The fortifications of Vauban in Besançon

Press file

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Preface: The fortifications of Vauban - a Unesco World Heritage site

A project initiated by Besançon

As the capital of the region of Franche-Comté, Besançon decided to put forward the works of Vauban for inscription on the World Heritage list in 2003, with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Communication.

Fifteen municipalities (including fourteen sites fortified by Vauban) joined in one association called “A Network of Major Vauban Sites” – created on the initiative of Jean-Louis Fousseret, the mayor of Besançon and president of the association. These fifteen municipalities have worked together to present their candidacy, and in doing so honoured the work of the famous engineer.

An alliance : “The Network of Major Vauban Sites”

The role of the association is two-fold: to coordinate the actions in favour of conserving, managing and developing the heritage fortified by Vauban in its architectural, urban and environmental dimensions and to initiate and develop exchange programmes and research on an international level.

The works of Vauban – a series of sites

Only a series of sites can do justice to the genius of Vauban and the exceptional, universal value of his works. Eleven sites were therefore selected, based on rigorous scientific analysis. These represent the most authentic, the best preserved and the most representative sites of Vauban’s works.

The selection was carried out by a scientific committee composed of national and international experts – historians, archaeologists, architects etc. – commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Communication, the Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Defence.

The list of sites:
I. Vauban and Besançon: historical background

The strategic position of Besançon

Besançon lies within a particularly exceptional site: a loop formed by a meander in the River Doubs, enclosed by a hill.

This natural situation constitutes a remarkable strategic position for defence as was observed by Julius Caesar who besieged it in 58 A.D. and described it in the *Gallic Wars*, the oldest known written document on the history of Besançon:

“...for there was in that town a most ample supply of everything which was serviceable for war; and so fortified was it by the nature of the ground, as to afford a great facility for protracting the war, inasmuch as the River Doubs almost surrounds the whole town, as though it were traced round it with a pair of compasses. A mountain of great height shuts in the remaining space, which is not more than 600 feet, where the river leaves a gap, in such a manner that the roots of that mountain extend to the river's bank on either side. A wall thrown around it makes a citadel of this [mountain], and connects it with the town.”

The first French conquest

At the end of the first conquest of the Franche-Comté region in 1668, Vauban inspected the site and drew up plans for the Citadel. On the 2nd of May, after three months of work by the French at the Citadel, the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle returned Franche-Comté to Spain.

Thus, the Spanish reoccupied the province and started to build the Citadel. They drew part of their inspiration from Vauban’s plans.

The second conquest

In 1674, the war resumed. King Louis XIV was personally in charge and Vauban directed the siege. Besançon resisted attack for twenty days. Once the town had been seized, it took the troops another seven days to take possession of the Citadel.

Louis XIV then decided to make Besançon a bastion of his kingdom in the East and appointed Vauban to be in charge of the operation.

Vauban considered the Citadel “extremely beautiful, but it would appear to have only bones.” He wrote to Louvois in 1678: “Do complete the designs of the town and the Citadel, which cannot be any better, and afterwards you shall consider Besançon as one of the best towns in Europe, on which the King may rely more than any other in his kingdom.
The engineer came to inspect the work seventeen times between 1674 and 1711 and made Besançon one of the best fortified towns in Europe. The work, completed in 1693, was of such quality that Louis XIV was said to have remarked: “Vauban, it is not with stone that you built the walls of the Citadel in Besançon ; it is with with gold !”

The Citadel

The work done by Vauban at the Citadel took place between 1675 and 1683. It was made up of the following principal elements: the Saint-Étienne façade, the Royal façade, the emergency façade, the ramparts and the main wall. In all, the surface area takes up 11 hectares (27 acres). Of the three façades which make up the Citadel, the Saint-Étienne façade is the first one we cross.

It is preceded by an angular-shaped work, a half-moon, which contained two levels for firing arms.

There used to be a drawbridge one had to cross before passing through the entrance lodge with its two garrison houses. The slots for the arms of the bridge above the gate are still visible to this day.

