



K

THE HISTORY OF
CHÂTEAU DE SAMARY



Above: Detail from an early 19th-century map showing Samary.
Then called 'Métairie Samarie'. ('Métairie' translates to
'smallholding' or 'sharecropping farm').

The name 'Samary' is believed to be a corruption of the two words 'Sainte Marie', French for Saint Mary. The 'Sainte' is pronounced as 'Sant' or 'San', and Marie is pronounced as 'Ma-ree'. Hence,

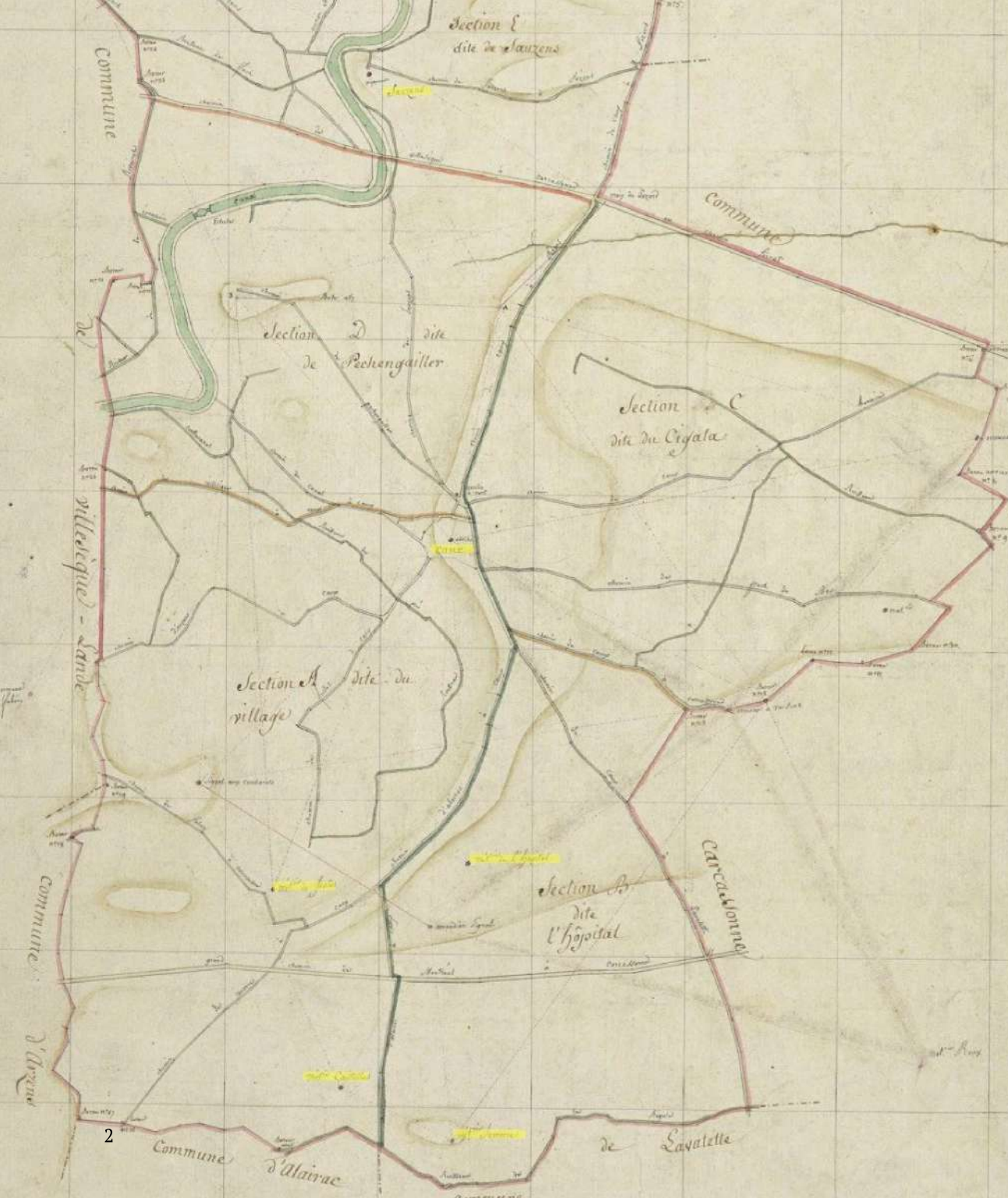
San-ma-ree, Samary



Researched for Karma Resorts
by Ancestral Footsteps,
specialists in family history tours and research
www.ancestralfootsteps.com

