

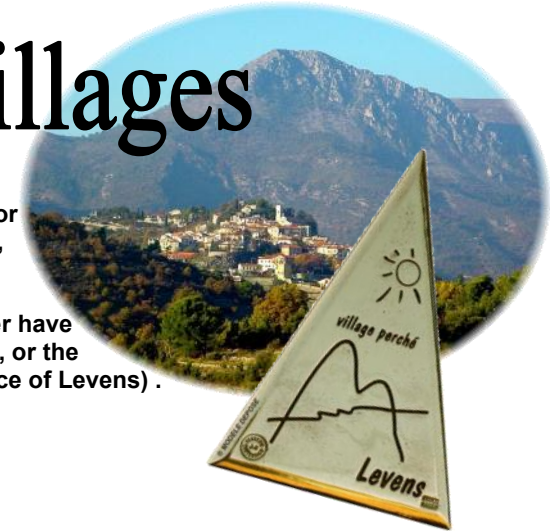


# Levens *Le vert pays*



## on the road of the perched villages

So that the visit of the « perched Village by Levens » is made easier for you, a signposted circuit was set up, been sealed in the soil, so you have only in you let guide. Vous be able to "enter" in shall never have by leaving either the swimming pool, or the « placette Paul Olivier » (Tourist office of Levens) .



By wishing you a nice visit...

### His History

Numerous surrounding walls as well as inscriptions carved in the stones and other remains are the witnesses of both Ligure settlements and Roman presence in Levens. On the site of the Roman house of the Madonna, was built in the 11th Century the first church called "Notre Dame des Prés", an exceptional example of Lombard Roman art. In the Middle Ages, the village spread round the watch tower and the castle built on a rocky spur overhanging the site, with its paved streets, its workshops, its new church and ramparts sheltering its inhabitants from the barbaric invasions.

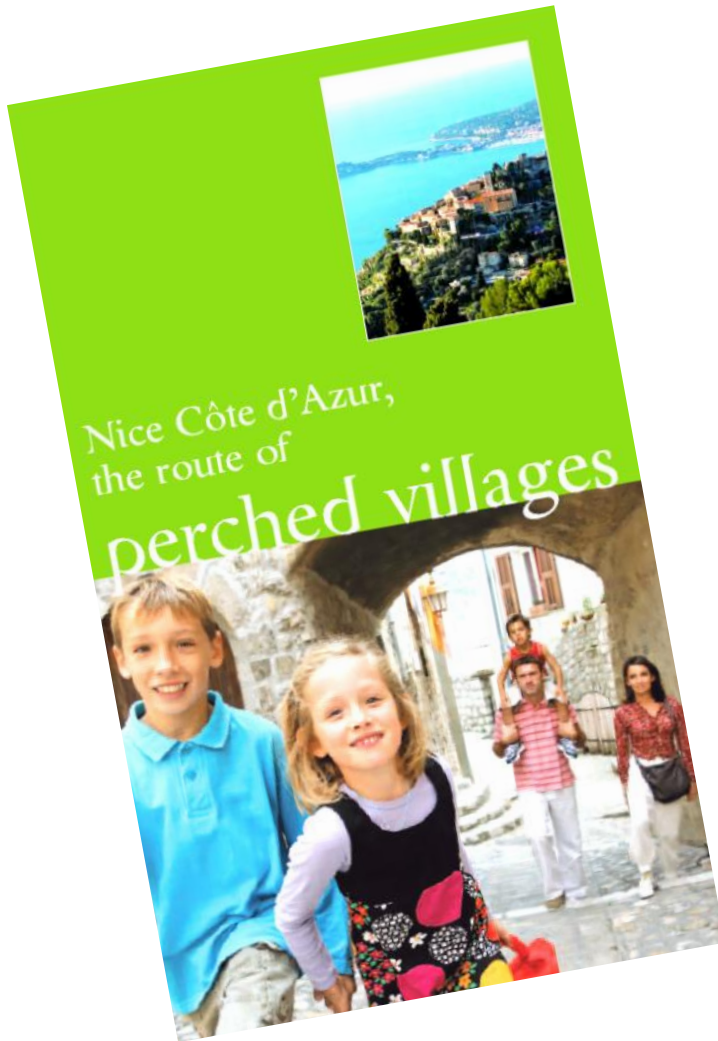
In 1435, the salt route running through Levens and linking it to Utelle and the Vésubie was ended. At first the preserve of the Riquier d'Eze family , Levens became the fief of the Grimaldi de Beuil in the 12th Century. The charter signed in 1475 between Louis Grimaldi and the Levens people allowed them to run their own administration.

In 1621, the Levens people rose up against the Grimaldi family; they invested the castle and planted on the village square a big conical stone « the Boutàu » on which they danced as a token of freedom; The following year, Charles Emmanuel of Savoy ordered the ramparts to be destroyed.

In 1700, the letters patent granted by Duke Victor Amédée put an end to feudalism : Levens became « Countess of herself ».

Following the bloody events of the Revolution, the Empire appeared as a peaceful time in which the most famous Levens man, André Masséna won glory.

