

DOMAIN OF CHAUMONT-SUR-LOIRE CHÂTEAU-HISTORIC GROUNDS-STABLES



DOMAINE
DE CHAUMONT-SUR-LOIRE



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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JACQUES-DONATIEN LERAY

A FIGURE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

JACQUES-DONATIEN LERAY, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND THE AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Leray de Chaumont bought the Chaumont-sur-Loire estate in 1750. He demolished the North wing of the Château, thus bringing light into the Courtyard and opening up **one of the most stunning vistas of the royal river, which was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site** in 2000.

Leray de Chaumont played an active role in the American War of Independence. In 1776, revolutionary envoys Silas Deane, Arthur Lee and Benjamin Franklin arrived in Nantes, from whence they travelled to Paris, arriving on 22 December. They were soon invited to stay in Leray's house in Passy, Hôtel de Valentinois, which he had bought in 1774.

Having been asked by the American government to supervise the equipment and management of the combined French and American fleet, Leray commissioned the conversion of a merchant ship into a warship, **which he named USS Bonhomme Richard**, in his shipyards.

A few months later, Leray made a financial and material commitment to the fight for independence by providing the insurgents with money, steamer trunks from his own fleet, uniforms, supplies, and saltpetre, which he produced at Chaumont.

When the tides of victory began to turn with French assistance, it was at his Hôtel de Valentinois that Benjamin Franklin worked on writing the defensive treaty of alliance that led to the dispatch of Admiral d'Estaing's squadron and Rochambeau's division to support the uprising. **When the peace treaty between France and Britain was signed at Versailles in 1783, Franklin was allowed to continue living in the Passy residence as Ambassador for the new republic. The government of the United States was internationally recognised.**

Continue your discovery of this historical figure by visiting his recently restored grave in Chaumont-sur-Loire cemetery. *(10 minutes' walk)*

SUGGESTED PROGRAMME FOR A DAY'S VISIT, FROM €51 PER ADULT*

- > From 10am, themed guided tour: Château, Stables and Historic Grounds. Visit to the Jacques-Donatien Leray space,
- > Lunch at one of our restaurants with an all-inclusive 3-course meal,
- > Self-guided tour of the Château, International Garden Festival (in summer) or the Arts and Nature Centre,
- > Visit to Jacques-Donatien Leray's grave in Chaumont-sur-Loire cemetery.

*Price includes admission to the Domain in low season and a gourmet bistro-style lunch, for groups of 20 or more people.

