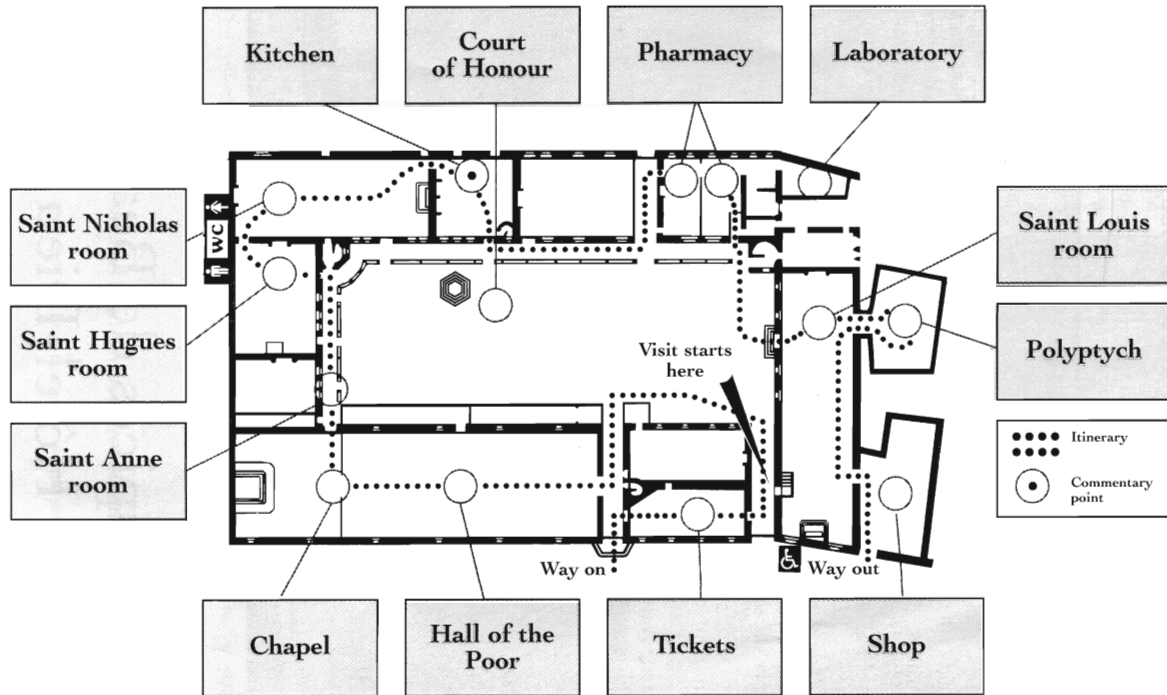


Visit of the Hôtel-Dieu



Hospices de Beaune
Hôtel-Dieu



PALACE FOR THE POOR

A work of charity

Perfectly preserved from the Middle Ages, the Hospices de Beaune Hospital was built in 1443 by Nicolas Rolin, Chancellor of Philippe-le-Bon, Duke of Burgundy.

In the wake of the Hundred Years' War, Beaune was suffering from poverty and famine. Three-quarters of the town's inhabitants had no supplies. To redeem the situation, the Chancellor and his wife, Guigone de Salins, decided to found a Hospice for the Poor "Les Pôvres"). They endowed it with an annual income (a saltworks) and its own resources (vines), and engaged a large number of artists in its decoration.



A unique monument

During the periods he spent in Flanders (of which the Duke of Burgundy was also Lord), Nicolas Rolin drew his inspiration from the northern hospitals, for the building of is "palace for the poor ". He commissioned Beaune artisans to build "Les Pôvres", his Palace for the Poor (Jean Rateau, master mason and Guillaume La Rathe, master carpenter, who built the spire).

The "Hôtel-Dieu", or Hospital, with its gothic façades, is today considered a jewel of medieval architecture. The multicolored tiles are thought to have originated in central Europe.

The style proved so popular that it gradually spread through Burgundy and eventually came to be considered typical of this province.



A model hospital

From the Middle Ages to the 20th century, countless sick were taken in and cared for in several of the large rooms by the Sisters of the Hospices de Beaune. The Hôtel-Dieu rapidly gained a great reputation amongst the poor, nobles and middle-class alike. It was subsequently enlarged with donations from the latter and embellished with new rooms and works of art, thus becoming a true "Palace for the Poor".



In 1971 its medical activities were transferred to a modern hospital, but the retirement home was retained. The Hospices run 61 hectares of vineyards inherited over the centuries and each year since 1859 have organized the most famous wine auction in the world.

1) GRANDE HALL "PÔVRES"

The centre of the Hospital

Opened in 1452, the Great Hall of the Poor is still its original size of 50 m long, 14 m wide and 16 m high. Tables and benches were placed down the middle of the room for meals. These were served in pewter dishes instead of the wooden ones which were the custom in hospices.

