

THE HISTORY OF THE PALAIS DE LA BOURSE

BORDEAUX PALAIS DE LA BOURSE





THE PLACE ROYALE

In the 18th century, the idea of creating a square decorated with a **statue of Louis XV** as a token of the inhabitants' loyalty and patriotism spread through the major cities in France.

In Bordeaux, **Claude Boucher**, Intendant of the province of **Guyenne**, suggested the creation of an equestrian statue in honour of the young King Louis XV in the centre of a new Place Royale. Jacques Gabriel, the king's architect, believed that the best place for this square was near the Garonne, where it would welcome and impress visitors to the city as soon as they arrived.

He designed the buildings around the square in tribute to **Place Vendôme** in Paris, built by his cousin **Mansart**. **Construction** began in **1731**.

The Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce had outgrown the space it had been using since its creation in **1705** and was struggling to host all the merchants who travelled to Bordeaux during the fairs. As a solution, Intendant Boucher opened the **Place Royale** for fairs.

The idea of **installing the Commodities Exchange** in the **North Pavilion** of the building that surrounded Place Royale gradually gained ground.

The Palais de la Bourse was inaugurated in **1749**. The Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce, which has always remained in the same location, became an indisputable authority in the city thanks to the development of **maritime trade** from the colonies. The city's Customs Department moved into the South Pavilion, called the Hôtel **des Fermes**.



THE FOUNTAIN

The Place Royale lost its royal status during the French Revolution, when it was renamed **Place de la Liberté**.

A modest column with a fountain was built to adorn the centre of the former Place Royale. In the 19th century, the city council commissioned architect **Visconti** to design a statue. The **Fountain of the Three Graces** was born.

The sculptures of Aglaé, Thalie and Euphrosine were carved by **Guméry**, while another sculptor, **Juandot** made the children on the dolphins and the mouldings around the base.

THE BOURSE OVER THE YEARS

Every day for half a century, the **Traders' Market** was held **outside in the courtyard** of the **Hôtel de la Bourse**, known as "**La Place**", and the crowd of merchants who gathered there had nothing but the adjacent arched galleries to protect them from the sun and rain.

Eventually, in **1808**, the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce commissioned **Bonfin** to build a timber-frame glass roof to cover the courtyard.

Described at the time as an "unsightly wooden cap", the structure was nevertheless honoured by a visit from **Napoleon I and Empress Joséphine**.

Later, the facades of the Palais de la Bourse were extensively embellished with new sculptural ornamentation including **mascarons and pediments**, which are still visible today.

Alsace artist **Claude Francin** decorated the pediments, which represent the **confluence of the Garonne and the Dordogne** (to the north) and **Neptune opening the way to trade** (to the south). On the square's central pediment (to the east), the artist represented the **Grandeur of the Prince**.

In **1825**, the Palais de la Bourse was subject to a new kind of threat: fire.

After the damage caused by the flames had been repaired, the Chamber of Commerce decided to renovate the honour staircase and built the twin-flight "**Monumental Staircase**", which still stands today.

During the work, the decision was made to extend the building. The chosen design, by architect **Charles Burget**, remained faithful to the style of Jacques Gabriel's building, and work began in **1862**.

Place Gabriel was born. Two new **pediments** were made by **Coeffard** and **Jouandot** on the themes of consular justice, industry and agriculture. By **1865**, the Bourse was once again open to merchants and the public.

By **1921**, the Palais de la Bourse had become too small and the Chamber of Commerce decided to renovate the **Gabriel Wing**. No sooner had the work been completed than another fire broke out, destroying the glass roof. The roof was rebuilt then covered with the current **Art Deco** roof.

However, the worst was yet to come. During the night of 8 December **1940**, two bombs hit the Bourse and the Customs Department, causing a fire in the roof that lasted several hours and seriously damaged the structure. The reconstruction work was finally finished in 1953.

In **1971**, the Bourse was declared a "national property". The Consular Court and the Commercial Court still hold hearings there to this day.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NAMES

Place Royale

In 1743 under Louis XV

Place de la Liberté

In 1752 under the First French Republic

Place Impériale

In 1808 under Napoleon I

Place Royale

In 1815 under Louis XVIII

Place de la Bourse

Since 1848 (Second French Republic)





INSIDE THE PALACE

The Bordeaux Gironde Chamber of Commerce and Industry has always endeavoured to protect the **architectural heritage** and the **many artworks** in its possession.

