

The Landmark Trust

LE MOULIN DE LA TUILERIE

Le Moulin de la Tuilerie is best known as the former weekend residence of Edward, Duke of Windsor, and his wife, formerly Wallis Simpson. Theirs was one of the great love stories of the twentieth century: in 1936, Edward VIII renounced the British throne in order to marry Mrs Simpson, an American divorcée. Under English law at the time, a divorcée could not become Queen, something Edward could not accept. After the war, the Windsors settled in France, where they were offered tax free status. Their main Paris residence was 4, Champ d'Entrainement in the Bois de Bologne, but in 1952 they bought this site in Gif-sur-Yvette to be a weekend retreat. It was the only house they ever owned together.

However, the site clearly has an earlier history. There is thought to have been a mill here since before 1500, although the current main building (Le Moulin) can be dated by its sundial above the main entrance to 1734. The motto on the sundial, *Lex His Horis Una Tibi*, means 'The rule of this sundial (or timepiece) is the only one you need.' Until renamed Le Moulin de la Tuilerie by the Duchess of Windsor, the mill was known as the Moulin Aubert after an earlier owner, although the mill probably owes its current form to one Jean Guillery, who revived it around 1734. Guillery practised a specialized form of milling to extract the maximum amount of flour from the bran from the first milling. There was a working mill on the site until 1908.

Sometime after this, the Moulin Aubert was bought by the artist and illustrator, Adrien Étienne, who became known as Drian. Drian is well known as an illustrator of women's fashions in the 1920s and 30s but was also an accomplished painter. Drian used the house as a weekend retreat from Paris. In the 1930s, he met Edward, then Prince of Wales, and also painted a portrait of his then mistress, Wallis Simpson, so the Windsors were already acquainted with the painter when they took a year's lease of the site in 1951. The Duke especially loved the place so much that in 1952 they bought it from Drian and sold it only after the Duke's death in 1972. The site was then owned successively by a Swiss business man and a Lebanese, Dr Akhras. It then suffered a period of decline until in 2005 it was bought by a British property company and the buildings and gardens were renovated under the guidance of Roland Duce, assisted in the early years by Patrick Deedes-Vincke. In 2009, Patrick Deedes approached the Landmark Trust for help with the site's future on behalf of the owner, who wished to give these important buildings a new use and a secure future, and make them accessible to the general public. Landmark collaborated with the owner on the renovation of Le Moulin and carried out the furnishing of all the buildings for their new purpose as inspiring places to spend a holiday.

The Windsors at Le Moulin de la Tuilerie

After buying the site in 1952, the Windsors spent two years renovating the main house and creating guest accommodation in the outbuildings (La Maison des Amis and La Célibataire). The Duchess renamed the site Le Moulin de la Tuilerie after the group of nearby houses and oversaw the internal works under the guidance of Stéphane Boudin, a well known interior designer. Only a few traces of their work survive today. Almost every weekend when they were resident in Paris, the couple would make the expedition out to Gif, he in a Chevrolet, she in a blue Cadillac, preceded by their staff in a Citroën to get everything ready. Joining them most weekends would be a glittering guest list of nobility and celebrities of the day.

The Landmark Trust Shottesbrooke Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 3SW
Charity registered in England & Wales 243312 and Scotland SC039205

Bookings 01628 825925 Office 01628 825920 Facsimile 01628 825417 Website www.landmarktrust.org.uk

La Célibataire & La Maison des Amis The Duchess called all her guest accommodation *les célibataires* (or bachelor's quarters). The ground floor bathroom in today's Célibataire (the unit for two people) has its original 1950s half bath and taps. The paneling in La Maison des Amis is also from the Windsors' day. Guests were always impressed by the Duchess's thoughtfulness – she thought of everything, from a favourite cocktail to china that matched the bedspreads when the maid brought breakfast in bed.

The Orangerie This converted barn, known today as The Orangerie, was what the Windsors called their Museum, full of memorabilia of the Duke's past life. Comfortably furnished with sofas and two fires, there was an enormous map on the wall charting all the Duke's official tours to the British Empire when he was Prince of Wales. Regimental drums were used as coffee tables, with hunting trophies on the walls. Round tables would be set up here for lunch; afternoon tea would be taken on the terrace outside. The Windsors used the small outbuilding attached to The Orangerie as a summer dining room (it was then open to the garden as a sort of loggia) and Boudin created ceramic murals which still exist today.

Le Moulin The stone slab just inside the main door is a tombstone robbed from a cemetery during the Revolution and re-used as flooring. The Windsors made the large room on the first floor their drawing room, opening it to the rafters and removing a partition. This was where they did most of their entertaining. The little room at the far end was the Duke's cocktail cabinet where he would prepare the drinks himself. The servants slept in the bedrooms beyond, with the kitchens and service rooms beneath on the ground floor.

The Duchess had her own wing, decorated in pastel shades and with plenty of room to hang her extensive wardrobe. The Duke's suite was more modest, a tiny sitting room (now lost) above his shower and dressing room, which was in turn above his bedroom.

The building used by the Windsors as a garage, known as the Coach House, has been converted into another large bedroom suite as part of the accommodation in Le Moulin.

The gardens The Duke, who was already a keen gardener, commissioned British landscape designer and plantsman, Russell Page to design the gardens. The result made the most of the former watercourses of the mill, combining water features with rockeries and ebullient herbaceous borders planted in the English cottage garden tradition. The Duke himself loved to work in the garden alongside his team of five gardeners, and the flowers were used to fill the vases in the house. The swimming pool was put in by the Windsors and the little changing hut has his-and-hers cubicles. Neither is now in use. Today, the Duke's planting has been lost but the structure of his garden remains, including the cobbled paths and courts, kept from earlier days.

The Landmark Trust is proud to open le Moulin de la Tuilerie as its first buildings in France. Landmark has also established Landmark France, an association loi 1901, to enable its partnership with the Conservatoire du littoral, the State agency for the protection of the French coastline. Landmark and the Conservatoire are working together to give new, financially independent life to historic buildings at risk on the Conservatoire's territories.

The Landmark Trust is a British charity that restores neglected or threatened historic buildings and gives them a new life and purpose by offering them for distinctive and inspiring holidays. The three buildings at Le Moulin de la Tuilerie can all be booked for self catering holidays for anything from 3 nights to 3 weeks. Le Moulin accommodates up to 12 people, La Maison des Amis up to 4 people and La Célibataire 2 people.

To book a holiday or to find out more, please visit www.landmarkfrance.fr or www.landmarktrust.org.uk or phone our Booking Office on +44 (0) 16 28 82 59 25