

A few centuries before year 1000, “**Nobiliacum**” came into place. Overlooking the Vienne valley, this small “village” grew slowly over the centuries thanks to its dynamic **commercial and handicraft activities** and the rising veneration of the **tomb of saint Léonard**, the founder and patron saint. Pilgrims from all over Europe came to pay him homage as early as the 11th century.

1

Livestock Scale (Tourist Office)

Old postcards show that the scale was used in the past to weigh **Limousin cattle** sold at renowned fairs at today's Champ de Mars, formerly known as "Champ de Foire" (“fairground”). The weighing device is currently kept inside the tourist office.



2

Medieval facades

Keep your eyes open for more medieval facades along the way!



Surrounded by ramparts in the past, the old town holds **5 medieval houses - partially preserved** - dating back to the 12th and 13th c., testifying its first period of prosperity.

They are recognized by their pointed arches on the ground level, gemel windows and sculpted friezes and modillions. The most striking façade is that of today's Martin patisserie.

3

Houses with round tower and square tower

These houses are distinguished by their **elaborate architecture**, each with a corbelled tower to display their splendour.



They reflect the wealth of their owners, and bear witness to the new-found prosperity of the region in the 17th and 18th c., thanks to its water-based crafts of paper mills and tanneries.



4

The romanesque collegiate church Saint-Léonard

This large church was not open to parishioners, but only to pilgrims coming from all over Europe to venerate the **relics of Léonard**, the legendary founder of this town (599). The first church was built upon his tomb, but it soon became too small, and was replaced by the collegiate church (managed by a “college” of canons).

The oldest parts of the church are the nave and the transept. The ambulatory choir (12th c.) was rebuilt to accommodate thousands of pilgrims, making the collegiate one of the world's largest pilgrimage churches. Gothic elements can only be found on the western side (13th c.). The bell tower measures 52 meters.

Well-situated on the **Way of St. James**, the collegiate is recognized as a **UNESCO Heritage Site**.



5

The town model

Housed in the **third place of the association L'Escalier**, the model can be seen during the opening hours. The fruit of many decades of work, it was entirely created by the volunteers from the Association Connaissance et Sauvegarde de Saint-Léonard.

6

House for the consuls

Equivalent to the today's town hall, this place housed **the consuls, the administrators of the town**, who were selected among the town's leading citizens (lawyers, medical doctors, merchants) aged at least 25 years old.

Grand pointed arches on the ground level with gemel windows in the southern side can be found in the building.



7

The Daughters of our Lady old convent

Settled in Saint-Léonard in 1652, the niece of the philosopher Montaigne, Jeanne de Lestonnac founded the order of the Daughters of Our Lady.

They constructed this former convent to take in poor young girls to give them education.

After its dissolution (1792), the sisters reestablished themselves in a new convent (1838), where sits today's Bernard Palissy College, before expelled by the law due to the separation of the Church and the State (1905). The building was then turned into a police station. It now houses the **Foyer Rural** and the **Museum of Gay-Lussac**.



8

Former hospital

A major monument of the town, this former **hospital** (a place of hospitality) **welcomed, cared for, nourished, and accommodated** whoever in needs since the Middle Ages. The two gates (13th c.) feature the popular architectural style of the time: columns, corbels along the curve of the arches and sculpted capitals. It is now a private residence.



9

Hermit's House

What interests us isn't the house itself, but rather its location. According to tradition, this is where Saint Léonard, the founder of the town, set up his **hermitage** (6th c.) to evangelize and brought forth a miraculous spring.

The statue of Saint Léonard there holds a book (he was a confessor) and some shackles, referring to his legendary power to free prisoners.



10

Passageways

The streets inside the town have barely changed since the 12th c. There remain some **carriageways** that wind around houses, bypass residential blocks and facilitate flow of traffic.