With huge thanks to Madame Hélène Rambaud
for all her information and photographs





Left: Early 19th-century map of the commune of Caux-et-Sauzens highlighting Caux, Sauzens, and the commune's four main farms - l'Hôpital, les Castelles, Festes and Samary.

There are several possible origins of the name St. Mary/Samary. There may once have been a small chapel on the land at Samary dedicated to St. Mary; the land may have had a connection to the small area west of Caux-et-Sauzens called Sainte-Marie; or the land was originally owned by one of the St. Mary's churches in the Carcassonne area.



Grape picking in Roman times

The Aude region in France has a rich history of winemaking, with evidence of vineyards dating back to Greek and Roman times.

The typical agricultural landscape of the Roman era was countryside with vines married to trees, arranged in rows with intermediate strips of wheat or other crops. The cultivation of crops was easy between the rows of the tall vineyard. Animals could be grazed there for most of the year, without risk of damaging the grapes.

It is possible that the farms in the Caux-et-Sauzens area were once arranged in this way until the planting of the classic vineyards.

From the 14th century onwards, vineyards expanded throughout the Caux-et-Sauzens area, and by the 17th century, vineyard parcels were mentioned in the archives. Sauzens even had a wine press and barrels, stored in a dedicated building near the château there.



Early 20th-century view of the vineyards of Caux-et-Sauzens

By the 19th century, a real wine economy had developed. Caux had over 80 hectares (nearly 200 acres) of vines and vineyards, which formed a significant part of the village landscape.

However, the vineyards were often affected by diseases such as oidium or mildew, and the great phylloxera crisis. The latter became known as the Great French Wine Blight, a severe blight of the mid-19th century that destroyed many of the vineyards in France and devastated the wine industry. It was caused by an insect, the grape phylloxera, which originated in North America and was carried across the Atlantic in the late 1850s. Over 40% of French grape vines and vineyards were affected over a 15-year period.

In response, the local farmers turned to hybrid vines (the cross breeding of two different grape species to give greater disease resistance) and replanted the fields of Caux-et-Sauzens.

According to the archives in Carcassonne, Jean-Pierre Fabre was the first recorded owner of the land at Samary. He was better known as Fabre of Aude. In the Samary land documents above, he is variously documented as 'Jean Fabre, senator in Paris' and 'Count Fabre of Aude'.

Fabre was born in Carcassonne in 1755 and was a well-known French Revolutionary. He is buried in the famous Père-Lachaise cemetery in Paris.

The French Revolution (1789 to 1799) was a period of significant change for French farmers, including those in the Aude region. While some gained from the abolition of feudalism and land redistribution, the revolution also brought economic hardship, instability, and the burden of war. Farmers bore the brunt of providing men, animals, and food for the armies.

A moderate supporter of the ideas of the French Revolution, Fabre received a commission from the king in 1790 to organize the department of Aude. Caux and Sauzens were two separate villages until the French Revolution. In 1791, the law of municipalities brought them together as one entity, Caux-et-Sauzens.

Across France and the rest of Europe the consequences of the Revolution were huge. There were many new developments including the fall of the monarchy and the growth of nationalism.

There were also changes in society with the rise of the middle class. At Samary, for example, the land would eventually change hands from an aristocratic family, the Fabres, to a middle class family, the Ancelmes.



