

DEUX SEVRES	CHURCHES
<p>Aiffres</p> <p>St Pierre</p> <p>South of Niort</p>	<p>There is a XIIc single nave to this church. The West door is plain but there are two good capitals; one shows a man on his side next to a bird and two beasts. There is a square XIIIc Romanesque tower on the North of the crossing. At the top are pairs of windows with good foliage capitals. In the cemetery is a tall, slim 'Hosanna' cross that is XIIc.</p>
<p>Airvault</p> <p>St Pierre</p> <p>North-west of Poitiers</p>	<p>This former abbey church was founded in the mid Xc. It was reformed by a monk, Pierre de Saine-Fontaine, who had come from the abbey at Lesterps (16). It was therefore modified to reflect some of the concepts to be found at Lesterps. The West façade has a number of bays and windows. Over the door are the Wise Men of the Apocalypse and, in a bay, a fragment of a horseman. The entrance is through a pillared narthex that leads into a wide nave with side aisles. In the nave is the tomb stone of Pierre de Saine-Fontaine; it is decorated with figures of Christ with eight Apostles. The choir has an ambulatory with three chapels. Most of the pillars have sculptured capitals. To the South are the remains of the Chapter House and cloisters. High on the interior nave walls are fine statues.</p> <p>See leaflets and 'Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou-Charente' pages 50 and 51, 'Poitou Roman' page 32 and 'Haut Poitou Roman' pages 232 to 238</p>
<p>Argenton-Chateau</p> <p>St Gilles</p> <p>South-west of Saumur and North-west of Poitiers</p>	<p>Of this XIIc church only the doorway remains. It comprises a stepped door with five arches illustrating Vices & Virtues and Wise & Foolish Virgins. There are also angels with the Lamb of God, Labours of the Month and Signs of the Zodiac. In the upper corners are illustrations of Heaven and Hell. Across the top is a line of modillions.</p> <p>See 'Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou-Charente'</p>

<p>Auge St Gregoire North-east of Niort</p>	<p>page 52 and 'Poitou Roman' page 32</p> <p>The tower is XIIc and it is over the crossing which has a cupola on trompes. The apse and choir are gothic and the nave is modern. By the South door are two capitals from an earlier church.</p>
<p>Belleville Notre Dame South of Niort</p>	<p>This is an unexciting church. It was built in the XIIc and was strengthened shortly afterwards. The flat ended apse is Gothic and the nave has been shortened. Inside are the remains of large pillars and pilasters.</p>
<p>Bouin South-east of Chef Boutonne</p>	<p>This church has a single nave and a gothic apse. The West façade has a stepped door with eagles and looped snakes on the arches. Over the façade are three original modillions. There is a square tower by the South side of the crossing, the base of which appears to be XIIc.</p>
<p>Cauny East of Melle</p>	<p>Only the rounded apse and the first bay of the nave remain from the XIIc church. The remainder is XIVc or later. The apse has several windows each with small columns and very fine capitals that include depictions of: two birds at a chalice, a man's head with snakes at his ears, foliage and beasts; two capitals have birds at the ears of a man's head. There are scaffold holes and about ten graffiti '+' and 'x'.</p>
<p>Celles sur Belle St Hilaire North-west of Melle</p>	<p>Next to the Gothic abbey church on the north side are the remains of the former parish church. The main element is the crypt which is of XIIc origin. It has small windows and Gothic-style roof vaults.</p>