Multiple restoration projects have been carried out in the historical rooms with utmost care to preserve their original design. Today, these rooms house major works including **paintings, tapestries, busts** and **tableware by Bordeaux faience manufacturers Vieillard**.

THE HALL

On the ground floor is a large courtyard surrounded by arcades that was used for traders' transactions.

In the corner of the Place Royal, a chapel was built, probably in the current location of the Gabriel Staircase.

The Hall contains enamelled earthenware **dials** (clock and weathervane), made in 1750 by Bordeaux master craftsman **Hustin**, and 19th-century **holostérique barometers** by **Naudet**.

The **monumental wrought-iron door** in the centre of the Atrium was crafted by **Dumaine** in 1773.



The central staircase is a majestic structure with landings and twin flights that echo the style of the **Ambassadors' Staircase** at the Palace of Versailles.

Dumaine made two new doors to the first-floor landing in addition to his previous commission for the ground floor.

The oval medallions adorning them represent **consular justice, maritime trade** and **wine**.

THE HISTORIC SPACES IN THE PALAIS DE LA BOURSE

The Bourse Space

The Great Hall, the Traders' Hall composed of an Atrium and Arcades.

The Tourny Space

The Blue Room, the Gold Room, the Beaujon Room, the Tourny Room and the Commissions Room.

THE BLUE ROOM

The first on the right when entering the Tourny Space, this large room overlooks the quay and was originally called the “Bust Room”.

Today, the room owes its name to the intense blue of the Brussels tapestry depicting a knight entering an ancient city (work by Gaspar Van Bruggen).

This Room is furnished in the Louis XVI style and features finely gilded woodwork.

It also houses two marble busts of the Count of Artois, the future **Louis XVIII**, and his brother the Count of Provence, the future **Charles X**.

The first was carved by Gros and the second by Pajou. Both were commissioned by the Consular Legal Authorities, which donated them to the Chamber of Commerce in memory of the princes’ visit to the Bourse in **1777**.



THIS ROOM ALSO CONTAINS:

- A **Louis XVI** clock
- Two **Louis XVI** fire dogs
- A portrait in oil of **Louis of France**, the **Grand Dauphin**, son of **Louis XIV** and Maria Theresa.
- A portrait in oil of **Philippe Duke of Anjou**, future Philippe V, King of Spain.
- A portrait in oil of **Louis Auguste de Bourbon**, the Duke of Maine and the legitimate son of Louis XIV and Mme de Montespan.
- A portrait in oil of **Philippe Duke of Orléans**, regent of France.





THE CORNER ROOM

This narrow room is **connected to the Waiting Room** and the **Gold Room**.

It contains a signed oil painting by **Caminade** that depicts the **Duchess of Angoulême** arriving in Bordeaux opposite the Bourse. This painting was given directly to the Duchess of Angoulême when it was made and was donated to the Chamber of Commerce in the 20th century by collector Raymond Jeanvrot.

Only art history enthusiasts will notice that the painting shows the Duchess of Angoulême dressed for the first and only time in blue, and not in white as usual.

On the right, an English gouache engraving from the early 19th century shows a view of the port of Bordeaux from **Château Trompette**, an old Bordeaux stronghold that was destroyed at Napoleon's request.

THE WAITING ROOM CONTAINS:

- A glass-top table displaying a collection of the Chamber's medals and tokens.
- Two rectangular paintings, one depicting the Count of Provence and the other the Count of Artois.

THE GOLD ROOM



Once called the “Honour Room”, this room is decorated with recently regilded old wood panelling and five overdoors containing oil paintings, three of which are by unknown artists. The other two are both by **Larrée, a Bordeaux artist** (Grand prix de Rome), who painted one of the figures in the likeness of Georges Barrès, then President of the Chamber of Commerce.

The painter depicted himself as a sailor smoking a pipe.

