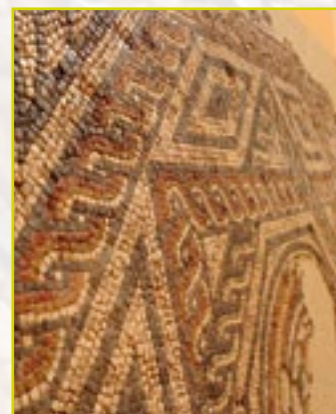


## The town of Bergheim

Bergheim is a charming medieval city nestling in a lush green landscape, surrounded by vineyards and protected by ramparts dating back to the Middle Ages. «Veredum», the first name known for Bergheim, dates back to a Roman occupation which has been confirmed, among other facts, by the discovery (in 1848 and in 2006) of 2 outstanding mosaics, one of which can be seen at the Colmar Unterlinden Museum and the other in the old Synagogue of Bergheim.



The Grand'Rue runs along the length of the city which has an almost rectangular layout. This road is intersected by a number of lanes and alleys while the centre is taken up by a vast triangular area where you will find the Town Hall (dating back to 1767) and a fountain from the year 1721.

The Catholic church dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary rises up from the foot of the town.

Wine grower houses are closely huddled together inside the town's fortifications of Bergheim: the gable walls of the oldest (dating back from the 15th to the 17th centuries) stone and timber frame property overhang the road; the most recent houses, built from the 18th century onward, are entirely built of stone.

## A little history...

After its occupation by the Romans, Bergheim formed part of the lands owned by the Duchy of Alsace. It then entered into the possession of the Moyenmoutier Monastery in Lorraine before being exchanged for the lands of the Toul Archbishopric to become the property of the Dukes of Lorraine who granted it as a fiefdom to the house of Ribeaupierre (Henri II of Ribeaupierre had Bergheim fortified in 1312). In 1313, the Ribeaupierre family sold Bergheim to the Habsburgs. In the 17th century, Bergheim passed into the hands of the King of France (Louis XIV). Finally, from the 18th century up to the French Revolution, Bergheim once again formed part of the lands owned by the Ribeaupierre family.



**The legend of the "Lack'mi"** : the right of sanctuary and the legend of the "Lack'mi": this right entitled any individual being pursued for debt, excusable and unpremeditated crime to seek sanctuary in Bergheim. This right to sanctuary is represented by the allegorical sculptured called the « Lack'mi », close to the Porte Haute [Upper Gate], showing a character who is making provocative gestures and mocking his pursuers' inability to catch him. The sculpture was crafted by a Bergheim inhabitant in 1997, the original from 1534 having mysteriously disappeared in 1852.

ALSACEZ  
-VOUS!

### Bergheim



Church of Bergheim.



Alsace houses (place du Dr Walter).



Fountain, rue des Vignerons (Vigneron street).

realisation www.ateliercc.com / photographies C. Dumoulin

Office de Tourisme du



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### To round off your visit:

- **Take part in the guided tours** (only in french) in July and August:
  - of the town of Bergheim
  - of the Witches' House
  - a walk with commentary along the Bergheim Wine Trail (Sentier Viticole of Bergheim), in the company of a wine grower, followed by a visit to a cellar and a wine-tasting.
- **Throughout the year, you can:**
  - walk the Bergheim ramparts and admire the other 2 flanking towers (the Pelzkappel Tower and the Fulweber Tower – see map) which are still visible,
  - ramble along the Bergheim Wine Trail (Sentier Viticole of Bergheim)(see map for the walk's starting point),
  - walk along the quarry track,
  - take a walk down the Grasberg path.
- **Discover the museum of Bergheim:** the Witches' House - 5 place de l'Eglise : a place of memories, this museum retraces the remarkable history of the sorcery trials held in Bergheim between 1582 and 1683 (see point 15 of the itinerary).