The glacis stretches out beyond this and is enclosed by the Royal façade.
The second front, which dates from the first construction, was heavily reinforced by Vauban, who put in deeper ditches and larger defence systems: a half moon with its covered path. Once again, one had to cross a drawbridge to reach the lodge which used to house the governor's quarters.

Huge walls, which were 5 to 6 metres wide and 15 to 20 metres high, with ramparts, linked the Royal façade to the emergency façade. In honour of his sovereigns, Vauban erected the King’s and Queen’s sentry boxes.

The urban enclosure
The fortifications of the urban walls around the Boucle (loop) and Battant neighbourhoods were built between 1675 and 1695.

◆ The Boucle
The Boucle, already highly urbanised, represents the heart of the city, tightly encircled by the River Doubs. As it was dominated by hills on all sides, there was little room left to develop a fortified wall. To solve this problem, Vauban had six fortified towers built which were anchored into the river in front of the hills that dominated the town. The medieval defence systems were also included within these walls, which were restored and completed by Charles V in the 16th century.

Vauban’s innovation in Besançon : the fortified tower
Vauban seized Besançon and, as a result, knew all of its weaknesses. In particular, the banks of the river drew his attention as they were narrow and easy to attack from the surrounding hills. Consequently, he devised a guntower which took up little space, but provided two levels for firing and was effective against artillery fire. In doing so, he modernised the towers of the medieval castle. Hence, Besançon was used as a testing ground to develop the fortified tower that Vauban used for other sites: Belfort and Landau, for example.

La tour bastionnée de Chamars - © ville de Besançon
The Battant walls

Within these walls dominated by land, Vauban first of all used the many medieval buildings in his defence system.

He then built other structures on a counter-slope – an excellent way of adapting to a complex landscape.

He built Fort Griffon on the site of an old bastion. The Citadel and Fort Griffon were designed to defend and guard the city. Given their positions, they were able to protect it with their artillery.

The Battant bridge was a strategic link between these two heads of command and was to be destroyed if one of the heads of command was besieged so as to save the other.
II. Vauban’s works in Besançon

Thus, Vauban made the most of the characteristics of the natural defence system that were offered by Besançon, a site fortified since Antiquity. His major accomplishment was building the Citadel, the cornerstone of his work, on the narrowest and highest part of the entire structure. He then designed the fortified walls surrounding the Battant neighbourhood, including bastions, defence walls and half-moons. These were towered over by Fort Griffon, the second citadels, which faced the first. Lastly, he optimised the defence system within the centre of the old town by building six fortified gun towers along the River Doubs – a truly innovative system. He transformed the town into a defensive bastion to defend the city, a role that was strengthened in the 18th century. The changes to the defence system, which took place during the 19th and 20th centuries and encircled the town with twenty forts, left Vauban’s fortifications intact. Today, Vauban’s fortifications cover 195 hectares (482 acres).

Characteristics justifying the candidacy of the site: adapting to a dominated meander – Vauban’s second system for the fortified towers
III. Restoring the heritage of Vauban

1. Since the purchase of the Citadel in 1959:

“Our city has a moral duty not to let go of what was his birthplace; it where the Gauls were, then the *oppidum* during the time of the Romans, and then the first church in Besançon: Saint-Étienne (…). It is my strong conviction that (…), even with the cost that this will incur, we have no choice but to buy it1." On October 20th 1958, the town council linked the fate of Vauban's Citadel with that of the town of Besançon.

Between 1958 and 2007, the Citadel was “reconstructed”. This included restoration work essentially concerning the roofing and masonry, with particular attention given to watertightness and safety.

Over the last decades, the most important operations have involved:
- restoring the masonry destroyed by the bombings in 1944,
- restoring the stone facing, the sentry boxes and the flat-stoned slates on the roof,
- repairing the leaks along the ramparts,
- the roof of the chapel, the buildings of the emergency façade and the Royal façade, and the Cadets’ building.

