



The Pharo Palace is an exceptional site, perched on the Pharo plateau, overlooking the Vieux-Port and the Bay of Marseille. The Palace, a token of the esteem in which the Emperor Napoleon III and his wife Eugénie held the city, is now enjoying a completely new lease of life. As a convention centre open to the world, it plays a key role in the city's international outreach, economic development and tourist life.



The Pharo Palace

MARSEILLE

Access

Pharo Palace
58, boulevard Charles Livon
13007 - Marseille
Métro line 1 Vieux-Port station
Then bus No. 83 to «Pharo»

Public park

Open every day of the year
from 21/06 to 21/09: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
from 22/09 to 20/06: 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Allo Mairie : 0810 813 813
www.marseille.fr
<http://palaisdupharo.marseille.fr>

Admission to the Historic Palace reserved for Congress attendees.



DCRP - Ville de Marseille - photos Ville de Marseille - Archives Municipales



The Pharo Palace
MARSEILLE



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CAPITALE EUROPÉENNE
DE LA CULTURE
MP2013

Plus que jamais, Marseille !



A palace for Empress Eugénie

In 1855, Marseille decided to gift Napoleon the plateau of Pharo so that he could build a palace «beside the seaside». Overlooking the harbour and the Vieux-Port, the imperial residence in Marseille symbolises the city's submission to the regime, along with the Emperor's love for his wife, Empress Eugenie, to whom he decided, meanwhile, to present the estate.



The first stone of the Palace was laid on August 15, 1858, on Saint-Napoléon's Day. The work was entrusted to Lefuel - the architect behind the Louvre - and his Geneva - based counterpart Vaucher. The latter was replaced in 1867 by Espérandieu, the architect of Notre-Dame de la Garde.

When the Empire fell in 1871, the Pharo Palace was still incomplete - the Emperor and Empress were never to live there. The slow progress was partly due to the violent winds that slowed the work and difficulties in procuring the stone, because of the Cathédrale de la Major being built at the same time.

A unique architecture

Flanked by two side wings forming a shield against the mistral, the building's structure is more akin to the architecture of a seaside resort - the Empress adored bathing in the sea - than an imperial residence. Its references to classical architecture are numerous. The facades of Pharo Palace are punctuated with arched windows on the ground floor while those on the floors above are decorated with garlands and shells. The tympanum on the pediment sports the arms of the city of Marseille borne aloft by two children. The motifs for the stone ground-floor were carved by Marseille-born artist Simon.



From the splendour of the Empire to the Third Republic

After the fall of the regime, opponents of Napoleon III attacked all symbols of the Empire : the crowd destroyed the eagles on the main gate and mutilated the Napoleonic emblems and ornaments decorating the facade. On the Emperor's death in 1873, the city claimed ownership of the estate and pursued a lawsuit against the ex-Empress that was to last several years.



Legally still the owner of the Palace, Eugénie decided in 1884 to offer it to the City of Marseille, provided it was used for public purposes. Until the late nineteenth century, the building served as a hospital, first catering to sufferers of cholera (1885-1886) and then of tuberculosis (1886).

The buildings on the side of the Palace esplanade were initially occupied by the Faculty of Medicine in 1890, before being taken over jointly by the military health service's Institute of Tropical Medicine and by Aix-Marseille II University of the Mediterranean from 1954 onwards.

The new life of the Palace

The Pharo Palace is now a conference centre of international renown. Boasting a unique setting, it receives annual congresses from around the world. Over time, besides the two main rooms inherited from the Second Empire a 900-seater auditorium, a meeting rooms and conference facilities and a large exhibition hall have been added.

Monument to the Heroic Victims of the Sea

This monument is a moving testimony to the tragic fate of the many lost at sea. Its construction, interrupted by World War I, was completed in 1923. Perched on the Pharo plateau, overlooking the Vieux-Port and the Mediterranean, the building is a tribute to our sailors, held in deep affection by a city whose destiny is and always been linked to that of the sea.

