

Glossaire

Bastion: low pentagonal structure protruding from the curtain wall*.

Casemate: artillery-proof vaulted chamber.

Curtain wall: section of rampart between two bastions*.

Dauphin: a noble title for heirs to the French throne since 1349, when a lord sold his seignury, called the Dauphiné, to the King of France on condition that the heir to the French throne bore the title “Dauphin”.

Demi-lune: a protected outwork beyond a bastioned front, located in front of the curtain wall* and encircled by a ditch.

Glacis: a slightly inclined plane connecting the top of the covered walkway with the natural level of the land that extends in front of the site.

Lunette: advanced structure of the same shape as the demi-lune* but not integrated into a bastioned front.

Philibert de l’Orme (c. 1510-1570): French Renaissance architect.

Silviculture: forest cultivation.

Practical information

Average length of visit: 90 minutes

Guided tours.

Tours are suitable for disabled visitors.

Gift and book shop

The guide for this monument can be found in the *Itinéraires* collection in the gift and book shop.

Centre des monuments nationaux

Place forte de Mont-Dauphin

05600 Mont-Dauphin

tél. **04 92 45 42 40**

www.monuments-nationaux.fr

crédits photos © Marc Tullane / Centre des monuments nationaux, illustration Lionel Dujou, réalisation graphique Marie-Hélène Forestier, traduction Triducteo, Imprimé en France, 2022.

Vauban (1633-1707)

Military engineer

Born into the minor nobility, he was enlisted by the Fronde fighters of the Prince of Condé but was taken prisoner and entered the service of the king. In 1654, he successfully led his first siege, earning himself recognition. He became a military engineer in 1655, and General Commissioner of Fortifications in 1678; he travelled all over the kingdom inspecting the borders and protecting them with fortifications, forming the king’s “Pré Carré” frontier. He built or enhanced over 300 sites, nine of which were designed by Vauban himself, including Mont-Dauphin.

An erudite man

Having led 48 victorious sieges, Vauban was also considered the best “taker of cities” of his time. His talents as a strategist and engineer allowed him to perfect the bastion* fortifications built by his predecessors. Through his travels, he acquired economic, social and geographical knowledge of France and wrote essays on various subjects: attacking and defending fortresses, silviculture* and river navigation. Aware of the poverty of the people, Vauban published *The Royal Tithe* in 1706, decrying the evils of the tax system and advocating the abolition of the privileges of the powerful, a project rejected by Louis XIV.

“Little Bighorn” by Ousmane Sow

Since July 2021, the Centre des monuments nationaux has exhibited “*Little Bighorn*”, a monumental work by the Senegalese sculptor Ousmane Sow, in the fortified village of Mont-Dauphin. Consisting of thirty-five pieces sculpted using a technique developed by the artist, the series as a whole comprises a dozen battle scenes in reference to the famous confrontation between the Plains Indians and the United States Federal Army in 1876. Seeking to represent peoples with close spiritual ties to the African ethnic groups already depicted in his sculptures (Nuba, Masai, Zulu and Peuhl), Ousmane Sow turned his attention to the Plains Indians of North America.

“I had thought of leaving Africa a little to create another ethnic group which would come a little closer to our customs, and I thought of the American Indians. Like most African peoples, they care about their bodies, have a taste for make-up, and revere their sorcerer. As I could not represent the entire Indian race, I used the Battle of Little Bighorn as a starting point, where General Custer lost the battle and was killed. “*Little Bighorn*” represents one of the Indians’ most resounding victories. This is the most important series I plan to make.”
Ousmane Sow, 1996

Fortified village of Mont-Dauphin

A masterpiece of Alpine fortification

A Vauban stronghold

Built by Vauban on a strategic site between 1693 and 1704, Mont-Dauphin was an outpost designed to protect the Kingdom of France against invasions from Italy. Following the attack by Victor Amadeus II of Savoy in 1692, Louis XIV realised that the French kingdom lacked defences on the Alpine border. Commissioned by the king, Vauban chose the Plateau des Mille Vents to build the Mont-Dauphin stronghold. His plan was to provide accommodation for a civilian population in addition to the military garrison. It was named in honour of the Dauphin*, eldest son of the king, and of the province of the same name.

A fortress that was never besieged

An effective deterrent, the stronghold was never besieged. In 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht moved the



Italian border further away from the village, resulting in a slowdown in the development of the garrison and the population. The site came under only one attack: an

Italian bombing raid in 1940 which destroyed a wing of the arsenal.

The only urban complex in the Alps, initiated according to Vauban’s plans, the stronghold was listed as a historic monument in 1966, and subsequently placed on the World Heritage List in 2008 under the “Fortifications of Vauban”.