Since then, thanks to the initiative of the town, proprietor of the Citadel, it has found cultural and tourist vocations which preserve and enhance it. A visit to the Citadel provides an opportunity to discover the three national museums it comprises as well as the monument itself. Today, it has become one of the most popular sites in the region of Franche-Comté (around 200,000 visitors per year). A mixed-economy corporation is in charge of the commercial management of the site and its tourist development.

In addition to the Citadel, Vauban left two other structures to Besançon: the fortified walls around the Boucle (meander) and the belt of walls around the Battant neighbourhood. Both of these structures are still in relatively good condition. Two factors lead to the disappearance or the reorganisation of certain buildings: military redevelopment over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, especially on the surrounding walls beside Chamars, and urban development in the 20th century. Over the last few years, the upkeep of both has involved much cleaning and clearing of the undergrowth from the fortifications.

So it is that over the last ten years, the town of Besançon has invested approximately 8 million euros in renovating the Vauban fortifications (the Citadel, the surrounding walls of the Boucle and the Battant neighbourhoods).

2. Current plans to restore and to enhance historical buildings:

Like of all the towns which are part of the Network of Major Vauban Sites, Besançon adopted (in July 2007) a plan involving the management, conservation and sustainable development of Vauban’s heritage. This document was an integral part of the dossier which was presented to Unesco. It renewed the policy set up by the town of Besançon many years ago and has established a provisional programme for the future, from 2007 to 2013.

◆ **The current restoration of two fortified towers**

Since January of last year, two construction sites, which will cost 200,000 €, have marked the beginning of the first stage of rehabilitating the fortified towers of the Cordeliers and Chamars, both belonging to the town of Besançon. The aim is to restore these buildings to their original state for opening to the public in July 2008.

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1 Jean Minjoz, Deputy and Mayor, 1958
The work has been conducted by a team of construction specialists with the help of the DRAC (Regional Office of Cultural Affairs) of Franche-Comté. After thoroughly cleaning the inside and outside of the building, work entrusted to a social integration programme (ADDSEA), a long-term project involving detailed research began. Thanks to the plans from the 17th century which helped them to progress, architects, historians, project leaders, conservation officers, joiners, painters, locksmiths and two specialised companies for the interior lighting and stone-cutting worked until June to finish the woodwork, the locks, the paintings, the lime washing, the railings, the electricity, the restoration of the window frames and the shutters. These are but some of the many jobs carried out by municipal workers of all branches under the auspices of the town council. The municipal road, rail and waterway department and the park land department contributed actively to the planning and requalification of the area surrounding the towers.

**Restoring the citadel**

Within the framework of the State - Region Contract for Projects 2007-2013, a 9.9 million euros restoration and development programme has been implemented. The town, the state, the region and the department (county) are financing this work. A large part of these funds will be allocated to the Citadel.

At the beginning of 2008, the first major project began with the arsenal, which has been classed as a historical monument. The main part of this project involves repairing the flat tiles on the roof, some woodwork and the dormer windows. To complete this project, an impressive scaffold measuring 42 metres wide and almost 20 metres high has been put up; a scaffold taller than the surrounding wall of the Citadel. As it will take around 18 months for this work to be carried out, the climatope installed in the attic shall remain closed to the public and access to the aquarium restricted.
Citadelle-Arsenal:

Examples of future plans of action

Restoration of “Communication 110”: in 2009, an underground tunnel, 110 metres long, linking the Saint-Étienne façade to the Royal façade at the Citadel will undergo restoration. Its opening to the public is planned for summer 2009. Visitors will be able to discover the heart of the Citadel, in a unique way and see the place which originally allowed the soldiers to circulate from one façade to another.

