



The sumptuous castle of Serrant, whose brown schist contrasts with white tuffeau, has much personality. Surrounded of broad water ditches, it is located at about fifteen kilometers in the west of Angers, in the commune of Saint-Georges sur Loire.

The castle is presented under the aspect of a building of an about sixty meters length, confined of two big round towers capped with domes. The building is decorated in its middle by a covered staircase. A continuous balcony strongly underlines the frontage and the turns like simulating a covered way, according to a very traditional style whose Bonnavet in Poitou constitutes a good example. On the other hand, the attic window which crown the central staircase and the domes which cover the turns are of a more innovative design. The preliminary draft of the high parts that one knows by the order of 1539 envisaged a roof in house for the staircase and of the round dome on the lathes of angle. One changed party between the project of 1539 and the final realization by the Brie, undoubtedly under the influence of prestigious models.

The current castle is the result of several construction campaigns during 16th, 17th and 18th century. It presents a great unit. Ponthus de Brie, chamberlain of Louis XI, makes build, in 1481, a fortress, defended of any share thanks to drawbridges, ditches and massive towers which dominate the surrounding countryside.

In the years 1530, Péan de Brie who wishes a new castle, makes begin work which is at the origin of the castle that we can admire today. Péan de Brie calls upon Jean Delespine, the architect who illustrated himself with the Pincé hotel in Angers. In 1539, one passes an order for the high parts, signs that construction is already quite advanced.

Péan de Brie dies a little later about 1542-1543. His son, Magdelon de Brie, continues work and dies him also a little later in the years 1548-1549. Serrant returns then to his half-brother, Charles, who has soon financial problems. The castle, unfinished, is sold by adjudication in 1597. Péan de Brie and his sons raised only the left part and the central staircase. In 1596, Hercules de Rohan, duke of Montbazou, become the owner of the places.

But it is especially in 1636, when Guillaume Bautru buys it, that work makes new great strides. Born in Angers in 1588, Guillaume Bautru is adviser of State under Louis XIII and Louis XIV, introducer of the ambassadors by the king, ambassador plenipotentiary, and in great favour with Richelieu and Mazarin. He is allowed with the French Academy on March 13, 1634. He was a beautiful spirit. According to Chaplain, « Those which have share with its secrecy say that the Relations of its embassies cannot be better written. ».

Guillaume Bautru also marked his time by his original behaviours: libertinage, fool jokes, satires and left again prickly. He was also an effective builder. Indeed, in the years 1640, he decides to continue work according to the plan initiated by Hercules de Rohan: the frontage is completed, as well as the southern tower and the two wings in return on the court (completed in 1710).

At the time of this new campaign, one continues the frontage, except in the high parts where one replaces the roof by an attic. (This provision does not exist any more in the current castle, removed at the time of the restoration of 1870 which restores a stage in addition with dormer

windows). It is surprising to note that, in spite of the century which separates the work ordered by Guillaume Bautru and those carried out by its predecessor, Hercules de Rohan, the unit of construction was preserved, thanks to a strict respect of the architectural program established at the 2nd part of the XVIth century.

Guillaume Bautru dies on March 7, 1665.

His grand-daughter, Marguerite de Bautru, married the marquis de Vaubrun, general lieutenant of the armies of the King. With the death of her husband, killed at the sides of Turenne to the battle of Altenheim, the marchioness of Vaubrun continued work until 1705. It is it which made raise, by J Hardouin-Mansart, the beautiful vault dedicated to the memory of her husband and, by Coysevox, the white marble mausoleum. In 1749, the last descendant of Guillaume de Bautru is widowed and without children: she sells the castle of Serrant. Antoine Walsh, a ship-owner of Nantes, acquires it; he results from an old Irish family which voluntarily exiled itself in France in order to show her intangible honesty towards Stuart deposed. Walsh refits the interior decoration of the castle, create a landscaped garden, and build the two houses, the monumental grid of honour, which carries their blazon: a "sorry", i.e. bored swan of an arrow.

In 1755, Serrant was set up in county

In 1830, the Countess Valentine Walsh of Serrant married the Duke of Trémoille which results from one of the oldest families of France. The Duke makes restore the castle by Lucien Magne. To this time go back the balustrade decorated with fire pots, the capitals which crown the windows of the second stage, and the blazon of the Trémoille to the top of the principal entry.

Today, the castle is the property of the Prince and the Princess of Merode who go down as of Trémoille.

The apartments are magnificently furnished. Sumptuous Flemish tapestries decorate the large dining room. One will admire the large staircase, the apartments with the coffered ceilings of the 1st stage, the library and his twenty thousand volumes, the rooms of pageantry where Louis XIV and Napoleon passed. The works of art are numerous: mirror of Venice, tapestries of Flanders and the Goblins, very beautiful Italian cabinet, bust of the Marie-Louise empress by Canova, portraits.