

The founding of Revel

Revel bastide was founded in 1342 during the reign of Philippe VI (1293-1350) on the old site of Vauré forest.

What is a bastide ?

A 'Bastide' is a medieval town in the south-west of France, normally built completely from scratch. Most were built between the 12th & 14th century. One of the most notable aspects of this type of town is its particularly meticulous layout. A typical 'Bastide' consists of a grid of perpendicular streets converging on a central town square, lined with wonderful arched galleries. Revel has since increased greatly in size and population, but at one point, this honeycomb of streets was completely enclosed within the town walls.

The bastide of Revel: This charming square covered-market (39 m each side), supported by 79 oak pillars, can

be found in Revel's historic town centre. The market is crowned with a stunning 19th century stone tower. At one point, it served as Revel's first town hall. On the ground-floor, six «consuls» (town council officials) and 24 counsellors would gather to make important town decisions. Revel jail and the jailor's quarters took up the first floor. Note the tower windows, they still have bars on them! At one time, the tower that presides over Revel market was a half-timbered belfry. It was later replaced by the neoclassical tower we see today in accordance with 19th century tastes. Interestingly, the arcades are arranged according to the points of a compass (Levant = East, Couchant = West, Midi = South, Nord = North). The surrounding buildings used to be supported by wooden pillars (a few of them still stand today) but were later replaced by stone arches, which were stronger and most importantly less flammable!

Head towards rue du Taur: N° 10, la Maison du Sénéchal (Steward's House) was once the HQ of « la Jeunesse Réveloise » (Revel Youth) a military militia in charge of keeping the peace in Revel. This house, with its 15th century door, was also Alexandre Monoury's first work-shop. This peerlessly gifted cabinet maker from Versailles settled down in Revel in 1888 and launched the 'Fine Furniture' tradition.

Turn right, rue du Temple: at the end of the street, you'll see the «Bains Douches» building. These Public Baths, erected in 1933, were designed by the architect Viala. This geometrically shaped building is symptomatic of an increased concern with hygiene and general well-being at the beginning of the 20th century. Nowadays it serves as a meeting hall for Revel's modern day inhabitants.

Follow rue des Escoussières: "Les Escoussières" were medieval streets situated between the city walls and the town's first buildings. On your left notice the wide boulevard which surrounds the historical centre. These were built on the remains of an old medieval ditch.

Cross the square and stop opposite the Centre

Culturel Get : This building, which houses a cinema, a multimedia library and a cultural centre, was the famous mint liquor factory of Peppermint - Get 27 until 1988. On top of the façade, a triangular pediment proudly bears the Get family coat of arms, exactly the one which adorns Get bottles everywhere. Warehouses and the distillery can be found at the back and at the sides the building.

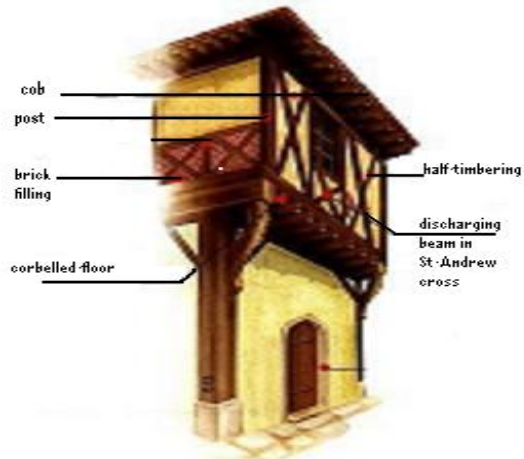


Cultural Centre Get

Follow rue Georges Sabo on your right hand side :

Take a moment to admire the beautiful corbelled houses. In the Middle Ages housing tax was based on ground floor surface area and on the number of windows each house had. Naturally, house owners wanted more floor space without having to pay extra taxes. To this end, they rather ingeniously exploited the loophole in this system by projecting their first and second floors over the ground-floor, creating a kind of 'overhang' effect.

Where rue Georges Sabo joins rue Notre-Dame, turn to your left. You'll see a beautiful half-timbered house ('pâtisserie'). The technique used to construct this building used wood for the supporting framework structure and other materials (brick or stone) to flesh out the wooden skeleton. Naturally, because of the materials used, most of these houses went up in smoke fairly quickly.



Half-timbered and corbelled house

Head to rue Notre-Dame: Pause a few moments in front of Revel church 'Notre-Dame-des-Grâces', named after the Virgin Mary to win divine protection. Its foundations date all the way back to 1350. In a 'Bastide', the centre of town was usually occupied by the public authorities, meaning the church was usually pushed to the outskirts of town.

The church was destroyed several times during the many religious conflicts that ravaged this region (the Catholics and Protestants fought for the entirety of the 16th century).

It was rebuilt during the 17th century, a time when the number of churchgoers was increasing rapidly, so much so that the church had to be enlarged in 1736, 1829, and again in 1869. The architect crowned the building with two cupolas in 1889 giving the façade a distinctly 'byzantine' feel.

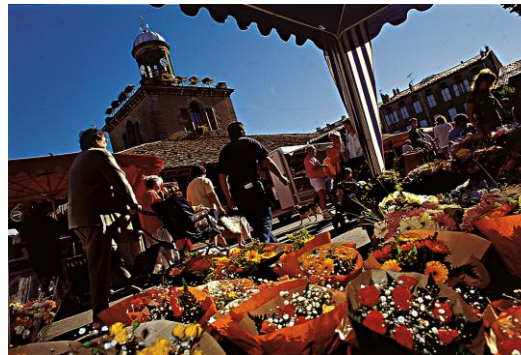
Of particular interest in this church, is its organ, which was painstakingly designed and installed in 1844. It is of such cultural significance that it was classified as a 'Historical Monument' in 1995.

Head to place de la Mission: Opposite you, on boulevard Carnot, you can see Roquefort Hospital:

completed in 1874 by Joseph Delors. The precise, symmetrical architecture and its long, straight lines are very indicative of public architecture of the second half of the 19th century. The style of this building is an interesting mélange of civilian and military architecture, but has various unmistakably religious flourishes (bell-tower roof, stained-glass windows, a cross).

Follow rue de Dreuilhe: At n°9, on your right hand side (where the street joins rue des Ecuries) you will find the building which served as Revel's town hall from the Napoleonic period until 1907.

At the end of the street, on arriving at the covered market square, you've reached the end of the tour.



Revel market every Saturdays morning
one of the most beautiful market in France

We wish you a pleasant stay in our town.
Town guided tours for groups with reservation.
Leaflet conceived and printed by the Tourist Office
Do not throw it away



Square 'Philippe VI de Valois', covered-market 14th c.

REVEL HISTORICAL TOUR

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