Rehabilitation of the Hangar: Situated at the Citadel, the hangar formerly used for manoeuvres will also become the object of a restoration campaign. The Hangar is due to open to the public in summer 2009. Given the large surface area, temporary exhibitions will be programmed for visitors.
IV. Discovering the heritage of Vauban

◆ The Citadel
The Citadel is the site most visited by local citizens and tourists in Franche-Comté: the monument, the premises and the wall-walk. Computer-generated images take one on a virtual journey through the history of the construction of the Citadel. Audio guides are available for visitors. Three national museums are located within the walls of the citadel: the Resistance and Deportation Museum, the Comtois Museum and the Museum of Natural History, with its zoo, aquarium, insectarium, noctarium and climatorium.

◆ Two surrounding walls : Boucle and Battant
To discover these two vast architectural groupings, visitors choose from a variety of pathways offered by the Tourist Office to compose their own route, à la carte.

On foot :
  o Follow pedestrian paths marked « Vauban, tours and détours »; maps free of charge at the Tourist Office
  o Take a guided tour with an accredited « City of art and history » lecturer
  o Go on a Vauban safari: follow the footsteps of Vauban on a GPS itinerary that combines a hike, a treasure hunt and a multimedia game

By bicycle :
  o With Velocity, take one of 200 bicycles from one of the 30 stations in the heart of the city. The first 30 minutes are free. Cards and information at the Tourist Office.

By boat :
  o Take a ride on the River Doubs to view the works of Vauban from an excursion boat

On the mini-train :
  o A 45-minute audio-guided tour will reveal the mysteries of the city. Tour the city in one ride or get off at the citadel and resume the tour later on.

By plane :
  o Vauban seen from the sky, with comments from the pilot.

In 2008: all summer long, a rich and varied programme of cultural activities for discovering the works of Vauban in Besançon (see the detailed programme in the annex)
  o Two exhibits and film presentations at the Time Museum: “Vauban, the major sites” and “Besançon, conquest and fortification”
  o The construction of a spectacular site: the Citadel (programme of cultural activities)
  o The fortified tower in Besançon, Vauban’s brilliantly inspired invention (programme of cultural activities)
  o Theatric promenades and sketches in the heart of the city and at the Citadel

Information :
- The Citadel, rue des Fusillés de la Résistance, 33 (0) 381 87 83 33, www.citadelle.com
- Tourist Office, 2 place de la 1ère Armée française, 033 (0) 381 80 92 55, www.besancon-tourisme.com, info@besancon-tourisme.com
V. The partners in the project

◆ The regional support committee

The Franc-Comtois support committee for World Heritage Inscription of the works of Vauban is an integral part of the national support committee.

The regional committee is headed by Jean-Louis Vincent, army corps general and former chief of staff. He has been assisted by Pierre Chauve, president of the Association for the Renaissance of Old Besançon, Marie-Dominique Joubert, president of the Association of the Friends of the Museums and Library of Besançon, Michèle Manchet, régional delegate to Historic Homes and Michel Woronoff, honorary President of the University of Franche-Comté.

It is a civilian association whose role it is to support Besançon and the Network of Major Vauban Sites by enhancing visibility and creating partnerships with institutions, companies and key figures. These partnerships have helped to promote the works of Vauban for World Heritage Inscription (information and education campaigns, financial support ...).

Every day, new members joined the association, thus reflecting the commitment of 3460 citizens of all generations and origins: elected officials, artists, officers, entrepreneurs, journalists, liberal professions, cultural associations, students, shop owners, retirees, etc.

“For the support committee, this has been an extraordinary human and intellectual experience. Intellectual, because once you “get into Vauban”, you never leave. His multiple talents make him a very fascinating person. Human because of the incomparable wealth conferred upon it by the diversity of the thousands of members of the support committee. It is an adventure that is destined to continue”, General Jean-Louis Vincent, president of the regional support committee.

Jean-Louis Fousseret, Mayor of Besançon and President of Greater Besançon, President of the Network of Major Vauban Sites (right) and General Jean-Louis Vincent President of the regional support committee (left).
The EDF Foundation

The purpose of the foundation is to help support initiatives of general interest in favour of social cohesion and preservation of the planet. In so doing, the foundation unites and promotes the diversity of peoples, generations, cultures and nature.