<p>Chail St Pierre South-east of Melle</p>	<p>Of XIIc origin, this church has been extensively rebuilt. It has a stepped West door below a small modern bell wall. There are three sculptured plaques on the West façade, one to the left of St Michael killing a dragon and, to the right, St Peter and Christ (damaged). The door is stepped with pairs of discs on the arch and some restored capitals.</p>
<p>Champdeniers Notre Dame North of Niort</p>	<p>This church has an attractive West façade with a stepped door between two blind arches that leads into the nave with side aisles. The nave has square pillars topped by sculptured capitals; figures and foliage. The choir is Gothic. Below the choir is a crypt with two rows of slender columns with capitals. The crypt was extended East in the XVc.</p> <p>See 'Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou-Charente' page 33</p>
<p>Clussais Notre Dame East of Melle</p>	<p>This church was built in the second half of the XIIc. There is a fine apse with three windows. The roof is covered by lauze. The tower is slightly off line at the west end. It has fine arches. The façade has two levels with blind arches and some late XIIc sculptured capitals.</p> <p>See leaflet</p>
<p>Le Cormenier St Eutrope South of Niort</p>	<p>This church looks typically Romanesque and XIIc, but it has been heavily restored. The apse is rounded and high with decorated arches and capitals on tall engaged pillars. Inside there is a cupola on trompes and a single nave that has been rebuilt. The West door has four original Corinthian-style capitals.</p>
<p>La Fougereuse</p>	<p>This is in a tiny hamlet and is a former priory; it is now part of a farm and is ruined.</p>

North of Argenton-Chateau	
Frontenay-Rohan-Rohan	
South of Niort	<p>This was founded in 1016, but was extensively rebuilt in the XVc. Only the base of the tower at the South side of the church remains. From the original XIc building. Inside, there is a cupola that falls onto four large columns that have severely damaged capitals. On the exterior, above the door, is a remade arch with two XIIc Corinthian capitals.</p>
Javarsay	<p>The church dates from 1150. It has a fine West façade with a stepped door between two tall blind arches. There is a line of modillions and friezes across the top of the arches; these depict birds, foliage, stars, a pilgrim and the Lamb of God. The nave has side aisles leading to a cupola on pendentives that is in Périgordin style over the crossing. There are capitals at the crossing with heads, lions and foliage. Over the crossing is a square tower. The apse is Gothic.</p>
St Chartier	<p>See 'Poitou Roman' page 37, 'Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou-Charente' page 54 and 'Haut Poitou Roman' page 335</p>
West edge of Chef Boutonne	
Loize	<p>This church has a XIIc door with a XVc insert. The single nave has been restored; the apse is XVc. The West door has a broad arch of circles. This falls onto capitals with lions on the left and foliage on the right. Behind these are two re-used modillions; to the left, an upside-down man and an animal and to the right, King David playing a lute. Over the door is a tall, slim window.</p>
South-east of Melle and North-west of Ruffec	
Marigny	<p>This church retains its XIIc rounded apse and two rounded side chapels off the transepts. The tower and nave were destroyed following the Revolution and have been replaced. There is no decoration outside. Inside, there is a cupola on trompes at the</p>
St Jean Evangeliste	
South of Niort	

<p>Marnes East of Airvault</p>	<p>crossing and good capitals: a lion attacking a man, a lion with the head of a man and a prone figure.</p> <p>This is a late XIIc church. There is a single nave with a stepped West door that has plain capitals. The South transept also has a stepped door that is decorated with an arch that comes down to the ground and with foliage capitals to the sides; these are damaged. The apse is long and flat ended. It appears to have been partly rebuilt. There is a large capital at the South-east corner and there are modillions. Inside there are large capitals at the crossing. Some are in a crumbling state. They are of palmettes. Those on the North side have heads amongst the foliage. There are two side chapels and over the crossing is a ribbed cupola. Above this is a square tower.</p>
<p>Mauze sur le Mignon St Pierre South-west of Niort</p>	<p>This XIIc church was devastated by the Wars of Religion. Only the base of the tower at the North-west corner of the church and two very worn Corinthian style capitals remain. On the West face of the tower are the remains of figures on decorated arches. Until the 1850s there was a horseman. Inside, below the tower are some XIIc capitals of foliage.</p>
<p>Mazières sur Béronne South-west of Melle</p>	<p>At the site of a IVc archpresbytery is a small XIc chapel. It is now in private hands. It has a short, round apse (now altered) and a single nave, with a low, stepped door. This has short columns each side that are topped by capitals depicting foliage. On the South wall of the nave is one tall, slim window; on the North side is a shorter one.</p>
<p>Melle</p>	<p>This church was a place of pilgrimage founded by</p>