Jean-Pierre Fabre, a French Revolutionary, and owner of the land at Samary



Liberty Leading the People by Eugène Delacroix

NOMS, PRÉNOMS, PROFESSIONS ET DEMEURES des propriétaires et usufruitiers.	ANNÉE de la muta- tion.	de la section.	du numéro du plan.	DES CANTONS ou lieux dits.	DE LA NATURE de la propriété.
Fabre Jean de Samary	1861	A	107	à Moudou	t. lab.
Canet Claude	1861		108		t. vague
Maître Jérome		B	104	à Moudou	
Maître Jérome			105		t. lab.
Maître Jérome			106		
Maître Jérome			107	à Camp Long	
(1869 pour 1869)			108	champ de la gaine	
Maître Jérome			109	à terre douce	
Maître Jérome			110	champ de la gaine	
Maître Jérome			111	au bois	t. lab.
(1861)			112	"	t. lab.
Maître Jérome			113	"	t. vague
Maître Jérome			114	"	t. lab.
(1861)			115	terre douce	
Maître Jérome			116	champ de la gaine	
Maître Jérome			117	champ de la gaine	
Maître Jérome			118	au Moudou	t. vague
Maître Jérome			119	à laire	sol
Maître Jérome			120		maison
Maître Jérome			121	"	maison
Maître Jérome			122	"	jardin
Maître Jérome			123	champ de la gaine	t. lab.
Maître Jérome			124	"	cours d'allée
1862 1864 B 121			à laire	maison	
1869 1874 " 124			champ de la gaine	maison	
1880 1879 B 126			terre douce	maison	
1882 1880 " 127			du puy	maison	

List of the 19th-century owners of the land at Samary.
With Count Jean Fabre at the top of the list
and Claude Ancelme as the final entry.

Count Fabre died in 1832, but the land remained in the Fabre family until they sold it in 1859.

The land at Samary was eventually bought by Claude Ancelme de Alcide in 1864. Ancelme was a landowner from Canet, in the neighbouring department of Hérault. Many large landowners from the burgeoning middle classes - in industry, finance or the liberal professions - now owned vast estates all over France.

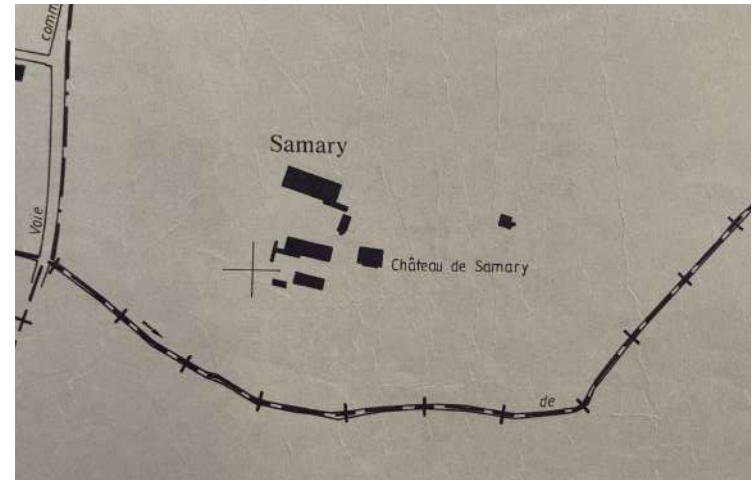
Census records are available for Caux-et-Sauzens from 1836. Samary first appears in the census records in 1846 as a dwelling, the 'domain of Samary' with Étienne Cabrié, a farmer, living there with his wife, Marie, and daughter, Marguerite.

Domaine de Samary	6	Grégoire	Marie	1
	1	Étienne	Marie	1
	2	Severac	Marie	1
	3	Cabrié	Marguerite	1

Samary, in the 1846 census



Mid 19th-century map of Samary showing the plot at 116 where the Château de Samary now stands



20th-century map showing Château de Samary and the addition of its huge wine 'cave', over twice the footprint of the château

Claude Ancelme de Alcide bought the land at Samary in 1864, but it was not until 1879 that he began to build a grand house there, the Château de Samary. Claude lived there in the summer months with his wife and two children.