### ➔ Glossary (see items underlined on the itinerary).

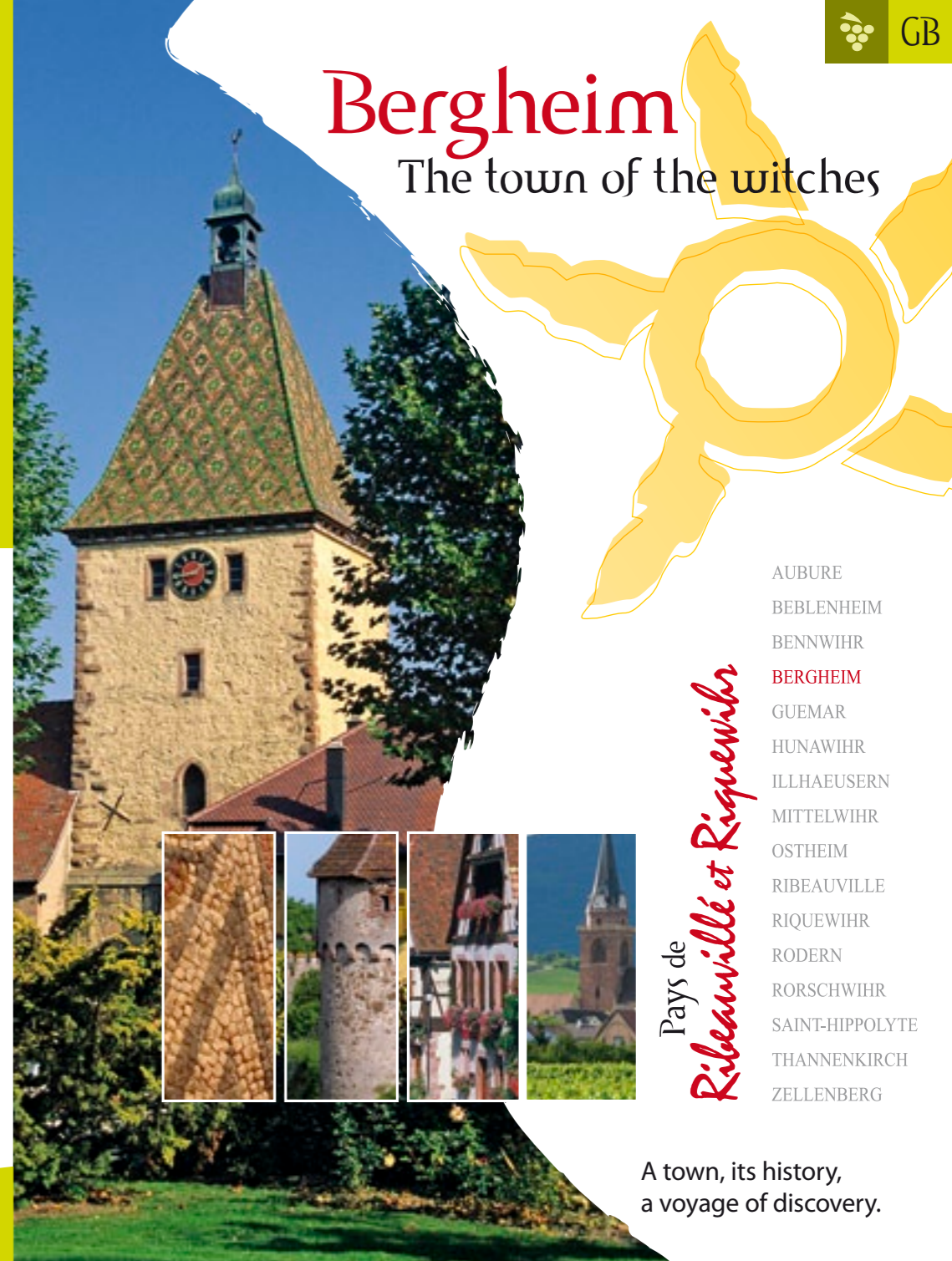
- **The communal stove (Ratstube):** the Town Council house (ancestor of the Town Hall); the council was made up of one Provost Marshal and 12 to 14 councillors chosen from the village's notables, responsible for administrative and financial matters, civil and criminal cases as sworn members of the seigniorial court (see point 11 of the itinerary).
- **The tithe court:** the place where the tithe was lodged (tax remitted in kind, usually 1/10th of the annual cereal crop or wine produce, levied by the clergy or the lord decimator) (see point 4 of the itinerary).
- **The Bergheim arms:** 3 rolling lines representing the 3 hills that surround Bergheim: Kanzlerberg, Altenberg and Grasberg (see point 4 of the itinerary).
- **Dates, initials and emblems:** In Alsace, it was customary to carve, usually on door lintels or gate arches, trade emblems (which identified the function of the owner of the house in much the same way as shop signs do today), the date the house was built and the initials of the owners.
  - **The emblem of the farm work:** a ploughshare (see point 4 of the itinerary).
  - **The armorer's emblem:** 2 crossed arquebuses, (see point 23 of the itinerary).
- **Thémis:** an allegorical statue representing Justice, (see point 11 of the itinerary).