Behind each bed, there was a chest in which the patients' clothes were kept. The furniture, based on mediaeval designs, dates from the 19th century, when the restoration of the hall was begun in 1875 by Maurice Ouradou, son-in-law of Viollet-le-Duc.



A sumptuous decor

The ceiling is oak panelled, with broken barrel vaulting. The many-coloured dragons which "spit out" the cross beams are reminiscent of the monsters of hell. The comical faces of the Beaune middle-class people are accompanied by animal heads symbolising their respective failings.

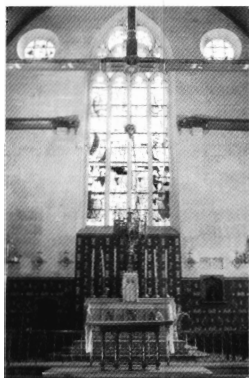
In places, the floor tiles bear the monogram of Nicolas Rolin and Guigone de Salins. The "Seulle ★" motto accompanying them shows that Guigone was the only one in her husband's thoughts!

Above the large door is the remarkable "Christ aux Liens" dating from the end of the 15th century and carved from a single block of oak.

2) CHAPEL

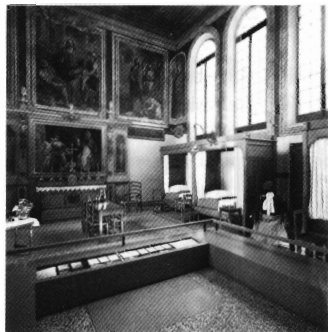
The chapel is an integral part of the Hall of the Poor and symbolises the perfect alliance between the religious and medical practices at the Hôtel-Dieu, the patients being able to take part in services without having to move about.

It was here that Rogier Van der Weyden's famous polyptych was originally placed. It can now be seen at the end of the visit. The remains of Guigone de Salins lie under a bronze plaque.



4) SAINT HUGUES ROOM.

Created in 1645 at the instigation of Maitre Hugues Betault, this room is evidence of the involvement of the benefactors in the history of the Hospital. It has always been dedicated to the sick and here we are constantly reminded of them. The shelves above the beds held their personal possessions and a cord helped them to sit up more easily.



The wall paintings

Nine of the eleven wall paintings by the Parisian painter Isaac Moillon illustrate the miracles of Christ. The other two depict Saint Hugues dressed as a bishop and as a Carthusian monk. On the ceiling is the "miracle of the pool at Bethesda". The reredos illustrates the miracle of Saint Hugues bringing two children who succumbed to the plague back to life.

5) SAINT NICHOLAS ROOM

Designed to take in the "Poor and sick in danger of dying", the Saint Nicholas room separated the unwell from the frail and dying.

Relatively small, this room contained 12 beds for male and female patients. When Louis XIV visited the Hôtel-Dieu in 1658, this shocked him profoundly and he set up an annuity of 500 pounds for new arrangements to be made to separate the men from the women. The present size of the room dates from the second half of the 18th century.

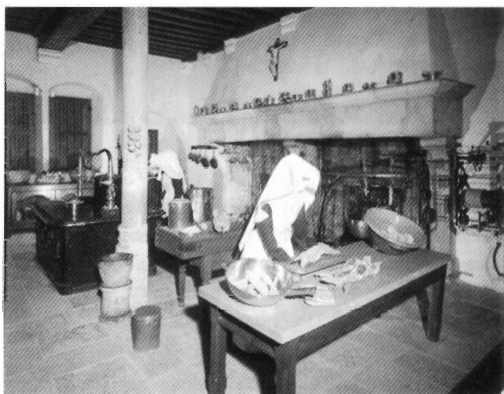


The Saint Nicholas room today houses a permanent exhibition on the history of the Hôtel-Dieu. Of particular interest is an astonishing straw model made in the 18th century by a patient.

The floor has been excavated and covered with glass to reveal the floodlit river Bouzaise flowing beneath. This water course carried the rubbish downstream, proof of the attention given to matters of hygiene when the buildings were being designed.

6) KITCHEN (Son and Lumiere takes place here every 15 minutes)

Until 1985, the kitchen continued to function with modern equipment, feeding the residents of the retirement home. It has now been restored to its appearance in the early 20th century with its piano: a huge oven with two taps for hot water known as "swan-necks".



The masterpiece remains the huge dual-hearth Gothic fireplace which has preserved its original accessories. The floor of the hearth is tiled with the famous tiles bearing the "Seulle ★" motto. The large hinged bracket is for moving the cauldrons to and from the fire.