1874	q	124	Champ du Jod	Donnelloni
1879	B	116	Samary Champ	Maison
1880		116	Du puits	Maison

Extract from the list (opposite page) showing the permission to build a house, 'maison', in 1879, on plot 116.



Claude Ancelme de Alcide
(1825 - 1900)
who built the Château de Samary



The Ancelme family outside the Château in 1910

Belle Époque exterior features at
Château de Samary include:

Decorative sculpted detail of the
grapes over the front entrance



Elaborate moulding at the top
of the front facade



Arched windows to create
elegance and fluidity



Fountain opposite the main
entrance, now a sculpture



Château de Samary was built in the 1880s at the height of the
Belle Époque.

The Belle Époque, 'The Beautiful Era', was a period of French and European history that began after the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 and continued until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. It was a period characterised by optimism, enlightenment, romanticism, regional peace, economic prosperity, conservatism, nationalism, colonial expansion, and technological, scientific and cultural innovations.

Although known as a period of looking forward, many 19th-century villas and châteaux in the Carcassonne region were built in historicist styles, drawing inspiration from, and often imitating, past historical styles.

Belle Époque châteaux such as Samary were designed to reflect wealth and sophistication, featuring luxurious interiors and elaborate gardens. Exterior details like fountains were also common, adding to the overall decorative richness.

Buildings were decorated with sculpted details, mouldings, and other embellishments. Windows were frequently arched or curved, contributing to an overall sense of elegance and fluidity. Buildings were often painted in soft, pastel shades.

Elaborate gardens





The Belle Époque use of coloured tiles and mosaics, particularly around windows and doors, added a touch of colour and artistry. Some fine examples remain at Samary.

Vegetal motifs in carved wood or moulded plaster, painted over, were common above doorways



Decorative stair railings



Intricate ironwork



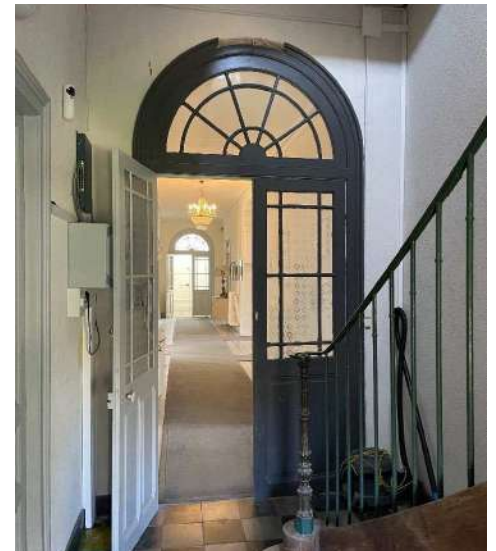
Inside Château de Samary there are also many examples of Belle Époque style, with interiors characterised by a mix of classic elegance, rich ornamentation, and artistic expression.

Key elements include curved lines (moving away from the strict straight lines of previous styles), and floral and vegetal motifs, a decorative design which used plant forms, such as leaves, flowers, fruits, or branches, as its primary element.

Intricate plasterwork or wood carvings on walls and ceilings and above doorways often featured these floral patterns, adding a sense of opulence. Arches were common in doorways and windows, lending a sense of grandeur.

There was also a focus on quality materials and craftsmanship. Wood was a prominent material, with furniture featuring detailed carvings and inlays. Decorative railings, often with intricate ironwork, were frequently found in Belle Époque designs.

Doorway arches gave a sense of grandeur



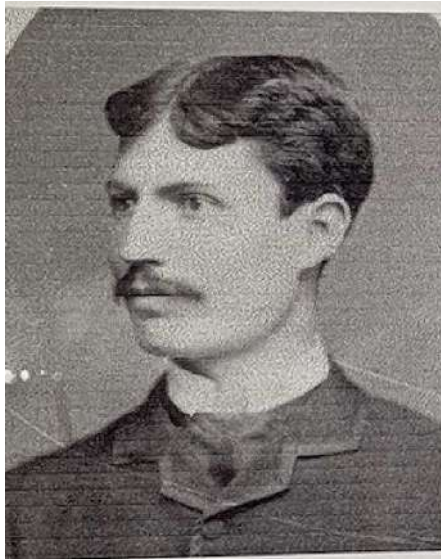


In many of the rooms at the Château de Samary there are matching marble fireplaces and window sills.