ON EN A TOUS BESOIN

# Bergheim

## The town of the witches



AUBURE  
BEBLENHEIM  
BENNWIHR  
BERGHEIM  
GUEMAR  
HUNAWIHR  
ILLHAEUSERN  
MITTELWIHR  
OSTHEIM  
RIBEAUVILLE  
RIQUEWIHR  
RODERN  
RORSCHWIHR  
SAINT-HIPPOLYTE  
THANNENKIRCH  
ZELLENBERG

Pays de  
*Ribeaupillé et Riquewihr*

A town, its history,  
a voyage of discovery.

# A voyage of discovery

## 1 The Lime Tree (on the edge of the Alsace Wine Route, in the public garden or "Herrengarten")

It would seem that the lime tree goes back to the year 1300, making it the oldest tree in Alsace. From 1320 onwards, people held their festivities under the tree which, even now, continues to flower each year.

**THE FORTIFICATIONS OF BERGHEIM** currently represent one of the best examples of medieval city fortifications in Alsace and comprise:

- **1 double fortification:** 2 fortification walls separated by a moat (now given over to gardens),
- **1 outer moat** (through which runs the Bergenbach, a stream that crosses Bergheim),
- **a counterscarp wall** to the north-east,
- **4 gates:** strategic defense positions placed at the 4 cardinal points. To the West, the *Porte Haute* is the only one still visible today. The other 3 (the *Untertor*, the *Neutor* and the *Leimentor*) were destroyed during the 19th century to allow carts through.
- **9 flanking towers:** 1 square tower and 8 half-round towers (all still visible to this day).

## 2 The Porte Haute [Upper Gate]

The most imposing part of the outer fortifications, it is the only one of the 4 gates that now remains. This gothic style gate has a single curve arch (initially constructed as a 2-part arc). On the town side, the timber frame gives the building a less forbidding appearance than the "aspect" of the outer façade. *Not to be overlooked:* the roof covered with glazed tiles arranged in a Burgundian pattern.

## 3 The sun dial (44 Grand'Rue)

The 1711 sun dial, (renovated in 1959 and in 1977) is one of the finest to be found in Alsace. It tells the time and shows the changing of the seasons, the position of the sun in the zodiac, the date, the times of sunrise and sunset.

## 4 House located 55 rue des Vignerons

The passage way through this house has 2 doors dating back to the 16th century:  
 - a great single arch carter's gate, featuring the emblem of the farm worker and the Bergheim coat of arms.  
 - the Renaissance style postern gate with its basket handle shape and a wealth of sculptured mouldings, grooves, plant motifs and masks.  
 The house was the Queen of Hungary's 'tithe' court before being used as a farm (emblem of the farm work).

**5 The Echalas market place:** this is where the market selling 'échalas' (wooden stakes used to support vine stocks) was held.

## 6 The rue de la Monnaie

This alley reminds us that Bergheim used to hold the right to mint coins. With the 1375 charter, the Archduke Leopold of Austria granted Bergheim the perennial rights of appointing a Münzmeister (coin master who was granted the right to mint coins and issue pfennigs).

## 7 The old stove of the wine growers corporation (11, place du Dr Walter)

The building that housed this stove, mentioned since 1423, was rebuilt at the beginning of the 18th century.

## 8 House located 8 place du Dr Walter

The main façade of this 18th century house has regularly shaped openings, topped by baroque motifs.

## 9 House located 6 place du Dr Walter

The façade of this 1566 house has a crenellated gable that is characteristic of Rhenish art in the 15th and 16th centuries with sandstone architraves to the windows and lintels sculptured with inverted shells.

