

Welcome to the site

St Jean de Côte is an historic village which dates from the middle ages. You will find a romano-byzantine church, a priory, a bridge and water-mill of really amazing architecture. It has won a prize for its roofs and has been voted « One of the Most Beautiful French Villages ».

We hope you enjoy this virtual visit and look forward to meeting you in reality.

The Heritage

St Jean de Côte is a remarkable collection of buildings from the XIth to the XVIIth century.

The Château, La Marthonie, dates from the XIIth century and is a classified monument. Situated in the heart of the village, it dominates the village square;

One of its most famous residents was Mondot de la Marthonie, first president of the Cour de Parlement de Bordeaux and then of Paris. He was also the queen mother's coucellor when the king went to Italy.

The château was first built in the XIIth century but was damaged by the English in the Hundred Years war. It was partially reconstructed in the XVth century and completed in the XVIth. This structure was named the « The Old Château », with towers, crenellations and vertical windows. In the XVIIIth it was enlarged vertically and a lower wing was added in the ancient style. The free space between the left wing and the eastern space was provided with a monumental staircase.

The Church of St John the Baptist.

Built at the end of 1083 by the order of Raymond de Thiviers; the bishop of Périgueux, it became the parish church but was originally the church of the Priory.

The building is perfectly orientated and is unique in its construction. It is built in a semicircle around an apse, since the nave is formed of a single square bay surmounted by a dome. Damaged in the English wars, it was rebuilt with great difficulty owing to the great weight of the dome. It collapsed in 1787 and again in 1860

The dome has recently been replaced by a modern construction so you don't risk to be crushed by a falling dome. The work has been possible due to the efforts of the society « APRESJC » and generous donations from the local government and the Credit Agricole.

The Priory

Reynaud de Thiviers authorised the building of the Priory before going to the Crusades in 1101

It housed 16 canons and the clergy responsible for the surrounding towns and villages. It appears to have been quite rich and influential in the area. In 1669 the bishop of Périgueux demanded that the damage to the Priory be repaired and the existing building dates from this time and also the wood carvings in the church.

The ecclesiastics disappeared during the Revolution, the buildings sold, books and manuscripts burnt. Nowadays the Priory is privately owned. From this time the village entered a phase of decline.

In the XIX century St Jean de Côte saw a new period of prosperity when the railway Angoulême – Brive was constructed but it declined again from the First World War up to the 1970's. From that period on it has regained some of its former stature owing to foreigners taking up residence or buying holiday homes. Added to this, there has been much restoration work and an important development of tourism. Not for nothing has the village gained the coveted title of

One of the Most Beautiful Villages of France

Translation Suzanne Anderton