Marble was an expensive material, and using it for both the fireplace and window sill was a significant investment. While marble was a sought-after material for fireplace surrounds, it was typically reserved for the most opulent and grand interiors. Window sills, on the other hand, were more commonly made of wood or other materials, even in grand homes such as Samary. Window sills were exposed to the elements and prone to damage, making marble a less practical choice compared to materials like wood or stone.

Samary also has examples of the famous Caunes red marble from nearby Caunes-Minervois, 25 minutes north-east of Carcassonne.

Not only was the red marble used at Samary but was also used in the Château de Versailles, the Louvre and the Opéra de Paris. The Romans also used it, but it was later, during the reign of Louis XIV, when the Caunes marble reached its peak.



Claude Ancelme
(1855 - 1920)



Gabrielle Ancelme Mignard
(1868 - 1939)

When Claude Ancelme, who built Château de Samary, died in 1900, the château passed to his son, Claude, and his wife, Gabrielle. The couple lived mainly in Paris in the Ancelme family home at rue du Cherche Midi, but spent their summer and winter holidays at Samary.

Claude studied law and became a magistrate. In 1910 he accepted a position in Douai, near Lille, in northern France, close to the Belgian border.

In summer 1914, aged 59, Claude was on holiday at Samary with his family. When he returned to Douai for work, he was taken hostage by the German army who had just occupied the town. He was sent to Holzminden internment camp in Germany and only released in 1919. He died the following year.

The First World War deeply disrupted the social structure of Caux-et-Sauzens. Young men left the village in August 1914 and many would never return, killed on the battlefields. The entire village later paid tribute with the construction of a war memorial. The resulting lack of local labour in the inter-war years meant that workers from abroad would be needed to help harvest the vineyards at Samary.



Claude Ancelme left Samary in the Summer of 1914 to be captured by the Germans and taken to Holzminden internment camp, shown above in 1917.

30	Gonzalez	Vincent	1909	Andorre espagnol	fil	cultivateur
31	"	Jean	1908	"	"	"
32	"	Samuel	1910	"	fil	2/p
33	"	Josephine	1911	Argen	"	"
34	"	Pae	1912	Argen	fil	2/p
35	"	Julien	1921	Argen	fil	2/p
36	Colomé	Honorio	1889	Calayon	chef	cultivateur
37	"	Fernando	1911	Argen	fil	2/p

Extract from the 1926 census at Samary showing Spanish, 'espagnol', workers such as Vincent Gonzalez and Honorio Colomé and their families.

After the First World War, Samary, like many other wine-growing regions in France, was greatly affected by a labour shortage, and so needed to rely on foreign workers to harvest their crops.

The Spanish had been immigrating to France since the late 19th century, especially in the border regions, mainly working in agriculture or industry in the South-West. Their numbers went from 106,000 to 255,000 between 1911 and 1921. Throughout the 1920s, the Spanish presence consistently increased through the migration network system and from 1921, they represented the third largest foreign nationality in France.

In 1931, 55,000 Spanish immigrants were working in agriculture (30% of the working population), especially in the vineyards of the Midi.

38	Fernandez	Faundés	1880	Argen	chef	cultivateur
39	"	Estimira	1882	d.	d.	femme
40	"	Victoria	1909	d.	d.	fil
41	"	Bernardo	1911	d.	d.	fil
42	"	Manuel	1912	d.	d.	fil
43	"	Reguel	1923	d.	d.	fil
44	Franzin	Antonio	1874	Coggia italien	chef	cultivateur
45	"	Rosa	1887	d.	d.	femme
46	"	Emilia	1899	Argen	d.	fil
47	"	Giovanni	1910	d.	d.	fil
48	"	Edouard	1912	d.	d.	fil

Extract from the 1931 census at Samary showing Spanish worker Faundés Fernandez and Italian, 'italien', Antonio Franzin, with their families.