At the fall of Napoleon, the County of Nice returned under Sardinian rule until its annexation to France in 1860 and the first Mayor of Nice was François Malaussena from Levens. The fall of the Empire and the 1870 war brought about a drift from land as the population of Levens lacked water and the olive culture dropped. Doctor Joseph Faraut, then the mayor of the village, adopted as his motto "aqua fons vitae" (water, the source of life), thus helping the Canton of Levens to revive. The same rural planning policy was furthered by his grandson, Joseph Raybaud, elected the youngest mayor in France in 1929.



### COMMUNAUTÉ NICE CÔTE D'AZUR

TOURIST OFFICE OF LEVENS  
3, Placette Paul Olivier - 06670 Levens  
Tel: 04 93 79 71 00 / Fax: 04 93 79 75 64  
Email: ot.levens@wanadoo.fr  
www.levenstourisme.com



## Regarding « Boutau »

When in 1621, Annibal Grimaldi was choked in Tourrettes-Revest, César Grimaldi was baron of Levens. It is subjected to the effects of this fatal fall in its family, since this event decided on the inhabitants to rebel against their lord. The death of Annibal de Beuil was the sign of the uprising of Levensans which got rid of their lord César. The castle was demolished ... It is to perpetuate in the memory of their descendants the historical fact of the expulsion of their last lord, whom Levensois of this time put down on the upper place of their village in front of the entrance of the ancient manorial castle, a round, cone-shaped stone cut down. The inhabitants gave a name to this stone: "Boutau". The tradition of pride and independence so hard kept at Levensois as every year, in the course of their employers' holiday they organize one dance « farandole » or « brandi ». Having gone through the main streets of the city, the couples of dancers are going to put down the foot on this symbolic stone as a sign of win!

### The Hill

Climax of the village in 600 metres in altitude. Panorama on 360°. Seen on the valley of Vésubie, the channel of Vésubie, the mount Vial, the « Madonne d'Utelle », Mercantour, the mount Férier, and the Cap off Antibes. Above the swimming pool the relics of the Tower of Lookout. Certain stones come from oppidum ancient of Levens or castellum Leventi.

### The Parish Church Saint Antonin

#### ORIGIN

Leaned on the North bulwark - the East of the ancient feudal castle, the Church is mentioned for the first time in 1286 in the charter of the Abbey of St Pons (Nice).

#### THE FACADE

Restored at the beginning of XX th Century just like the Cathedral of Monaco. Stones come partly from careers of Turbie, but especially from careers of Ste. Clear, hamlet of Levens. They can imagine the ancient facade by looking at the stone lintel of grey limestone, deposited on the place in front of the Church. According to the ancient photographs, the steeple was ended by a building in four slopes in the form of pyramid as in the Medium and high Country inhabitant of Nice. It was transformed into a crenellated tower when they installed the clock.

#### INSIDE

Basilical plan in three naves separated by two rows of columns composed of high drums in very hard local grey limestone to be worked. Foundations include curious heads of late Romance style, they can point out the diversity of presentations : warlike footed the bill, priest, twins and the « smile of Levens ». To note the small cartouche on one of the drums of the first column : 1614, the date of the important restoration of the Church. We are in front of an example of baroque style as in the most part of the churches of the region very influenced by Piedmont and Liguria.

**The chorus :** the brought forward twisted columns give the impression of a perspective to draw attention to the centre of the retable. The break of the entablature and the pediment shows the supernatural vision of the Christ in majesty. The fresco painter Guy Ceppa restored in 1981-1982, the original decor of the frescoes which decorated the Church in XVII th Century. To note: the Table of communion of marble 1779 of Carrara marble polychrome and inlaid with onyx. Some elements of the chorus date of XVI th Century, notably the prédelle amazing of 1594 telling the life of saint Antonin.

**Virgin of Vow :** in 1735, a terrible epidemic of fever devastated the region. Levensans, in recognition of the protection of the Virgin, made vow in 1738, that during 30 years the holiday of December 8 th in favour of « Immaculée Conception » would be celebrated every year with promise to renew this vow every thirty years. Promise was always kept scrupulously. The Virgin carries sumptuous clothes accomplished by the cisterciennes sisters of the abbey of Castagniers in 1955. Virgin is in the centre of the retable supervised by the pictures of St Antonin is of St Jean the Evangelist . Both clothes of Jacques Bottero, artist of Nice of XVII th Century, in the chorus, represent Saint Antonin. **All altars and retables** of the Church are the same baroque topped up style and agree with the decor of the chorus. They all are classified by ancient monuments.

On both sides of the chorus : the altar and retable of Our Lady of the Rosary , cloth of XVIII th Century polychrome Century, Gypseries epoch Gets worse. The altar of souls of the Purgatory Epoch Gets worse: Saint of « Gonzague » and Saint « Nicolas de Tolentino » interceding to saint Pierre for souls of the Purgatory. Cloth epoch Gets worse.

**The statue of saint Antonin** represented with the palm to martyr date of XIX th Century. **The pulpit to be preached** moved in the first span of the low north side, an wooden sculpted at the end of XVI th Century. The tense arm held the crucifix to represent the force of God.

