

## Cernay-la-Ville

Cernay-la-Ville is situated at about 45 km south-west of Paris and about 20 km south of Versailles in the Chevreuse Valley area.

The village of about 1600 inhabitants lies between the Rambouillet forest on the north and farmland on the south.

This unique and very picturesque setting has attracted many artists as early as the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

With the arrival of the railroad at a neighboring village, Boulay-les-Troux and the invention of the paint tube in the mid-1800s it became easier for the artists to explore the countryside and work outside - the Cernay painters' colony was born.

The colony was led by Léon Germain Pelouse who lived in Cernay from 1870 till 1884.

He was also the president of the "Salons de Paris".

His work can be seen in many museums all over the world such as in Oslo, Chicago, New York, Montreal and Sidney, etc.

In 1897 the pupils and friends of Léon Germain Pelouse erected a monument in the woods around Cernay.

Several hundreds of French and foreign painters came to the area during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Among them we find the French painters:

Louis Français  
Henri Harpignies  
Jules and Emile Breton  
Emmanuel Lanseyer  
Armand Cassagne

But also

Ceramano from Belgium  
Peder Kroyer from Denmark  
Winslow Homer from the USA  
Theodore Robinson from the USA  
Marc Aurèle Suzor-Coté from Canada

Back in those days one of the main activities in Cernay were the quarries where the cobblestones for the Paris boulevards were extracted. The same cobblestones later used by the students during the May 1968 riots.

The quarry workers were housed in the 8 Cernay inns, of which 2 still exist today: "The Leopold" and the "Auberge des Paysagistes".

The painters also gathered there in the evening after their day's work.

### CERNAY TODAY

Today, being in the heart of the Natural Park of the Chevreuse Valley, Cernay-la-Ville and its surroundings attract many tourists. Some come just for a Sunday hike, but also to visit the different castles and monuments all within a 10 km radius.

The Cistercian Abbaye des Vaux de Cernay

Château de la Madeleine

Château de Breteuil

Château des Mauvières

Château de Dampierre

Château de Rambouillet

Cernay-la-Ville still inspires artists today and, culturally speaking, the village is very active by organizing yearly exhibitions of the painters' colony, but also of contemporary artists. For our 2017 exhibition we received the Hungarian artists, and euroArt member, Imre Szakacs.

In 2012 we collaborated with the curator of the Kroyer exhibition in the Hirschsprung museum in Copenhagen.

We also have regular artistic exchanges with our German twin city Odenthal, home of the Altenberg Cistercian Abbey.

We have regular contacts with different American painters' colonies such as Winslow Homer's Prouts Neck (Maine).

One of our valley's watermills, the "petit moulin", was transformed into a museum which opened its doors in the spring of 2016. The museum and its barn, which is going to be used for temporary exhibitions, is situated on a 30 ha natural site. Its permanent exhibits are centered around the geology of the site, the different watermills of the area and, of course, the painters' colony.

## Artists of the Artists' Colony

Louis Français	(1814 - 1897)
Henri Harpignies	(1819 - 1916)
Armand Cassagne	(1823 - 1907)
Jules Breton	(1827 - 1906)
Émile Breton	(1831 - 1902)
Ceramano	(1831 - 1909)
Emmanuel Lansyer	(1835 - 1893)
Winslow Homer	(1836 - 1910)
Léon Germain Pelouse	(1838 - 1891)
Peder Kroyer	(1851 - 1909)
Marc Aurèle Suzor-Coté	(1869 - 1937)

## Tourist Information

### **Tourist Office**

Tourist Office - Rambouillet Place de la  
Libération 78120 Rambouillet  
+33 (0)1 34 83 21 21

### **La Maison du Parc**

Château de la Madeleine Chemin Jean  
Racine 78472 Chevreuse  
+33 (0)1 30 52 09 09

### **Cityhall**

2 Rue de l'Église 78720 Cernay-la-Ville  
+33 (0)1 34 85 21 35  
[www.cernaylaville.fr](http://www.cernaylaville.fr)



[www.rambouillet-tourisme.fr](http://www.rambouillet-tourisme.fr)

**Mayor**

Mr René Mémain 2 Rue de l'Église 78720  
Cernay-la-Ville  
+33 (0)1 34 85 21 35

[www.parc-naturel-chevreuse.fr](http://www.parc-naturel-chevreuse.fr)

**Museum "Le petit moulin des Vaux de Cernay"**

D91, La Vallée 78720 Cernay-la-Ville  
+33 (0)1 30 88 70 86  
[www.parc-naturel-chevreuse.fr/destination-parc/le-petit-moulin-des-vaux-de-cernay](http://www.parc-naturel-chevreuse.fr/destination-parc/le-petit-moulin-des-vaux-de-cernay)

An important collection of paintings can be seen at the Cernay cityhall (on appointment)