Italian workers were also living at Samary with their families.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, half of Italian emigrants crossed the ocean headed for the Americas but France was their third most popular destination. Geographic proximity, the natural shortage within the French population and the labour needs linked to the growth of the economy were behind this appeal.

From 63,000 in 1851, the number of Italians increased to 240,000 in 1881, then 330,000 in 1901, to become the leading foreign nationality in mainland France. On the eve of the First World war, they numbered 420,000, which was over 1% of the population in France.



Jules Jourdanne
(1892 - 1983)

Jules Jourdanne was the next owner of the Château. In 1921 he married Marie Thérèse Ancelme who inherited Samary. She was the granddaughter of Claude Ancelme who had built the Château.

Jules Jourdanne was a remarkable man - a veteran of the First World War, having served at Verdun in the 3rd Artillery Regiment - he later became the Mayor of Carcassonne.

Jules was also a great wine connoisseur. His son Jacques wrote, 'my father proved himself to be an excellent wine maker - at the avant garde of progress.' He also recalled his father Jules' rare wine and alcohol collection, kept in the huge wine cave at Samary.

The family had an apartment in Paris and also in Gambetta Square in Carcassonne, but spent their holidays at Samary.



The Jourdanne family in the garden at Samary



Marie Thérèse Ancelme Jourdanne
(1891 - 1984)



Postcard of Château de Samary, circa 1930s



A rare photo of an interior at Château de Samary, the music room

To the left of the entrance hall at Samary, now the library, was the music room.

Marie Thérèse Jourdanne had studied at the conservatoire in Paris and was a very talented pianist. One of her favourite composers was Liszt, whose music wafted through the rooms of the Château.

Interiors of grand houses were still very sumptuous in the 1930s. The photo, right, of the interior of the nearby Château de Pennautier, just north of Caux, gives an indication of a château interior in that period.

Note the lamp and lampshade on the far left, a modern accessory. Samary was lit with oil lamps until electricity arrived there in 1932.



Interior of a nearby château in the 1930s



Grapes ready for pressing



Wine barrels stored in a typical 'cave'



The former wine 'cave' at Samary

Jules Jourdanne's granddaughter H  l  ne remembers the vast wine cave at Samary and the endless rows of wine barrels.

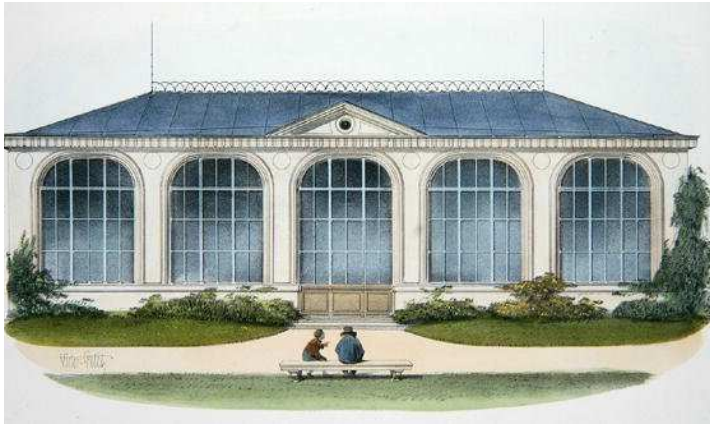
She also fondly remembers enjoying a regular excursion with her grandfather, who would drive her in his old car on a grand tour of Samary's vineyards.



Various images of the Jourdanne family in the grounds at Samary in the 1930s.

One of their favourite pastimes was riding around the garden in the donkey and cart.





