BÉNÉDICTINE

LE PALAIS

Paris, 12 December 2023



An architectural masterpiece from the 19th century, the Palais Bénédictine houses the world's only distillery for Bénédictine liqueur, as well as the oldest known private company museum. To mark its 150th anniversary, the museum is reinventing itself to offer an even more immersive and interactive visit experience.

Alexandre Le Grand, a Fécampois with a predestined name, who invented the Bénédictine liqueur and made it famous throughout the world.



Behind this fairytale-like palace is Alexandre Le Grand, a merchant from Fécamp. By chance, he came into possession of a mysterious book containing the recipe for an elixir created in Fécamp Abbey in 1510, which he succeeded in reproducing in 1863, and adapted to create the Bénédictine liqueur. This visionary then built an astonishing neo-Gothic and neo-Renaissance building, which houses both the distillery and a museum, where he preserves objects and artworks from the former abbey of Fécamp, where the recipe was created, or which evoke the Benedictine monks. With his collection, he illustrates the origins of his liqueur.



Inspired by his famous namesake, he set out to conquer the world with his elixir of 27 plants and spices. A pioneer in marketing, he came up with original advertisements, exported all over the world, and defended his brand by registering it and fighting against the numerous counterfeits. There have been more than 800 such imitations, making Bénédictine undoubtedly one of the most copied liqueurs in the world.



SOUVENIR DE FÉCAMP. — UNE VISITE CHEZ M. LEGRAND, PROPRIÉTAIRE DE LA BÉNÉDICTINE. (Voir page 315.)

Reflecting the visionary spirit of its creator,
Bénédictine reveals itself in a distinctive way

While there have been some fantastic wine tourism initiatives in the major wine-growing regions for many years, the Musée Bénédictine is undoubtedly the oldest example: it could be said that this company museum, entirely managed by a private entity, invented "spiritourism".

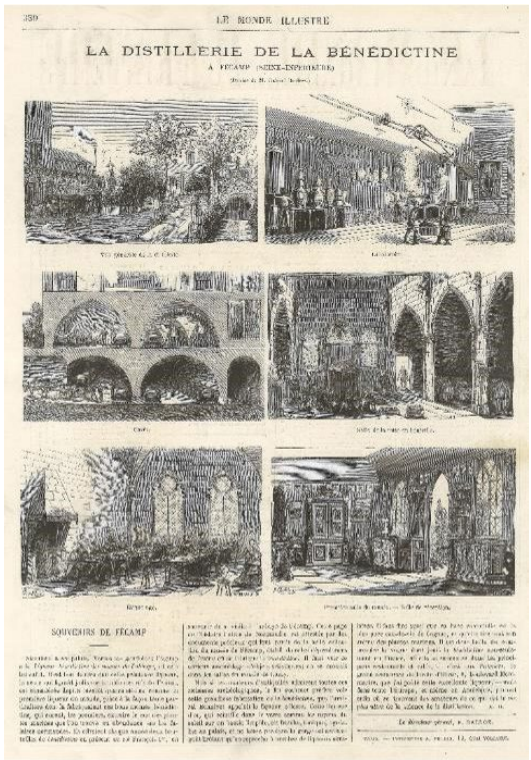


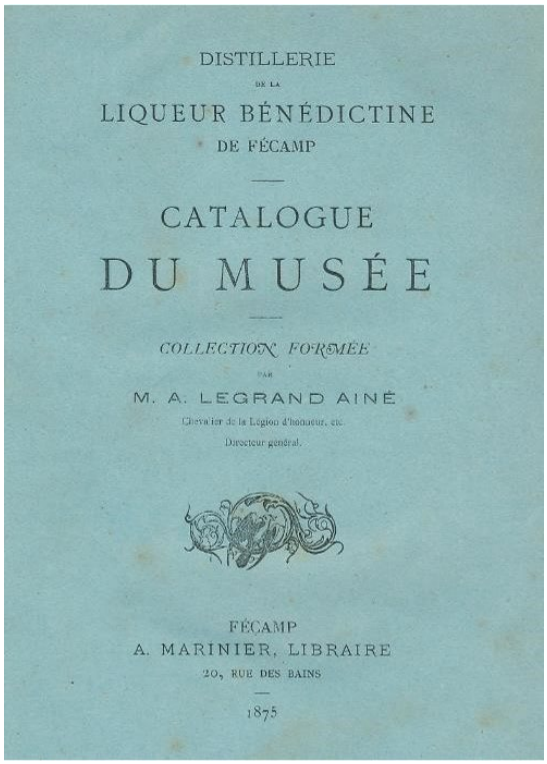






Although the date of the museum's inauguration is not known precisely, advertisements mentioning it appeared at the end of 1872. However, it was in the summer of 1873 that the first visitors' book was created, attesting to the museum's regular opening to the public.





