

## The Haut-Koenigsbourg castle



The moment you step over the threshold of the great door at Haut-Koenigsbourg Castle, you find yourself in a whole new world: the Middle Ages. Cross the lower

Courtyard with its inn, forge and mill then climb the spiral stairways leading to the Lord's furnished apartments. Plunge into an environment of architecture and furnishings steeped in history. The omni-present drawbridges, armoury, keep and cannons are a constant reminder of the purpose of this mountain fortress, which has been besieged, destroyed and pillaged numerous times since its construction.

This prestigious fortress was abandoned after 1633, and then given to Kaiser Wilhelm II von Hohenzollern in 1899 by the town of Sélestat. He commissioned the architect Bodo Ebhardt, a specialist in medieval fortifications, to restore the castle. Its renovation satisfied his passion for the Middle Ages, whilst he dreamed of a return to the old German Empire.

The political ambition of this huge renovation project, undertaken at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was to legitimize the newly forged Hohenzollern imperial dynasty, and create a symbol for the world of the power held by this new empire. Today, the restoration is admired more for its educational potential: although it is not altogether perfect, the result is undeniably authentic. Much to the delight of fortress enthusiasts, this restoration of the Haut-Koenigsbourg offers a remarkable insight into 15<sup>th</sup> century mountain fortresses in the Alsace region.

Visit the artillery platform, also referred to as the Grand Bastion: an exceptional monument with a characteristic structure. Take the time to enjoy the breathtaking panoramic view over the Alsace plain, the Vosges Mountains, the Black Forest and even, on a clear day, the Alps...

The Haut-Koenigsbourg castle is one of the symbols of Alsatian heritage and a witness to the course of European history. Visitors from all horizons have the ideal environment to become more familiar with castle architecture, the Middle Ages and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century restoration through a wide choice of tours, activities and events.

When you visit the Haut-Koenigsbourg you visit so much more than just a monument...