St Hilaire	<p>Benedictines and is probably one of the finest Romanesque churches in the Poitou. It was a dependency of St Jean d'Angely. The West façade is splendidly decorated especially on the upper level. There are modillions on the nave and there are capitals depicting a harp player and a boar hunt. There is a very fine North door with a statue of Constantine (new). The nave dates from the first half of the XIIc and the apse from the XIc. There are fine, decorated windows on the nave. Inside there is an unusual decorated door on the South wall. The nave has side aisles. There are columns with good sculptures – 281 of the latter. The tower is similar to the nearby church of St Pierre. The choir has an ambulatory and three radiating chapels.</p> <p>See 'Haut Poitou Roman' pages 279 to 284 and leaflets</p>
Melle St Pierre	<p>This church was originally founded as an oratory dependant on the Benedictine abbey of St Maixent. The apse and transepts with two side chapels are XIc. The nave with narrow side aisles date from the first half of the XIIc. The nave has many splendid capitals, not all of which are finished. They include 'Mis-en-tombeau' and the Thorn-puller. The church was damaged during the One Hundred Years War and the Revolution. The West façade and door are plain. The South door has fine geometric and floral decoration on the arches. Above it is a large tablet depicting Christ in Majesty; it is damaged. There is a tower over the cupola. The tower has blind arches. The apse has very fine decorated windows.</p> <p>See 'Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou-Charente', 'The Pilgrim's Guide' page 237, 'Poitou Roman' pages 37 to 38 and 'Haut Poitou Roman' pages 285 to 287 and leaflets</p>
Melle	This is the oldest of the three churches in Melle. It

<p>St Savinien</p>	<p>was under going restoration in 2004. It has a single nave of XIc origin and transepts with rounded side chapels and a rounded apse that are XIIc. The West façade has a stepped door with a blind arch each side. The capitals by the door are finely carved but weathered. There are interlacings and lions. Above is a line of modillions depicting horse heads with small friezes in between and extending over the blind arches; there is a copulating couple, a huge fish and animals. There is a small South door with a decorated arch. Over the West door is a small tympanum of two lions each side of the Christ. Round the apse are lots of modillions; these appear to have been restored or are replacements. Over the crossing is a square tower, the top of which has recently been restored. Inside in the North-east corner is a capital depicting the death of St Savinien. There are tacherons on the choir – 13 x ‘T’ etc.</p> <p>See ‘Haut Poitou Roman’ pages 276 to 278, ‘Poitou Roman’ page 37, ‘Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou Charente’ page 55 and leaflets</p>
<p>Mellérin</p> <p>South-east of Melle and North-west of Ruffec</p>	<p>This is a rather ordinary church from the second half of the XIIc. There is a single nave with a remade South door. There are large buttresses on the North and South walls. The windows were remodeled in the XIXc. There is a tower with open arches. There is almost no interior decoration.</p>
<p>Niort</p> <p>St Florence</p> <p>South edge of the town</p>	<p>Only the central part of the nave of this church is Romanesque. On the West façade are four re-used plaques with bas-relief sculptures; these depict two single men, Adam& Eve (?), and a man with a woman to his side.</p>
<p>Parthenay</p> <p>Maison de Dieu</p>	<p>This is a small chapel with a rounded apse. It stands on the North bank of the river. It was a XIIc pilgrim chapel. There are small windows in the</p>