With an official agreement signed on June 5th, 2008, the foundation decided to support the development of our fortified heritage by backing the initiative of the Network of Major Vauban Sites.

The foundation also decided to support Besançon’s educational project « The Children’s Tower ». This objective of this project is to open the fortified Chamars Tower to the public for the first time. The tower was restored in 2008 with the young public in mind, with films, observation tasks and hands-on activities. The challenge is to raise children’s interest in the tower so that in the future, they may take responsibility for preserving and promoting this heritage site.

Koramic Tiles

Koramic Tiles, whose main production is terra cotta tiles, is frequently called upon to renovate the roofs of historical monuments. They have developed a cultural partnership policy, the goal of which is to renovate and promote local historical and cultural heritage.

For the tricentennial anniversary of Vauban’s death, Koramic was a sponsor for the photo exhibit of the fourteen major Vauban sites organised by the town of Besançon. Koramic also provided funding for the billboards promoting Vauban works in Besançon.

By becoming a partner in the project for the inscription of Vauban’s fortified works on the Unesco World Heritage list, Koramic has joined the forefront for regional and cultural development.
VI. Annexe

In the footsteps of Vauban: cultural activities, summer 2008

THE STRONG POINTS:

The works of Vauban – a thematic discovery of

- Vauban, the major sites (exhibit)
- Besançon, conquest and fortification (exhibit)
- The construction of a spectacular site: the Citadel (cultural activities)
- The fortified tower, invented by Vauban in Besançon (cultural activities)

Theatric promenades at the Citadel and in the heart of the city,

Exhibits, films and guided tours,

A choice of activities for children,

... SOMETHING TO SATISFY EVERYONE’S CURIOSITY!

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Once upon a time - Theatric promenades (tickets sold at the Tourist Office)

Discover the city with the Compagnie Bacchus: theatric promenades, gastronomy and entertainment await you in the streets and sites of Besançon. A unique way to discover the city’s architectural heritage.

The « Boucle » of Besançon, in the company of Victor Hugo, Claude Nicolas Ledoux, Nodier, Granvelle.
Departure: Square Castan – Arrival: the courtyard of the Time Museum

July: Saturday the 12th, 19th and 26th at 6:30 p.m.
August: Saturday the 2nd, 16th, 23rd and 30th at 6:30 p.m.

Battant Quarter, in the company of Colette, Carco, Proudhon and Considérant, the washer-women.
Departure: the bandstand in the Barrière Casino gardens – Arrival: Fort Griffon

July: Thursday the 17th, 24th and 31st at 6:30 p.m. / Friday the 11th at 6:30 p.m. / Friday the 18th and 25th at 8:00 p.m.
August: Friday the 1st, 15th, 22nd and 29th at 8:00 p.m. / Sunday the 17th, 24th and 31st at 5:00 p.m.

« Vauban, tours and detours » - Information at the Tourist Office

Discover the heritage of Vauban close up or from the air: walk, bike, roller-blade, fly … Maps with paths and directions available at all public information offices and at the main Tourist Office.

The Children’s Tower – (admission free)

Information available at the « direction Culture et Patrimoine » (Culture and Heritage office) of the town of Besançon

A tower especially for children, to help them understand the incredible invention created by Vauban in Besançon

Explore Vauban’s fortifications with Fred and Jamy. Watch the well-know discovery programme “C’est pas Sorcier” (It’s no mystery). Duration: 30 minutes. Ground floor
Lounge for reading or playing Vauban chess (adults); game area with building toys (children). First floor
Hands-on and observation games for children 8 years or older, on the platform
At the Chamars Tower in the « Gare d’Eau »  
July 10th through August 31st, every day from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m.

**Towers with music** – (admission free)  
Information at Direction Culture et Patrimoine (Office of Culture and Heritage) – the town of Besançon

Experience the charm of the clarinet and the accordion with the Duo Syrius, at the Cordeliers and Chamars Towers. Enjoy a beautiful European repertory: the heat of the tango, Slavic romanticism, 17th century fugues and preludes.

