



# Saint-Martin Chapel

Originally, this Romanesque chapel was the parish church of the village of Bruley, built in the 12th century (around 1175), whose nave and sacristy were demolished in 1902. The destruction of its nave during construction of the new parish church in neo-Gothic style, condemned it to become a simple chapel. Built at the top of the wine-growing hillside, it has been surrounded by the cemetery since the beginning and allows us to admire a vast panorama over the Toulous and the beginning of the Woëvre plain. Today, a glazed metal gate closes the choir at the level of the semicircular arcade which gave access to the transept.

## Outside

Externally two parts are interesting: the tower and the bedside.

Above the choir rises a bell tower surmounting a square bay extended by a semi-circular apse, flanked to the north and south by two small rectangular transepts. This ensemble, from the Romanesque period, dates from the 12th century. This square bell tower is lit on each side by twin openings with columns. It was raised towards the end of the Middle Ages to provide refuge for the population during wars and acts of robbery. The access door is on the right side at 7 meters high and required a retractable ladder to access it.

On the chevet of the chapel, built in stone of devices, we can see the traces of the old Romanesque windows. In the southern part of the apse, the circular opening is an oculus of Lorraine Meuse tradition which made it possible to expose the Blessed Sacrament, placed in a Eucharistic cupboard, so that it is visible from the outside as from inside. Thus the peasants returning from the fields could say a prayer without entering the church.

The demolition of the nave (located on the site of part of the current cemetery) followed the decision, in the 19th century, to build a new, larger church to accommodate parishioners and pilgrims coming to gather at the grotto. The nave, what was called a barn nave, certainly did not present any architectural interest, as probably did the porch since they have not been preserved.

## Interior

The choir itself is square in shape with a flagstone floor. We notice a larger central slab (we can think of the access to a well when the inhabitants took refuge in the bell tower). The crossing of the transept is vaulted with ribbed vaults made of large "sausages" whose ends, embedded in the walls, end in the shape of a "pencil point". This is quite common in Lorraine. What is less so is that the arms of the transept, on each side of the choir, are provided with transverse barrel vaults. The arms of the transept are of unequal size and the walls are not alike.

During the demolition of the nave, the altarpieces and the side altars located in the nave were moved to reinstall them in the transepts. The twisted columns of the altarpieces are artfully decorated with bunches of grapes and vine leaves, recalling the wine-growing vocation of the village

from time immemorial.

The apse is vaulted in « ass of oven » and has a decoration with pillars and medallion, decoration added at the time of Stanislas in the 18th century. This addition of decoration caused the closure of certain original openings. The current windows of the transept were pierced late, probably when the original openings were obstructed by the decoration added in the 18th century.

The upper cornice of the apse supported statues of Saint Martin in the center, Saint Peter, Saint Louis, Saint Anne and Saint Etienne. These, as well as a large wooden Christ, are currently in reserve in the new church with a possible reinstallation after the interior restructuring of the Chapel.

The high altar is made of wood, painted white with gilding. On the altar are six wooden candelabras and a carved wooden tabernacle.

The original windows were partially destroyed. The side windows were restored by the Besançon de Yutz workshop, completing what remained. The stained glass window at the back of the apse no longer existed. We do know, however, that he represented the Sacred Heart. The model selected was that of a young Italian trainee who was thus able to create the stained glass window currently in place.

The interior paintings are in very poor condition. An expertise of paintings prior to the 18th century, carried out by a specialized company (Arcam), concluded that there was little interest in restoring this pictorial ensemble, as it could not be recovered.

Several important figures, lords or priests, were buried in the choir or the nave. Only a priest's tomb is currently visible. On the exterior facade a mortuary inscription is dated 1468.

The various architectural techniques make all the interest of this construction.

Significant work carried out in 1991 and 1992 made it possible to redo the roof and the exterior coatings, work carried out by local craftsmen under the supervision of the Buildings of France.

The Saint Martin chapel was classified in the additional inventory of Historic Monuments by decree of June 27, 1984.