<p>Parthenay St Laurent</p> <p>Parthenay-le-Vieux St Pierre South-west of Parthenay</p> <p>Périgne St Martin South-east of Niort</p>	<p>apse. There is no outside decoration.</p> <p>Little remains of the XIIc church. It had a single nave; a North side aisle was added in the XVc along with the present apse and the vaults of the nave. The South aisle was built in 1852, along with the spire over the West porch. The West door has arches to the side and a frieze depicting two apostles (?); it is XIIc as are some of the interior capitals including the depiction of the Last Judgment, the Prayer of the Virgin and the 'Verdict'.</p> <p>A former priory of Chaise Dieu, the church dates from the XIc. There is a fine west façade with a decorated door that is between blind arches and an upper window between arches. Around the door is an arch decorated with animals (horses?) and seated people. In the left arch is a horseman and in the right, Samson and a lion. The nave, built with limestone and 'grit-stone', has two aisles divided by pillars that lean outwards. There is a rounded apse and two side chapels. Over the crossing is a cupola on trompes. Some pillars have sculptured capitals. To the north of the church, the cloisters have been incorporated into a dwelling. The church has an octagonal tower over the crossing.</p> <p>See 'Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou-Charente' pages 61 and 62 and 'Poitou Roman' page 40</p> <p>This church was an Augustine foundation. It was severely damaged in the XVIc. The apse and the east end of the South transept are XVIIc. The nave has a small West door and a fine North door, which has a frieze of birds each side and a man with lions (Daniel?). There are two decorated arches. The North transept has a smaller decorated door between two capitals, one of which has foliage decoration, the other a ghou. The interior</p>
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	of the nave is high with three bays marked by tall columns with wide but short capitals; one has a line of birds, the others of foliage.
Pers East of Melle and North-west of Ruffec	This XIIc church has lost its apse. It is now a rectangular chapel with a small bell wall and a line of modillions over the West door. There are small windows each side. In the church yard are a slim Lanterne des Morts and five Merovingian tombs.
Pierrefitte South-east of Argenton-Chateau	This church has been rebuilt, especially the nave. This has a stepped door between two huge, ugly buttresses. There are small, high windows in the nave. The apse is rounded and there is a tower over the South side of the crossing.
Pioussay St Martin North-west of Ruffec	This has a late XIIc West door with very small capitals and a thin frieze with single leaves. There is a niche to the right of the door. Inside there are engaged columns in the nave. The capitals have small heads or simple foliage designs. The apse is Gothic. See leaflet
Prahecq St Maixeint South-east of Niort	Apart from the area of the crossing this church is gothic. At the crossing are four large columns with good capitals from the XIIc: a lion, Samson and a lion, two sirens, pine cones and two of foliage. Outside, the low, square tower is Romanesque.
Rom North-east of Melle	This church is built on a Gallo-roman site. The church has been extensively rebuilt with side aisles added to the original single nave. There is a XIXc porch with a spire above. The West door is stepped and is of late XIIc origin in style. The apse is rounded. In the nave is a capital of a man between a bird and a beast; the scene is depicted twice.

<p>St Etienne la Cigogne</p> <p>South of Niort</p>	<p>This was a Benedictine foundation from the nearby Doeuil in the XIc. The nave was damaged in the Wars of Religion and again after the Revolution. The rounded apse has large bays with decorated arches – diamond patterns and simple capitals on the windows; these include foliage and small heads. There are capitals on the large engaged columns; these have foliage, heads including a Greenman and one with birds whispering in the ear of a man. There are some modillions with heads.</p>
<p>St Génard</p> <p>South of Melle</p>	<p>This church is small, set outside the village and is of XIIc origin. It has a rounded apse with incorporated columns that rise to the roof. Each side of the windows there are small columns topped by capitals. There is a single nave with an interesting West façade. The West door is stepped and has capitals each side; most are very worn. One is of a man with a long thin beard and with snakes coming out of his mouth. The arches over the door have foliage patterns. The outer arch has unusual scrolled leaves in pairs.</p>
<p>St Généroux</p> <p>South of Saumur and North of Parthenay</p>	<p>By a XIIIc bridge, this church is of X/XIc origin and dedicated to Ste Générouse, who died 16 July 521. It has a rounded apse and two side chapels which are divided from the nave by a high wall pierced by a line of arches separated by pillars; these are topped by square pillars. The outer wall of the nave has patterned decoration using different stones.</p> <p>See ‘Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou-Charente’ page 63 and ‘Poitou Roman’ page 33</p>