August: Saturday the 9th at 6:00 p.m. (Chamars Tower) and 7:30 p.m. (Cordeliers Tower).

**Guided tours of the Vauban heritage** – (tickets sold at the Tourist Office)

- The fortified towers at Fort Griffon : the works of Vauban in Besançon  
For the first time - a unique opportunity to visit the restored fortified towers: Chamars Tower and the Cordeliers Tower.

  Departure: Chamars Tower, 3:00 p.m. – Arrival Fort Griffon  
  Duration: 2 hours

July: Wednesday the 2nd, 9th, 23rd and 30th / Thursday the 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th et 31st / Friday the 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th / Saturday 19th at 3:00 p.m.

August: Tuesday the 12th, Wednesday the 13th and 27th / Thursday the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th / Friday the 1st, 8th, 22nd and 29th / Saturday the 9th and 23rd at 3:00 p.m.

- Tower to tower : the fortified towers of the urban wall  
  From the Notre-Dame Tower to the Cordeliers Tower – Itinerary 1

  Departure: in front of the gendarme office at Tarragnoz, rue Charles Nodier

July: Saturday the 5th at 3:00 p.m.
August: Saturday the 2nd at 3:00 p.m.
September: Saturday the 6th at 3:00 p.m.

From the Saint-Pierre bastion to the Porte taillée – Itinerary 2

Departure: the Tourist Office

July: Saturday the 12th at 3:00 p.m.
August: Saturday the 16th at 3:00 p.m.
September: Saturday the 20th at 3:00 p.m.

Battant fortified wall : from the arena guardroom to the Pelote Tower - Itinerary 3

Departure: in front of the fountain, Place Marulaz

July: Saturday the 26th at 3:00 p.m.
August: Saturday the 30th at 3:00 p.m.
September: Saturday the 27th at 3:00 p.m.

Walks around the forts – Information at the Tourist Office

The relief around Besançon has captured the interest of many a strategist. From Vauban to Séré de Rivières, the hills of Besançon, with their fortifications, recall the works of these great engineers.

July: Sunday the 13th at 10:00 – Fort Chaudanne
August: Sunday the 17th at 10:00 - Fort Bregille
September: Sunday the 7th at 10:00 - Fort Rosemont
October: Sunday the 12th at 10:00 – Fort Planoise

Cruises on the River Doubs
Two excursion boats to discover Vauban’s heritage from the river. Information: CNFS Vedettes panoramique - 06 64 48 66 80 or Le Vauban - 03 81 68 13 25.

Excursions « Fortifications along the river », with a guide, Vedettes panoramiques
Duration: 1 hour and 15 minutes
July: Saturday the 6th, 12th, 19th and 26th at 5:15 p.m.
August: Saturday the 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd at 5:15 p.m.
September: Saturday the 6th at 5:15 p.m.

Rides on a mini-train
A 45-minutes ride with an audio guide will unveil the mysteries of the city (in one ride or get off at the Citadel and resume the tour later on) - 03 81 87 83 36.

By plane
Vauban seen from the sky, with comments by the pilot - 03 81 81 50 82.

Exhibits – Information at the Time Museum

Vauban and Besançon – Time Museum
When preparing the siege of Besançon in the 1670s, Vauban had only on word: artillery. The “mounts” around the city rendered it impregnable without the flood of fire that was discharged. After having taken the town, Vauban raised the fortifications with two aims in mind: turn the border town against the Empire and keep an eye on the local population, who were not entirely on the side of France.

From the 1st of July 2008 to the 4th of January 2009
Tuesday through Saturday from 9:15 to 12 and 2:00 to 6:00 - admission
Sunday from 10:00 to 18:00 - free

« Vauban » workshops – registration required :  03 81 87 81 61

- Ô Vauban: the taking of the Citadel is not child’s play ! A game of strategy and tactics in which swordsmen and halberdiers fight it out.

