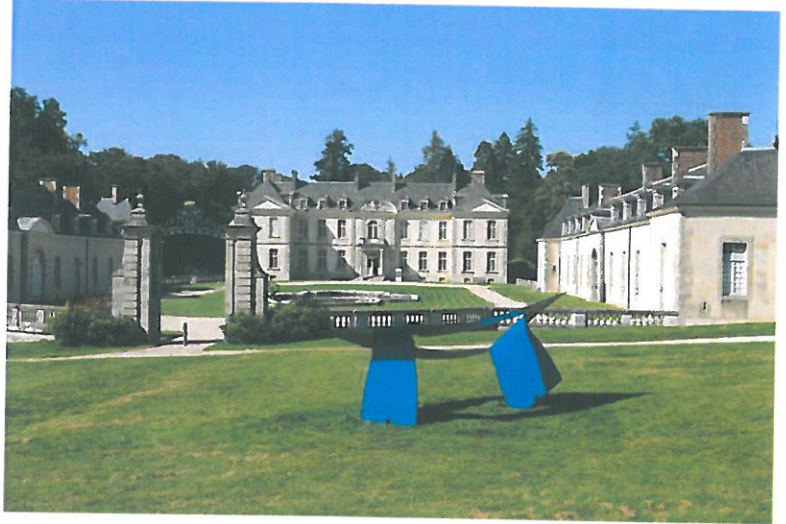


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THE ESTATE

The Estate was bought by the Conseil general of Morbihan in 1972 and became a listed building in 1988. The Kerguehennec Estate is situated in the town of Bignan, 30km north of Vannes. Built in the 18th century, the castle was altered at the end of the 19th century and a landscaped park was designed by Denis Bühler. From 1986, a sculpture park and an art centre are created. The Kerguehennec Estate has a lot to offer the visitor as far as architecture, art and landscape are concerned.

In 1847, the grounds extended over more than 2000 hectares (about 4000 acres) when the Janzé family owned it who were the Comte de Lanjuinais's ancestors. Nowadays, it covers about 175 hectares (about 350 acres). The place seems to have undergone three different building periods and substantial renovation in the 19th century. So, from 1476 to 1972, the property will change owners many times but two families have had a particular influence on the Chateau and the Park, the Hogguer and the Lanjuinais families.

In 1703, the Kerguehennec Estate was bought by wealthy Swiss bankers living in Paris, Daniel and Laurent Hogguer. On the ruins of the former manor, they built a castle which was to be a symbol of their success and wealth. With this purpose in mind, they called on Olivier Delourme, an architect from Vannes, who had already designed Loyat Castle, near Ploërmel and Saint Patern church in Vannes. Delourme's project is composed of a main building framed by two pavilions in keeping with the rules of symmetry and rigour of the Enlightenment. One can also notice a concern for comfort and intimacy as well as a definite taste for light by means of fragmenting the internal dimensions.

The Count of Lanjuinais will acquire the Estate in 1872. A trained lawyer, he was also a key political figure at a regional and national level. He was Mayor of Bignan and then the President of the Conseil general of Morbihan in 1901. He was also a Royalist deputy in the National Assembly from 1881. Paul-Henri Lanjuinais sets out to transform the park and the castle and give it more prestige led by the paradoxical objectives of autarchic vision and will for openness. Under the supervision of the Parisian architect Ernest Trilhe, major works are undertaken inside and outside the Delourme building.

After the purchase of the estate by the Departement of Morbihan in 1972, the restoration of the castle started with the facades and roofs, which will be completed in 1999. The internal renovation of the castle was initiated only in 2001 and today offers a late 19th century decor. The choice was to keep the decoration and the lay-out of the building and add modern comfort and easy access for everybody. The renovation project was completed in 2006 and the following year, the castle was opened to the public.

THE PARK

It is only at the end of the 19th century that the park was refurbished to a large extent by Denis Bühler, a well-known landscape-gardener who created together with his brother the « Parc de la Tête d'Or » in Lyon and the « Jardins du Thabor » in Rennes. He essentially reworked the Northern part of the park. From then on, broad and curving pathways now replace the former straight lines « à la française » thus creating a much more romantic route along which to wend one's way.

One does not discover the chateau from the front, nor is it visible from the Entrance: one must first take a long slow walk, the better to absorb the Park and enter into its spirit. In the Southern part of the park, the straight and perpendicular lines have been preserved. In the South of the Park, the straight and perpendicular pathways will be kept as they offer a compromise, a duality between the North of the Park with its English style and the South of the Park which is « à la française ».

The Count of Lanjuinais also wished to transform the North of the Park into a real arboretum and bring in tree species and tree varieties from all over the world. Trees from Asia, North America, Africa and Europe are to be found in the Park in harmony with the original planting of the Estate.

Finally the Count considered creating a vegetable garden as early as 1873. It included a greenhouse and a large ornamental pond the water for which came from the octagonal water tank in Clehury. Paul-Henry Lanjuinais enlisted the help of the gardener, Jarry, made him head gardener and put him in charge of planting up the vegetable garden.

AN EXCEPTIONAL SCULPTURE PARK

Created in 1986 at the initiative of the Ministry of Culture, the regional management for cultural affairs in Brittany and the regional collection of contemporary art of Brittany, this sculpture park is one of the most important sculpture parks in Europe. Recognized as a reference for the presentation of contemporary sculpture, today it reunites twenty or so sculptures by leading artists.

AN ART CENTER AND A CULTURAL MEETING CENTER

The art centre is located in the East outbuildings (former stables and sheepshed) and in the Château. Temporary exhibitions are set up there throughout the year. In 2007, a research centre was created at the Kerguehennec Estate dedicated to Pierre Tal Coat's work (1905-1985), a leading painter of the second half of the 20th century.

The dialogue between creation and heritage is at the heart of the artistic and cultural project at Kerguehennec. Each year, artists are given the possibility of staying in residency. Opportunities are regularly organized for meetings and exchanges. Being a privileged site as regards transmission, Kerguehennec organizes art classes which are immersed in the life of the Estate.