<p>St Jouin de Marnes</p> <p>South of Saumur and North-west of Poitiers</p>	<p>Founded in 342 by the hermit Jouinus (whose statue is on the West end of the exterior of the south wall of the nave) the church was built in the late XIc and has some similarities with the church at Airvault, though St Jouin is much larger. On the West façade there are two small doors flanked by a larger central door. There are statues of St Peter (to the right) and St Paul (to the left) and, above, St John the Evangelist with an eagle and Jouinus. On the upper level are the Annunciation and, finally, the pilgrims coming to the Last Judgment, with Christ between two angels. The nave is very long and has two side aisles and a rounded choir with an ambulatory and three radiating chapels. The pillars are topped by well carved capitals, mostly of foliage, but some birds, animals and figures.</p> <p>See 'Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou-Charente' pages 64 to 66, 'Haut Poitou Roman' pages 239 to 273 and the leaflet</p>
<p>St Léger lès Melle (also known as St Léger de la Martinières)</p> <p>North-east edge of Melle</p>	<p>This is a XIc church that was restored in 1682 and again in the XIXc. There is a single nave and a rounded apse. The West door is XVIc. The original North door has been sealed but the attractively decorated and twisted columns each side of the doorway and fragments of capitals and friezes are visible. There is another good fragment of frieze on the North-west buttress. The apse has one window which is decorated. There are engaged columns with capitals of foliage and a lion. There are modillions of heads, intertwined snakes, a monk and a boar eating a small mammal. There are scaffold holes on the North wall.</p>
<p>St Léger de Montbon</p>	<p>This XIc church stands on a knoll some way from the village. Only the apse and tower of this church</p>

<p>South of Saumur and East of Thouars</p>	<p>are Romanesque. The nave has a XIIIc South door and a XVIIc West door. The apse is short and round and much of it is hidden by a clutter of ugly XXc structures including primitive toilets. The square tower is over the crossing. It has a XVc window in the lower South wall.</p>
<p>St Martin de Baillargeaux Commune of Noize between Poitiers and Thouars</p>	<p>The village for this church disappeared after a plague. It has a single nave and a flat ended apse. Over the crossing is a small, square tower with a Byzantine cone on top. The West door, below a porch, is plain. The nave is short and cut off from the choir by a thick wall with three arches through it; those to the sides are lower and narrower than the central one. To the North of the altar are two small niches.</p>
<p>St Martin de Sanzey North of Thouars</p>	<p>Of the XIIc church only the apse and some capitals in the nave remain. The apse is long and rounded. It has very large modillions; most depict grotesque masks, there is one image of lust on the North side. The capitals depict foliage and, in one case, two figures with clover-like foliage. Beside most capitals is a second small sculpture; most are of heads; one is of a snake with a human head.</p>
<p>St Roman lès Melle West of Melle</p>	<p>This XIIc church has a rounded apse with incorporated columns and scaffold holes. The single nave has a stepped West door with fine capitals depicting, to the right, a ghoul, a head with a lion whispering in his ear and a cockle shell and, to the left, foliage. There are traces of an inscription over the door to the left. Inside, the nave is plain, but there are two capitals at the entrance to the choir, which is much higher than the nave. There are tacherons on the apse; V x 10, A x I and small spiral x 4.</p>

<p>St Soline East of Melle</p>	<p>See leaflet</p> <p>This former XIIc church has been much altered. The nave has side aisles. It was originally entered by a West door between blind arches, of which only the outlines remain. The East bay of the nave, the transepts, the side chapels and the apse were destroyed. The nave has XIIc capitals of beasts and foliage.</p> <p>See leaflet</p>
<p>St Symphorien South of Niort</p>	<p>Most of this church is XVc Gothic; but the South nave, though much rebuilt and restored, dates from the XIIc. There are two columns with capitals, one of which is very worn, but the other has foliage and interlacings.</p>
<p>St Vincent-la-Châtre East of Melle</p>	<p>The North door dates from the late XIIc. There are six capitals of monsters, a two-headed eagle, birds devouring one another and a prostrate man. Inside the single nave has two capitals depicting two hares (?) and two griffons. The apse is XVIc or later. The door capitals resemble those at Aiffres in style.</p>
<p>Sauze-Vaussais St Junien North-west of Ruffec</p>	<p>This church is in Vaussais. It is a former dependency of St Martial de Limoges. The entrance is on the South side where there are two doors. The choir is wide with three chapels on a flat wall. Each has a window that, on the outside, is well decorated on the columns and capitals. The choir is late XIIc. The crossing, which has a cupola on pendentives, is earlier. It is below an attractive square tower, though it has a hideous stairway on</p>

