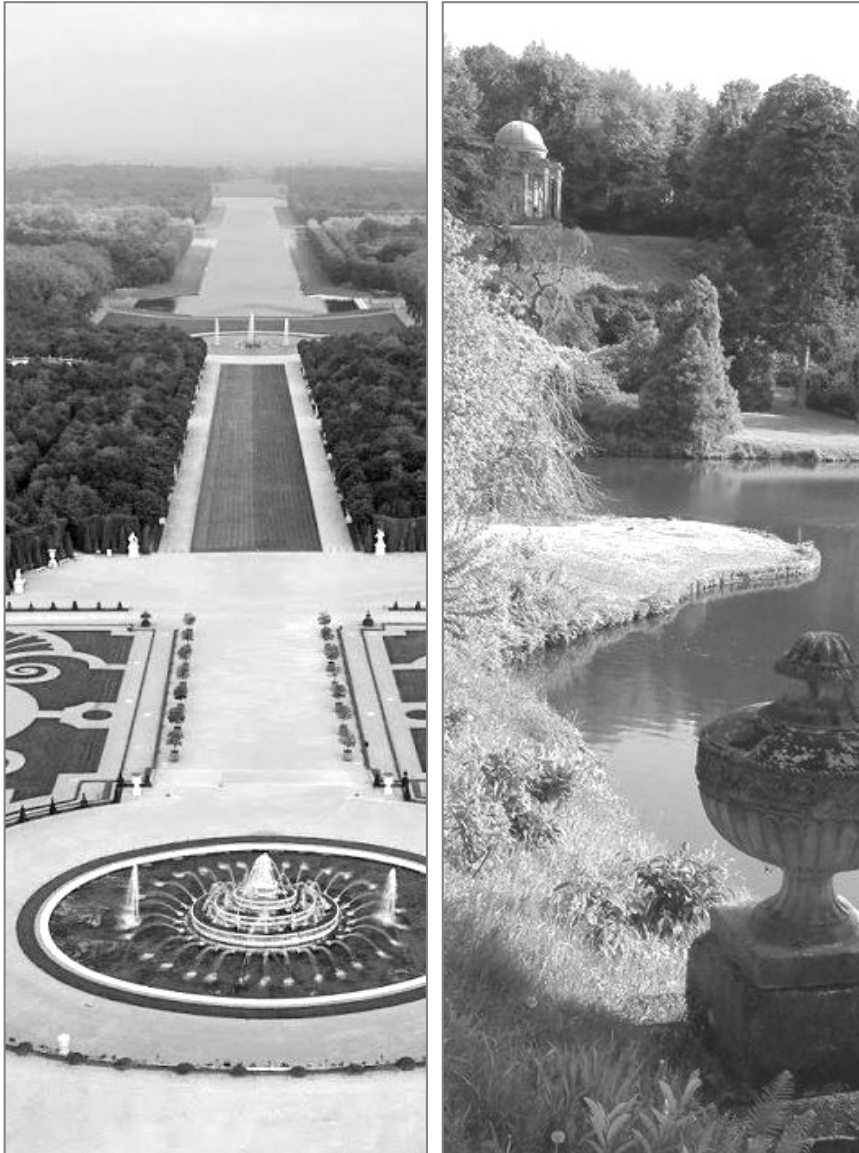


French Connections



4. A Place in the Country

March 12, 2025

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A CLASS ABOUT THE PARKS AND GARDENS OF LARGE COUNTRY HOUSES AND PALACES. It is a round tour, beginning in the Versailles of Louis XIV, the epitome of the French grand style, and ending with the much less formal gardens created at a distant corner of the park by Louis XVI a century later. Where did the one come from, and how was it transformed into the other? *rb.*

Introduction

The two areas of Versailles contrasted, with a list of the components that go into each: scale, layout, sculpture, water, and theme.

Versailles: *Orangerie* and formal garden (1662–)

Versailles: *Jardin Anglais* (1776–86)

A. Italian Influences

All the defining qualities of Louis XIV's Versailles, except its vast scale, were prefigured in Italian gardens of the previous century.

Boboli Gardens, Florence (1549–)

♪ **Villa d'Este**, Tivoli, near Rome (1555–)

Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo, near Viterbo (1552–)

♪ **Villa Lante**, Bagnaia, near Viterbo (1568–)

B. Views of Versailles

A look at the Versailles park and the ways the Sun King used it to proclaim his power.

Vaux le Vicomte: *Le Nôtre*, *Le Brun*, and *Le Vau* (1658–61)

Le Brun: *Bassin d'Apollon* (1671)

Jean Cotelle: Three views of the *Bosquets* at Versailles (c.1693)

♪ **Film:** *Le roi danse* (Gérard Corbiau, 2000; Benoît Magimel, *Louis*)

C. Versailles Abroad

Immediately Versailles was laid out, it became the model for palaces all over Europe. We concentrate on the last of them, the Palace of Caserta near Naples.

♪ **Montage:** **Het Loo** (Netherlands, 1684–); **Schönbrunn** (Vienna, 1689–); **Peterhof** (Russia, 1717–); **Sanssouci** (Prussia, 1745–), and **Caserta** (Naples, 1752–).

♪ **Video:** Persico sculptures at Caserta

D. Blenheim: From Battle to Palace

Built for the Duke of Marlborough, Blenheim Palace is both another grandiose take on Versailles and an example of the more natural English Landscape style that would sweep Europe by the end of the century.

Vanbrugh: Blenheim Palace, original layout (1795–22)

Brown: Blenheim Park, improvements (1764–)

Duchêne: Blenheim, French gardens (early C20)

F. French Painter, English Park

Eighteenth-century English aristocrats who “improved” their property were inspired in part by the work of French artists—Claude, Poussin, and others—that they brought back from the Grand Tour.

Henry Hoare II: Stourhead gardens (1741–80)

Claude: *Landscape with Hagar and the Angel* (1646, London NG)

Constable: *Dedham Vale* (1802, London V&A)

Versailles: *Temple de l'Amour* (c.1780)

G. Life on the Farm

We return to the model farm of Marie Antoinette, a confluence of English landscape, French classicism, and the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Boucher: *Shepherdesses and Sheep by a River* (c.1760)

Mique: *L'hameau de la reine*, Versailles (1783)

♪ **Rousseau:** *Le devin du village*, excerpts (1752, performed at Versailles 1780; this Versailles performance 2024)

François **Boucher** (1703–70, *French painter*), Lancelot "Capability" **Brown** (1716–83, *English landscape architect*), **Claude** Lorrain (Claude Gelée, 1604–82, *French painter*), John **Constable** (1776–1837, *English painter*), Achille **Duchêne** (1866–1947, *French landscape architect*), Charles **Le Brun** (1619–90, *French sculptor*), André **Le Nôtre** (1613–1700, *French landscape architect*), Louis **Le Vau** (1612–70, *French architect*), Richard **Mique** (1728–94, *French architect*), Paolo **Persico** (1729–1796, *Italian sculptor*), Alexander **Pope** (1688–1744, *English poet*), Nicolas **Poussin** (1594–1664, *French painter*), Jean-Jacques **Rousseau** (1712–68, *French philosopher and composer*), Sir John **Vanbrugh** (1664–1726, *English architect and playwright*)

The course website is www.brunyate.com/FrenchConnections

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