



↑ Logique
©Ville d'Aix-en-Provence.

The Hôtel de Châteaurenard was commissioned by Jean-François d'Aymar, Baron of Châteaurenard and Counselor at the Parlement (located in the Palais Comtal, now destroyed). In 1647, he awarded the building contract to the young Parisian architect Pierre Pavillon (1612-1670) and commissioned the decoration of the staircase from the artist Jean Daret (1614-1668), whose work was completed in 1654.

When Louis XIV stayed at Hôtel de Châteaurenard in 1660, he was captivated by the trompe-l'œil decoration of the staircase. And for good reason: it is an exceptional work, remarkable both for its scale and its quality, with no equivalent in France at the time. Thanks to a major restoration carried out by the City of Aix-en-Provence in 2024, the staircase is once again open to visitors with the purchase of a combined ticket with the Musée du Vieil Aix.



↑ The Lackey
©Ville d'Aix-en-Provence.

Cover photo caption
A view of the Hôtel de Châteaurenard
staircase ©Ville d'Aix-en-Provence.

Useful information

The staircase is open to visitors with the purchase of a combined ticket with the Musée du Vieil Aix.

Opening times

June 13th-October 4th 2026: Tuesday-Sunday, 10am-6pm.
Closed Monday.

Musée du Vieil Aix

Hôtel d'Estienne de Saint-Jean
17 rue Gaston de Saporta, Aix-en-Provence.

Hôtel de Châteaurenard

19 rue Gaston de Saporta, Aix-en-Provence.

Information

Tél. : +33 (0) 4 42 91 89 78

Mail : museeduvieilaix@mairie-aixenprovence.fr

Guided tour (Musée du Vieil Aix + Hôtel de Châteaurenard)

July 1st-October 4th 2026: 10.30am on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Booking required: +33 (0)4 42 91 88 74

or mediationmuseesaix@mairie-aixenprovence.fr

Prices (until October 4, 2026)

- > Ticket Office at the Musée du Vieil Aix
- > Admission: €7,00
- > Reduced price: €5,50
- > Free entry on the first Sunday of the month
- > Free for visitors aged under 18 (proof of age required)
- > Free for students aged under 26 (ID required)
- > Free for Citypass holders
- > Guided tour: admission + €3,00



THE HÔTEL DE CHÂTEAURENARD STAIRWELL A 17TH - CENTURY MASTERPIECE



The stone balustrade of the staircase is echoed in the painting while Doric columns open onto a loggia that extends into a fictional garden. Jean Daret appears to have drawn on a variety of sources to create his design, including contemporary interior decorations at the Palazzo Spada (started in 1635, Rome) and the Palazzo Pitti (1636-1641, Florence), treatises on perspective and perhaps even great Parisian interiors from the 1640s. The illusion continues on both sides of the staircase: two windows are draped with red curtains. A young servant watches from the east window to see who is coming up the stairs.

Although the entire surface of the stairwell was originally painted, from the walls to the coving right up to the ceiling, a part was destroyed in the second half of the 20th century, when Bureau de Bienfaisance (charitable organisation) moved into Hôtel de Châteaurenard. This explains why the ground floor no longer feature any decoration.

← Birdcage: detail of the trompe-l'œil painted decoration ©Ville d'Aix-en-Provence.



↑ Algebra ©Ville d'Aix-en-Provence.

A view of the Hôtel de Châteaurenard staircase ©Ville d'Aix-en-Provence. →

The design

The decoration combines illusionistic painting with an iconographic program exploring the *Triumph of Virtue*. At ceiling level, Pallas Athena presides over the composition and embodies immortal virtue: she holds the sword of science, beside the inscription VIRTUS IMMORTALIS. The walls have painted alcoves where you can see models of virtue: a Roman emperor, Hercules and King Solomon. The vaults display the Liberal Arts and their traditional attributes; Jean Daret added painting to celebrate his own work and secure its legacy. The seven Liberal Arts are Geometry, Arithmetic, Astronomy, Music, Rhetoric, Grammar and Logic.



↑ The ceiling of the staircase at the Hôtel de Châteaurenard ©Ville d'Aix-en-Provence.