<p>Sécondigny-en-Gatine</p> <p>St Eulalie</p> <p>South-west of Parthenay</p>	<p>the South side. The walls of the apse were raised, probably in the XIVc. The nave is XIXc.</p> <p>See 'Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou-Charente' page 67 and 'Haut Poitou Roman' page 341</p> <p>This church is orientated east to west and has been much altered over time. From the Romanesque period, it retains an octagonal tower from the XIc and the West end of the nave with the crossing which are XI/XIIc. The main door under the porch is XVIc. The West wall is XVIIc and the East end of the nave is XIXc.</p> <p>See 'Eglise de Sécondigny en Gatine' and 'Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou-Charente' page 68</p>
<p>Taize</p> <p>Between Poitiers and Thouars</p>	<p>There is a square tower on the North of the crossing with pairs of openings at the top; some have been recently blocked. None are decorated. This tower is Romanesque. Inside, at the entrance to the chapel below the tower, are two XIIc capitals depicting simple palmettes. Below the tower are more foliage capitals; the one in the North-east corner also has heads. In the nave are capitals in a different style, one of which has a bas-relief head in foliage. Those at the East end of the nave have a XVc Greenman beside them.</p>
<p>Ternay</p> <p>South of Saumur and North-east of Thouars</p>	<p>Of the original XIIc church only the short rounded apse and a square tower remain. The apse is without decoration. The tower has pairs of openings at the top; these have small foliage capitals. The remainder is XVIIc gothic.</p>

<p>Thouars St Médard North-west of Poitiers</p>	<p>Of the XIIc church, only the West façade remains. The remainder of the church has been rebuilt. The façade was also partly rebuilt in the XIVc and it was extensively restored in the XIXc. The façade comprises a stepped West door that is set between blind arches. The door has capitals depicting people being tempted by devils and scenes of hell. On the arches are scenes depicting the Evangelists, Christ's entry to Jerusalem, the Wise Men of the Apocalypse and the Ascension. The side arches have foliage capitals. Above the door and arches is a line of statues of the Apostles; these are XIXc. Above them are two windows and a rose window that dates from the XIVc rebuild.</p> <p>See 'Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou-Charente' page 69</p>
<p>Thouars St Léon North-west of Poitiers</p>	<p>Of the original church, only the South transept and tower remain. The tower has two stories. The lower one has two blind arches on each side; these have three smaller, slim arches within them. The top storey has four openings on each side. There are small foliage capitals by each arch. Inside there is a cupola on trompes below the tower. In the corners are capitals; These depict foliage, cockle shells, lions and a cat's head in foliage.</p> <p>See 'Les Eglises Romanes de Poitou-Charente' page 69</p>
<p>Tourlay South of Saumur and North-east of Thouars</p>	<p>The core of this church is probably late XIc. It was a short rectangular building. The apse was flat; a horrid carbuncle has been added to it hiding the lower two thirds of the original wall. The exposed bit is constructed using circular reddish stones. The North wall is also constructed using similar reddish stones, but rectangular. There are the outlines of the windows. This wall has extensive</p>

	<p>reinforcement at the base. The South wall is built using small, even calcaire stonework. The West door is late XIIc or even late XIIIc.</p>
<p>Usson South of Niort</p>	<p>This XIIc church has a single nave, both transept arms and the West part of the choir; the East of the choir is XVc. The nave has tall columns topped by modern capitals with late XIIc style large arches in between.</p>
<p>Vanzay North of Ruffec and south west of Couhé</p>	<p>This church has a single nave, a rounded apse and a stepped North door. The apse is at the West end. Over the crossing is a square, recent tower. There are modillions over the East end above the porch and simple decorative modillions over the North door.</p>
<p>Verrines sous Celles St Maixent West of Melle</p>	<p>This is a very fine XIIc church but, sadly, most of the nave has been destroyed. The apse is rounded and there is a rounded chapel off each transept arm. There is a cupola on trompes at the crossing that may have been modeled on those at St Pierre, Angoulême. The nave had had side aisles divided by huge columns. There are fine capitals that are reminiscent of those at Aulnay: Abraham's sacrifice, Samson and the lion, Samson and Delilah. The apse has many fine modillions including a deer (North side), a pig and an archer (both on the South side). The tower over the crossing has windows with columns and good capitals, especially the groups of small heads at the corners.</p>
<p>22.11.2014</p>	