- Young surveyors (8-12 years old): survey and measure the land as Vauban did. With a chain measure, a board and a height gauge, discover the trade of an engineer in the 17th century.
July : Friday the 11th, 18th and 25th at 9:30 a.m.
August : Friday the 1st, 8th, 22nd and 29th at 9:30 a.m.

Guided tours « About Vauban »

From the 2nd of July through the 31st of August, every Wednesday at 2:30 and every Sunday at 4:30

Vauban, the major sites – the fortified heritage, landscapes and architecture
Time Museum
The exhibit that looks back over the works of Vauban – slide show, videos and materialthèque – co-produced with the “Cité de l’architecture et du patrimoine”.

From the 5th of June through the 21st of September – admission free
Tuesday through Saturday: 9:15 to 12:00 and 2:00 to 6:00
Sunday : 10:00 to 6:00

Cultural activities at the Citadel (tickets sold on site)
Once upon a time in the 17th century
Actors dressed in costumes of the era bring the history of the Citadel alive: songs, popular dances of the day, fencing, humorous sketches, poetry…

From the 20th of July through the 17th of August, every day, 2:30 to 6:00

Wandering Vauban
Meet Vauban in person to learn everything about the history and the architecture of the Citadel.

July: every day from the 6th to the 18th at 3:00
August: Tuesday the 19th and 26th / Thursday the 21st and 28th / Sunday the 24th and 31st at 3:00
September: Sunday the 7th at 3:00

The Citadel of Besançon a 2000-year-old story – guided tour
Take a tour with an accredited « City of art and history” lecturer and discover the characteristics of an exceptional defence site, the history and the role of the fortress from its construction to today.

July: Thursday the 17th, 24th and 31st at 10:00 and 11:00 a.m.
August: Thursday the 7th, 14th, and 21st at 10:00 and 11:00 a.m.

Unusual places and points of interest at the Citadel – guided tour
Decipher enigmatic inscriptions, re-used stones, remains and traces of works that have disappeared or been modified.

September: Sunday the 28th at 3:00

About heritage works…
Entertaining and educational event: learn about the safeguarding, maintenance and promotion of architectural heritage works – restoration workshops, activities for children, novel guided tours.

From the 13th through the 21st of September, 9:00 to 6:00

Inscription of Besançon, the works of Vauban on the Unesco World Heritage list
Sound and light show
Place de la Révolution, on the façade of the Fine Arts Museum

From July 8th to 11th, every 20 minutes beginning at 9:45 p.m.

Hold your breath and keep the 11th of July open for the results of the 32nd Annual Session of the Unesco World Heritage Committee.

If the results confirm our expectations, a joyous celebration will prolong the evening. The guns will roar to mark the beginning of the festivities.

Vauban, accompanied by his colourful, disparate court, will welcome visitors. Buffoons and acrobats will harangue passers-by, actors will put on sketches. A sandsculptor will create a realer-than-life replica of the King’s Tower and the Vesoul Jazz Band musicians will set the place on fire!

Around 9 p.m., you will be invited to stroll through the city to the Citadel, accompanied by Vauban and his court. New Orleans jazz will be provided by the group Jazzopen. On arrival at the Citadel, the King’s guards will invite you on a torchlight tour of the ramparts. Baroque music will be provided by the group ORFEO. Don’t forget your flashlight!
A tasty surprise awaits you on your return to the Saint-Etienne façade.

Information about Vauban heritage activities and festivities:
The Town of Besançon
• Direction Culture et Patrimoine (Office of Culture and Heritage), 27 rue de la République, 03 81 41 53 65
• Musée du Temps (Time Museum), 96 Grande Rue, 03 81 87 81 50
  www.besancon.fr

Office de Tourisme et des Congrès (Besançon Tourist Office), 2 place de la 1ère Armée française, 03 81 80 92 55
  www.besancon-tourisme.com
  info@besancon-tourisme.com

Citadelle (Citadel), Rue des Fusillés de la Résistance, 03 81 87 83 33
  www.citadelle.com