## 10 The synagogue (17-19 rue des Juifs)

The synagogue indicates the presence of an important Jewish community (mentioned in the archives from 1398) throughout the centuries: 68 families in 1784, 513 persons in 1838 (15% of the population), 2 families today. The present synagogue building, erected between 1860 and 1863 in the Neo-Roman style (restored in 2002) is based on the medieval layout and is built on the site of 3 previous synagogues (it is the one and only synagogue in Alsace that



can still be found on its original 14th century site). Deconsecrated in 1992 (because not sufficiently attended), the synagogue became a cultural centre in 2002.

## 11 The Town Hall (3 place du Dr Walter)

The present day Town Hall, built under the Ancien Régime (1767), the once communal stove was converted into a town hall during the French Revolution. The sandstone façade has a baroque gable topped with a Thémis reminding us that the Town Council sat as an ordinary court.

**12 The fountain** (place du Dr Walter): dating from 1721, it is topped with the Bergheim coat of arms.

## 13 The old spinning mill (8 Grand'Rue)

At different times, this imposing building, entirely built of stone has been home to: dye works, a spinning mill and a factory making manufactured objects.

## 14 The Church of Notre-Dame de l'Assomption [Our Lady of the Assumption]

Archives record that, in about 700, there was a basilica dedicated to Our Lady on the site of the current church. It was destroyed in 1287 and only the bell tower, known as the "Green Tower" survived (it was used as a guard house, a chapel and an ossuary before being torn down at the start of the 19th century). The second church was consecrated in 1347. A vaulted choir, a sacristy with its vaulted intersecting ribs, a 3-nave structure, the bell tower and a sculpted door remain from this period. The chapel and the south sacristy were added in the 19th century.

- The **decor inside** the church is remarkable on several grounds: wall paintings from the Middle Ages, frescoes from the 14th century, polychrome wooden statues from 1480, a painting dated 1616, an organ that was restored in 2006.

- The **outside of the church** is just as exceptional: the west tympanum features the only representation in Alsace of the Adoration of the Magi executed in sandstone (from the 14th century) while the south and north walls retain fragments of a sculpture showing Jesus' descent from the cross (14th century).

## 15 The old ossuary, today's Witches' House (5 place de l'Église)

The present building which housed Bergheim's second ossuary was built in 1549-1550 and used as a boys' school between 1767 and 1970. This building with its extremely fine Renaissance style lintel now hosts the "Maison des Sorcières" [Witches' House]. The "Jardin des Simples" can be found to the rear of the house.

**16 La Tour carrée [Square Tower]** (Eastern rampart) is part of the original and oldest flanking towers of Bergheim's outer fortifications.

**The flanking towers of the northern rampart:**

As the enemy mainly came from the North, that side of the outer fortification had 5 flanking towers, out of a total of 9, that are still visible to this day.

**17 - The so-called "Witches" tower** once had a conical roof and has a downward firing cannon slit. From there, you can see the counterscarp wall that edges the outer moat.

**18 - The "timber framed" tower** has a projecting storey. After the 17th century, the tower walls which had ceased to be proof against fire arms, were built with homes.

**19 - La Tour de la Poudrière**, with its projecting surfaces has a Lombardy frieze, 3 gargoyles (in the form of bird beaks) and slits used for firing on the enemy (6 cannon slits, cruciform archer slits and two firing slits with notches used to anchor the cannon barrel).

**20 - La Tour Fahrer:** this flanking tower was built during the 14th and 15th centuries.

**21 - La Tour Wotling** (opposite the Tour Fahrer) is a flanking tower of the inner fortification wall.

**22 - La Tour Deiss** is topped by a house that is still inhabited.

## 23 The house of the « Sabotier » [clog maker] (4 rue du Haut-Koenigsbourg)

This house features the armourer's emblem (1617) and a timber gallery on the 1st floor.

## 24 The bailiff's court (57 Grand'Rue)

During the 17th century, the property belonged to the provost-marshal Georges Kentzinger. The building retains its 18th century timber galleries and stairs. The oldest wing (in the right hand courtyard) dates from 1582. At the beginning of the 19th century, the house belonged to Gabriel Israël Sée, whose son Léopold, was the first Jew in France to become a major general. A well dated 1566 and a 16th century cellar can still be seen.

## 25 German military cemetery