The most spectacular item is the steel spit, made in 1698. It is being turned by a little robot called "Maître Bertrand". He is wearing the traditional costume of large floppy boots, white breeches, red jerkin with gold buttons and a white cap with turned-up brim. As he turns the handle, he seems to be keeping a watchful eye on the goings-on in the kitchen.



NB:

From the porch, before entering the pharmacy, you get a glimpse through the wrought-iron grille (1785-1786), of the Founders' Courtyard with, behind the weeping willow, the statues of Nicolas Rolin and Guigone de Salins made in 1914 and 1923 by Henri Bouchard. The buildings enclosing the courtyard house one of the Hospice's retirement homes.

7) PHARMACY

In the Middle Ages, each hospital had its own pharmacy since there was no organized production of medicines. Pharmaceutical knowledge was still in its infancy and used the greatest variety of ingredients which came from mineral, animal and vegetable materials. Lots of plants were grown on the spot in the medicinal herb garden called in French "jardin des simples" and located behind the pharmacy.



The first room contains the mortar in bronze dating from 1760 and made by the pharmacist Claude Morelot, native of Beaune. The wooden bow tied together with the steppe lightened its weight and that is how it made the Sister pharmacists' work easier to prepare the remedies.

The painting created in 1751 by Michel Charles Coquelet Souville illustrates the different tasks executed in the XVIII^e century in Claude Morelot's apothecary: powdering of dried plants, use of the mortar, distillation by means of the still and preparation of a medicine.

In the second so-called dispensary room, the shelves hold a collection of 130 earthenware pots from 1782 in which the ointments, oils, pills or syrups, etc. were conserved. The glass bottles still contain "specifics" whose names are sometimes bewildering: woodlice powder, eyes of crayfish, vomit nuts powder, elixir of property...



8) POLYPTYCH (Entrance at Saint-Louis room)

Ordered by the Chancellor Rolin, this 15th century polyptych is attributed to the Flemish artist Roger Van der Weyden. Representing the Last Judgement, it was placed above the altar in the Chapel, but was only allowed to be seen by the sick on Sundays and feast days.



Outer panels (closed)

Nicolas and Guigone Rolin, kneeling in prayer, face each other, whilst the paintings in trompe-l'œil depict the Annunciation, Saint Sebastian (patron of the Chancellor's Cavalry) and Saint Antony (patron of the Hôtel-Dieu and Guigone de Salins) followed by his pig.

Inner panels (open)

Christ the Supreme Judge, majestic in his purple robes. His right hand, holding a flowering fleur-de-lys, is raised and beckons the chosen ones. His left hand, in contrast, is lowered in disapproval as if to say "Away from me, ye that are under God's curse. Away to the eternal fire..."

At Christ's feet: the four angels, harbingers of the Last Judgement, surround the Archangel Michael. Resplendent in his contrasting white robe and scarlet cloak, his face expressionless, he weighs those risen from the dead.

Left hand panels

Next to the rainbow, the Virgin begs for mercy for the sinners. Behind her, six apostles and four male Saints.

Right hand panels

Next to the rainbow, Saint John the Baptist, six apostles and three female Saints.

Bottom of panels

To the left of Christ: the Damned, frightened and despairing. To his right: the Blessed making their way to Paradise.

Tapestry "thousand flowers"

The techniques and colours of this work of art, bring to mind the famous 16th century "Lady with the Unicorn" which is in the Cluny Museum. This tapestry depicts the legend of Eloy (later St Eloi). Eloi was very proud. Once, he cut off the leg of a horse in order to shoe him more rapidly, but he couldn't reattach the leg.

9) SAINT LOUIS ROOM

At the instigation of Louis Bétault the Saint Louis room was created in 1661 on the site of a barn which enclosed the Hôtel-Dieu courtyard and served as a wine-fermenting room.

Its extension contained the Hospice ovens where the bread was baked and distributed daily to the poor waiting at the gates. In 1828 an agreement was

made with the Beaune bakers who took over the work. The ovens fell into disuse and the room was thus able to be enlarged.



This high room with its splendid roof timbers contains some very fine Gothic chests, including a typical piece of Burgundian furniture - the bench chest with tilting back - and a few interesting statues of wood and stone.

The fountain bears testimony to the fact that this room was devoted to the sick.

The superb tapestries

The largest series of seven tapestries, woven at Tournai at the beginning of the 16th century, tells the parable of the Prodigal Son. Another series of Brussels tapestries, dating from the end of the 16th century, tells the story of Jacob.

A piece from the same period shows David hearing the news of Absalom's death.

The collection also includes one 17th century tapestry of Aubusson, "Ronde des Jeunes Gens".

The way out is at the end of this room through the museum shop.

Thank you for your visit. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

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