

A refuge for artists

George Sand's circle

Friendship played an important role in the life of George Sand. Those who travelled to Nohant were particularly dear to her. They formed part of the writer's circle of close friends.

George held an open house for creative people. She created an atmosphere of free and communal living which

stimulated their work and was conducive to exchanges. Balzac, Delacroix, Liszt, Chopin and Flaubert number among the distinguished figures who stayed at her house. Sand adapted the amenities of her home to her guests' needs: buying furniture, converting rooms into studios...

A love of music

George Sand had a genuine aptitude for and an undeniable love of music, passed on to her by her grandmother, who was herself a musician. She played the harp.

The relationship between George Sand and Frédéric Chopin whom she loved and encouraged for nine years is now the stuff of legend. Franz Liszt with whom her name has often been linked is undoubtedly the musician she most admired. She would listen to him curled up under his piano to immerse herself in his music as she had done as a child, taking refuge beneath her grandmother's harpsichord.



Fan of caricatures, c. 1830: George Sand and her friends Paris, musée de la Vie romantique.

Nohant today

The sheep barn has been turned into a concert hall. Every year the "fêtes romantiques" romantic music festival and the "rencontres internationales Chopin" are held here. An open-air film festival is held every year on the theme of adaptation of major novels to the cinema.

In the main courtyard, the reception building has in its attic the "grenier littéraire", a space dedicated to reading, writing and meetings with authors.

Practical information

Visits of the house are by guided tour (in French, 1 hour long).

For safety reasons and to protect the furniture, it is not permitted to take photographs or video recordings inside.

The garden is open to the public.



Information at reception.

The Centre des monuments nationaux publishes a collection of guidebooks about French monuments translated into several languages. Éditions du Patrimoine publications are on sale in the bookshop-giftshop.

Centre des monuments nationaux
Maison de George Sand
36400 Nohant-Vic
tél. 02 54 31 06 04
fax 02 54 31 18 48

www.monuments-nationaux.fr

house of George Sand

In the writer's private world

A free woman

Aurore Dupin (Paris, 1804 – Nohant, 1876) was brought up in Nohant by her grandmother. She had two children from her brief marriage to Baron Dudevant. The woman who soon took the name George Sand chose to live her life as a free woman.

Writing devoted to ideas



Nohant, September 1857. Paris, musée de la Vie romantique.

George Sand wrote continuously from 1830 to 1876: novels, tales, short stories, plays, critical and political articles, autobiographical

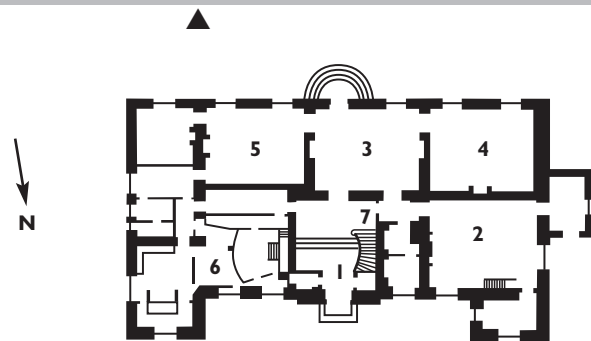
pieces and correspondence.

George Sand became involved in political action from 1835. She fought both for social progress, equality between men and woman and for her own freedom. This political commitment grew stronger during the 1840s and at the time of the 1848 revolution.

A welcoming home

For George Sand, Nohant represented a vital anchor point. But she often spent time away. When not travelling, she divided her time between Berry and Paris.

Nohant remained a special place around which the writer's life was organised and where she liked to gather her close friends.



The Nohant estate is inextricably linked to its former occupant, George Sand. Everywhere there are physical signs left by the writer. But it is the special atmosphere that reigns in the house that has the greatest impact on the visitor.

For reasons of security and conservation of the furniture, tours are guided. Filming or taking photographs inside is not permitted.

Tour lasts 1 hour.

You can prolong the enjoyment of your visit by taking a walk in the grounds.

The main courtyard

The house was rebuilt in the 18th century on the ruins of a medieval manor house.

A classical residence, it is located “on the edge of green fields with no more pretension than a village house.” (Sand).

The ground floor

- 1 The hall** through which you enter the house is decorated in pastel shades, the work of Maurice, George Sand’s son.
- 2 The kitchen** is the “vital centre” of the house. A very active woman with many interests, George Sand liked to spend her time in this room. It is furnished in a rustic style and has on display a large collection of copperware and pottery from the Berry region. The staircase leads to the cook’s bedroom.

3 The dining room is where George Sand’s guests would meet. A table is laid here. At precisely 5 o’clock, the bell would ring to invite family and friends to dinner. A chandelier made of Venetian glass would throw light on its distinguished guests. The porcelain plates from the Creil-Montereau factory were specially chosen by George Sand.

4 In the living room, evenings would be spent playing games or watching a puppet show. Portraits of George Sand’s ancestors and descendants adorn the walls. There are some remarkable pieces of furniture, for instance the oval table made by the village carpenter, the filing cabinet which belonged to George Sand’s grandfather, a chiffonnier (a tall narrow chest of drawers), a Pleyel piano and Louis XVI armchairs.

5 Bedroom of Aurore de Saxe, George Sand’s grandmother, has been furnished in the style of the 18th century. In the adjacent boudoir, George Sand later set up her writing study disguised in a tiny cupboard. This is where she wrote her first novels.

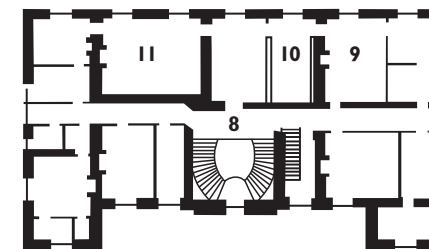
6 The two theatres close to the bedroom are reached across the corridor.

Invitation,
drawing by
Maurice Sand.



Maurice and the painter Eugène Lambert introduced the puppet theatre to Nohant. The first puppet theatre was improvised in the lounge from two chairs, a towel and covered pieces of wood. These early theatrical experiments were described in detail in a novel written in 1847, *Le Château des Désertes* [The Castle in the Wilderness]. Sand later converted a ground-floor room into a theatre for both puppet shows and live actors. Here she was able to try out her plays before having them performed in Paris.

7 The main staircase at the end of the corridor leads to the upper floor.



Upper floor

- 8 A central corridor** divides George Sand’s apartments from the bedrooms used by her guests. On the landing, a padded door insulated the room where Chopin composed his music.
- 9 The bedroom** known as the blue room, furnished in Louis XVI style, was occupied by George Sand at the end of her life. It is here that she died on 8 June 1876.
- 10 The study**, adjoining the library, was used as Chopin’s room when he stayed at Nohant every summer from 1839 to 1846. Sand had it partitioned after their relationship ended. In the study, the novelist devoted herself to her work. Here she wrote during the day and, after everyone in the house had gone to sleep, until the early hours of the morning.
- 11 The bedroom of Aurore Lauth-Sand** is the biggest in the house. The décor, restored in 1998, with its bamboo furniture is Art Deco style. George Sand’s granddaughter lived here until her death in 1961. She bequeathed the house to the State in 1952.