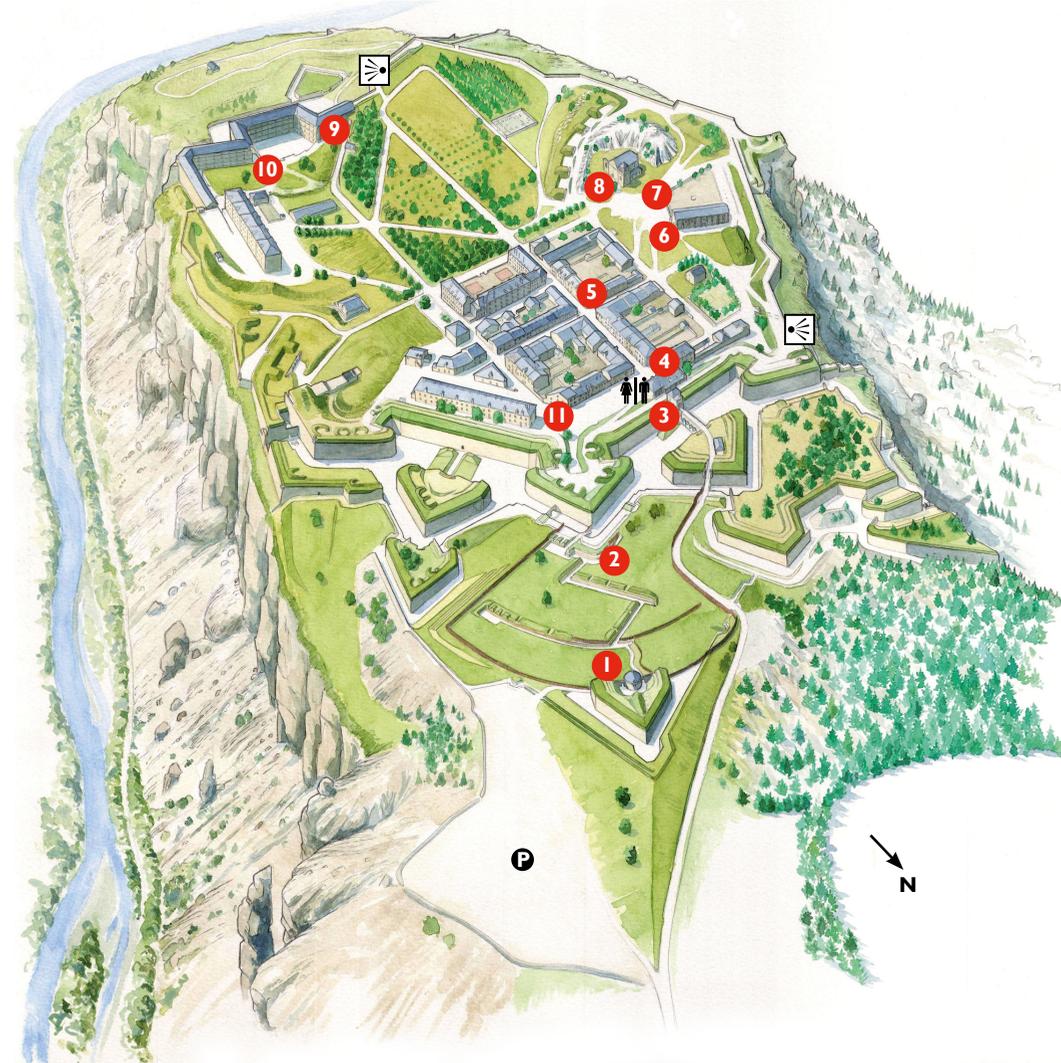
* Explanations overleaf

Defence

- 1 **The lunette* d'Arçon.** Vauban foresaw the need to place an advanced structure on the glacis*, below the fortification, capable of holding assailants at bay. This lunette* was not built until the 18th century. In 1791, General d'Arçon added casemates* and a tour-reduit enabling reverse fire. This inner redoubt was connected to the ditch of the royal bastion* via an underground passage 113 metres long.
- 2 **The stronghold system.** The medieval ramparts were rendered useless by 15th-century artillery. The only solution was to bury the fortifications, protecting them with mounds of earth and preventing access with large ditches. Thus, the bastion*, whose triangular-shape offers fewer blind spots, alternates with the demi-lune*, each defending the other. The curtain walls* linked the bastions* together, while, on the outer side of the ditch, a mound, used as the covered walkway, formed the first line of defence.
- 3 **The Porte de Briançon** is typical of the style adopted by Vauban for the gateways of his enclosures, with its triangular pediment capping an unsculpted rectangular panel. The drawbridge is operated by a lever system.

Accommodation

- 4 **The Horloge pavilion**, in a classical style, housed various activities, such as the guard room and the accommodation of the commander of the stronghold. **The Officers' pavilion**, completed in 1700, was used to house the unmarried officers of the garrison. They had a spacious apartment decorated with wood panelling.
- 9 **The Rochambeau barracks** was a "rampart barracks" built between 1765 and 1785 to increase the accommodation capacity of the stronghold.



Originally covered with an artillery terrace, remarkable barrel-vaulted roof timbers were added in the early 19th century to improve its watertightness using a process invented in the 16th century by Philibert de l'Orme*. The loft was used as a stable for mules, for storage and as an indoor training ground.

- 10 **The Binot barracks** are a good example of how Vauban's model was adapted to the steep terrain, in that the modules are offset to follow the slope. In front of the barracks, a small building shelters the access to an underground cistern with a capacity of 1,840m³.

- 11 **The Campana barracks**, built in the late 17th century in accordance with Vauban's principles, are made up of seven adjoining identical modules, each with an entrance and a staircase leading to two barrack rooms on each level. Today, the barracks house the town hall, craft workshops and apartments.

Shelter for a village

- 5 **The houses** were built according to a precise plan, with vaulted cellars, a ground floor for stalls and craftsmen's workshops, dwellings on the first floor and an attic. The streets were built straight and wide to facilitate the movement of artillery in particular.
- 8 **The Church of Saint-Louis**, designed for a more populated village, was never completed for lack of funds and a congregation.

Storage

- 6 **The gunpowder depot** was built according to Vauban's plans in 1695. It had very thick walls, buttresses and a perimeter wall, all designed to limit the blast of a possible explosion. In 1881, in order to withstand advances made in artillery, it was covered with a thick layer of earth.
- 7 **The arsenal**, a key element, served both as a depot (cannons, gun carriages, wheels on the ground floor; rifles, muskets, knives on the first floor) and as a weapons repair workshop.