Praised in the press and mentioned in all the guidebooks, the Palais Bénédictine quickly established itself as a must-see destination in Normandy. The two-star rating in the Michelin Green Guide makes it a destination "well worth a visit".

Today, to celebrate its 150th anniversary, the museum is being embellished and continues to reveal its unique character.

To further engage visitors, stimulate their curiosity and create lasting memories, the Palais Bénédictine's rich collection of sacred and ancient art is now revealed through immersive experiences.

The tour takes us not only through the history of the Bénédictine liqueur, but also through the different architectural styles that coexist here in joyous harmony:

- The Gothic Room, with its dark elegance and wooden framework in the shape of an inverted ship's shell, once created by local ship carpenters.
- The Renaissance Room, with its coffered ceiling typical of this period that emphasised perfect proportions.
- The Oratory, in pure Gothic style.
- The Abbey Hall, dedicated to the 16 principal abbots of Fécamp, whose statues decorate its walls.

The gem of the museum, the magnificent library will contain over 3,000 books, including priceless incunabula and precious manuscripts.

Visitors can then discover the Bénédictine liqueur, its production secrets, its distillery and its legendary hammered copper stills, some of which date back to the building's construction in the 19th century.

A centrepiece of our industrial heritage, awarded two stars in the Michelin Green Guide, the Palais Bénédictine welcomes over 70,000 visitors every year, who come to lose themselves in a fairytale entirely dedicated to the Bénédictine liqueur, its founding monk and the genius of Alexandre Le Grand. Treasures to be savoured without moderation.



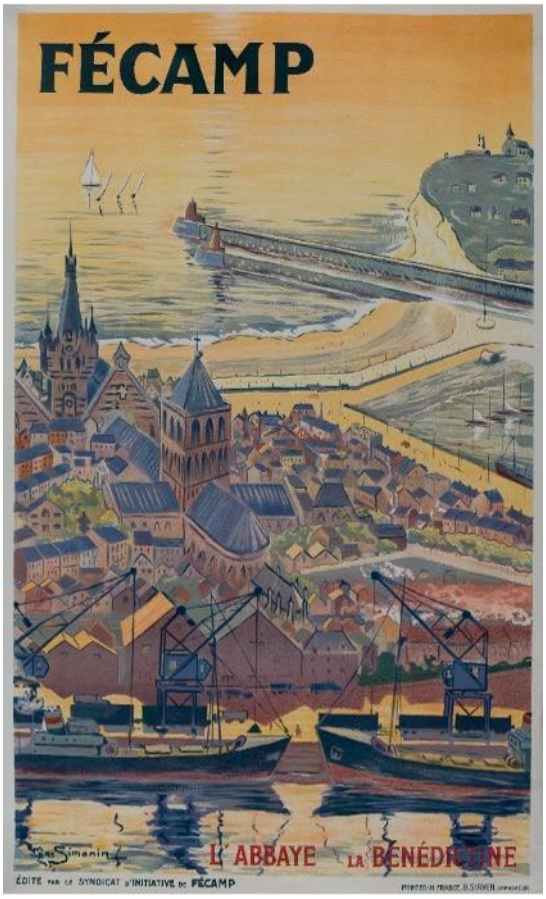
A must-see tourist attraction

Second Empire, 1850s-1860s: following the example of Napoleon III, the wealthy classes began to visit seaside resorts during the summer months, attracted by the benefits that the iodised air and sea bathing were said to provide. Close to the capital, the Normandy coast logically became the destination of choice for Parisians, even more so with the arrival of the railway and the construction of casinos, hotels and holiday homes.

In Fécamp, the inauguration of the casino in 1857, followed by that of the railway station in 1858, marked the true birth of the seaside resort, which attracted celebrities, artists and notables all summer long. In June 1864, when Alexandre le Grand began distributing the Bénédictine liqueur, George Sand, Théophile Gauthier and Jacques Offenbach all visited the Fécamp beach at the same time.

The opening of the museum, which welcomed visitors from 1873 onwards, brought Bénédictine to the attention of these first high-profile tourists.





LE PALAIS BÉNÉDICTINE
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Open all year.

Museum
Every day from 10.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m.
Tours depart at 10.30 am; 11.15 am; 2.00 pm; 2.45 pm; 3.30 pm; 4.15 pm

La Verrière bar
Monday to Thursday & Sunday, 10.30am to 8pm
Friday & Saturday from 10.30am to 9.30pm

Shop
Every day from 10.30am to 6pm
www.boutique.palaisbenedictine.com

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https://www.benedictinedom.com/flamboyant-palais/

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