### Fountains and channel : « rigoles »

The first water inlet takes place in 1875 thanks to the acquisition of a source being at the foot of the mount Férier. Four fountains running all year long are done up. Before, the village eats in drinking water thanks to the rain stored in tanks. Visible channels in the village serve for feeding gardens - « ouòrt » in levensan and in nissart - in water. Sprinkling is organized by the town hall alternately, of day as night, to a strict timetable. Water circulates by a central channel : « rigole » which ramifies. This system works even at present.

### Home Familiale Masséna

Been born on May 6th, 1758 in Nice, he crossed her childhood to Levens. Big Serviceman, nicknamed « the beloved child of win » by Napoleon 1st. Duke of Rivoli, Prince of Essling, Field Marshal of France, he died in Paris on April 4th, 1817.

### Home of Portal

On these bulwarks are the hinges of the ancient door taken away in 1622 by decision of the duke of Savoy Charles-Emmanuel. This last orders to destroy bulwarks and to take away doors in retaliation against the lord of Levens Caesar Grimaldi, his vassal. Leaned on what remains of bulwarks of the XIVth Century, this ancient bourgeois residence have a cellar of medieval origin. Having acquired by the municipality in 1971, it receives temporary exhibitions and, permanently, the personal collection of the sculptor Jean-Pierre Augier.

### Natal home François Malausséna

In this home is born, on August 18th, 1814, François Malausséna, prestigious lawyer, shining politician. First French Mayor of Nice in 1860, adviser general of the district of Levens, he dedicated all her energy to the development of the region, up to his death in 1882.

## Doors of the ancient castle

The first feudal castle is rather an upper-class home. The village becomes established around this castle, on one easy rocky spur to be defended and endowed with bulwarks of the end of the XIII th Century and of XIV th Centuries.

## The blacks Penitents Chapel

In Levens, the statutes of the Brotherhood of the blacks penitents were founded under the title of the Christmas of Saint « Jean Baptiste » and Saint « Jean Décapité ». The penitents blacks were in charge of the sick, of poor people, of the toilet of deaths and funerals and participated in streams.

#### The OUTSIDE :

The black chapel is in rectangular form. The Facade of Baroque style is overcome of a broken pediment and a pretty little steeple with volutes put down on the ledge of the roof.

#### INSIDE :

To the left: The stalls of the penitents, a statue of Saint « Jean Baptiste » in his chair of stream decorated with twisted columns of baroque style.

In the centre: The retable devoted to the Virgin to the child encircled with Saint « Jean Baptiste » and with St « Michel Archange ». Anonymous picture of XVI th Century, restored by the fresco painter Guy Ceppa in 1979. They will note the landscape and the pretty small rural stages.

Under the altar : polychrome wooden being lying Christ of XVII th Century.

The stations of the Cross date Sardinian restoration (1814 - 1860) and before had to be in the parish church.

In the Crypt were kept the reservations of grains lent by the Penitents to the peasants whose crop had been poor. It was the Mount of Devoutness Frumentaire or Granatique. A museum of Religious Art is installed there.

## The white penitents chapel

In Levens, the currency of the White Penitents is inscribed on the pediment "Crux Ave Spes Unica" (Crucifix my only hope). The statutes of the White Penitents testify very strict moral and cultural obligations that the Penitents were obvious. Except their spiritual vocation, they played a very important role of society of mutual assistance and assistance notably to the sick.

#### The OUTSIDE :

The Chapel constructed in 1775 is wholly representative of these numerous religious buildings of Baroque art Piémontais which they find in the most part of the villages of the County of Nice. The facade keeps a certain sobriety. Central plan is convex while

both lateral spans are straight. The pediment follows the lightly wave-like lines of the facade. To note: the only opening: the oculus bifide. The chapel is devoted to our Lady of Assumption .

#### INSIDE :

This chapel is amazing by its plan in the form of ellipse, which draws attention to the scenic effect of the retable very nice in gypsum laughed polychrome of the XVIIIth century.

The processional group of XVIII th polychrome wooden Century, stucco and pasted cloths. Amazing equilibrium of the "air" statue of the Virgin supported by two angels in his rise towards the sky.

To the left the picture of the Assumption of the Virgin (1587 of Coriolan Malagavazzo). School of Crémone, for the period which follows Renaissance from too close distance. The balanced composition of the picture recalls the influence of Raphael.

The processional Crucifix of the Penitents overcome by a Pelican, symbol of charity, emblem chosen to be the greeting of the humanity.

## The Room of Marriages

It is adorned with frescoes of Louis Dussour (manager of the Arts Décoratifs in Nice), accomplished in 1958 for the bicentenary of the birth of the Field marshal André Masséna, duke of Rivoli, Prince d' Essling, from whom the family is originally of Levens. Style reminds of that of the pictures of Épinal, type of rather naïve popular imagery which tells heroic and flattering tales. Lively colours and black traits of the drawings underline the figures on make it white of the wall.

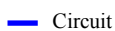
## LEGEND



Departures



Arrows of orientation



Circuit



Point of view



Tourist office