This room also contains four large medallion-shaped tapestry portraits made at the **Gobelins Manufactory** and woven by Pierre-François Cozette, father, and Michel-Henri Cozette, son. These portraits were commissioned by **Nicolas Beaujon**.

The first portrait is of Louis XV, the second is of Marie Leszczyńska, the third of the Dauphin, future Louis XVI, and the fourth depicts the Dauphine, Marie-Antoinette of Austria.

There is also a portrait in oil of the young King Louis XIV, which may be the original of a portrait painted by **Claude Le Febvre** around 1670. The painting was donated by **Lucien Maurel**, former Vice-President of the Chamber.

THE GOBELINS MANUFACTORY

The internationally renowned Gobelins Manufactory is particularly famous for its exclusive “**high warp**” technique and has marked the history of tapestry making since 1662, when Colbert decided to group Parisian workshops together in a single location.



THE BEAUJON ROOM

This room was once the President of the Chamber of Commerce's study and contains an oil painting of **Nicolas Beaujon** (see insert) after Carle Vanloo.

Beneath it, there is a **letter of notification** dated 1563, in which King Charles IX asks the Parliament of Bordeaux to create a consular jurisdiction in the city.

It also features two tapestry panels from the Gobelins Manufactory dated 1772 and based on compositions by Boucher, respectively titled *The Great Adventure* and *The Fisherman*, as well as an oval portrait of Louis XVI given to Nicolas Beaujon by the king and a fireplace and column clock in white marble from the **Louis XVI period**.



Lastly, there are four 18th-century overdoors by an unknown artist that represent Earth, Air, Water and Fire. They come from Hôtel de Lalande, Place de la Bourse.

WHO WAS NICOLAS BEAUJON?

Born in Bordeaux in 1718, Nicolas Beaujon began to work with his father, a **grain merchant**, at an early age. He ensured supplies to Limousin and Guyenne, especially during the famine that ravaged the region in 1747. The following year, he was appointed Director of the Chamber of Commerce of Guyenne. The reputation he earned at this time facilitated **Intendant Tourny's** request for him to receive letters of nobility in 1750. In 1753, he moved to Paris and became **Banker to the King and the Court** and then *Fermier Général* (privatised tax collector) under Louis XV.

Gifted with good taste and surrounded by a network of well-informed contacts, Nicolas Beaujon built a collection of artworks in **Hôtel d'Evreux**, now the **Élysée Palace**, that earned him renown and a prestigious reputation.





THIS ROOM ALSO CONTAINS:

- An unsigned oil painting of Marie Adélaïde of France, the daughter of Louis XV.
- A pastel portrait of the Marquis of Tourny, made around 1745, which was donated by Guillaume Jarreau, President of the Chamber of Commerce.
- Two portraits after reproductions of Tourny and Jarreau
- Six modern overdoors by Bordeaux painter Larrée.

THE TOURNY ROOM

This former meeting room of the cabinet of the Chamber of Commerce houses marble busts of **Jacques Jules Gabriel**, father, who drew the plans for the Place de la Bourse and the building that surrounds it, and of **Ange-Jacques Gabriel**, his son, who finished the construction work following his father's death.



THE COMMISSIONS ROOM

This is the largest of the interconnected rooms and, like the others, is located along the edge of **Place Jean Jaurès**, once called Place Richelieu.

It was used for some fifty years to hold meetings of the **Consular Assembly**, until the increase in size of the latter meant that the room could no longer be used for this purpose. Today, the Commissions Rooms is a prestigious venue for conferences and meals.

The room houses an oil painting of **Jean-Baptiste de Fénelon**, an equerry born in Bordeaux on 22 February 1654. He was consul of the Bourse in 1688 and President Judge in 1698. The painting was donated by Ms M. Faure in memory of her brother, **G. Faure**, President of the Consular Assembly from 1929 to 1933.



THIS ROOM ALSO CONTAINS:

- An oil painting of **Jean Sylvain Bailly**, the Mayor of Paris who was guillotined in 1793, painted by Mosnier in 1789.
- A **Louis XV-period** cartel clock with its base.
- Six overdoors by Larrée (1927) portraying, like those in the neighbouring room, imagined views of the city's port and quay in the 18th century.





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