An example of a French orangerie circa 1895
in the gardens of a grand house



The former orangerie in the gardens at Samary

Château de Samary also had a large orangerie in the garden. Orangeries were often associated with fashionable residences like Samary and were typically brick structures with large windows.

Historically, an orangerie was a room or dedicated building where orange and other fruit trees were protected during the winter, as a large form of greenhouse or conservatory.



A former orangerie interior



14 June 1942. Mayor Jules Jourdanne (left) in Carcassonne with Marshal Pétain (centre) and Jean Cabouat, Prefect of Aude.



Map of France occupied by the Axis Powers 1940 to 1944

In February 1941, Jules Jourdanne, the owner of Château de Samary and a respected local landowner, was appointed Mayor of Carcassonne, serving the newly installed Vichy regime.

Following the swift German victory in 1940, France had signed an armistice that divided the country into an occupied zone and an unoccupied 'Free Zone'. The Vichy regime was established in the unoccupied zone, with Marshal Pétain as its head, supposedly to protect the French population from the full force of the German occupation.

On 14 June 1942, Carcassonne received a visit from Marshal Pétain, and gave him a very enthusiastic welcome. Jules Jourdanne was there to meet him. Carcassonne remained 'free' until November that year.



German soldiers by Carcassonne castle

In November 1942, following the Allied landings in North Africa, German forces moved into Carcassonne, ending the city's status in Vichy France's 'Free Zone'. They quickly requisitioned many city properties for lodgings and offices, and at least one country estate – the Château de Samary.



A high-ranking German officer in Carcassonne



Jules Jourdanne's identity card from 1943

German command headquarters were established in town and German troops enforced order and protected supply lines. As mayor, Jules Jourdanne was expected to work alongside them. He served as mayor until the Liberation in 1944.

Reprisals against mayors who were thought to be collaborators were widespread after the Liberation. Jules Jourdanne, however, was not arrested, or summarily executed, which is testament to his fair reputation. He was replaced on August 24 1944 by Louis Amiel, President of the Liberation Committee, and Jules retired to Samary.

A historian later wrote of Jourdanne: 'A well-intentioned landowner with no political past, the new mayor managed the difficult daily life during the war years. At the Liberation, during the tragic days of August 19 and 20 1944, his courage saved the Germans from greater harm, as he offered himself as a hostage and urged the population to remain calm.'

According to another historian, 'Jules Jourdanne refused to receive his mayoral allowance and merely dealt with the city's day-to-day business, without taking an active part in Vichy's coercive laws.'



Germans and French fraternising in Carcassonne. One of them may have been SS Eckfellner, the occupier of Samary.

According to eye-witness testimonies taken after the war, SS Officer Hermann Eckfellner was the Nazi who reportedly occupied the Château de Samary as a residence or outpost during the Occupation, reflecting his high status in the local Nazi hierarchy.

He was Chief of the Gestapo in Carcassonne, in charge of intelligence and police operations. As Gestapo, he wore plain clothes. In Carcassonne Eckfellner personally oversaw interrogations and was known for his brutal methods. Witnesses later recalled Eckfellner beating prisoners and kicking a prisoner down a staircase.

No photo has been found of Eckfellner and it is believed that he died in Bordeaux in 1951. Maybe he owed his life to Jules Jourdanne who tried to stop reprisals against the Germans at the Liberation, or to a horse he stole from Samary to make his escape.

If Carcassonne was the scene of Eckfellner's brutal actions, then Samary was presumably reserved for relaxing, entertaining, and plundering the Château's excellent fresh food and wine reserves.

Whilst Jourdanne remained in Carcassonne administrating the city's affairs, the rest of his family were at Samary.



Jules Jourdanne's son Jacques in the grounds at Samary with one of his beloved horses, stolen by the German occupiers in 1944.

Jules' son Jacques later wrote 'I wasn't old enough to serve in the army as I was just 14 when the war started but I never suffered from hunger. My father had some pigs at Samary and had planted some fields with beans and peas. The garden had lots of fruit and vegetables. There was very rare wine and alcohol at that time in our 'cave' at Samary.'

According to Jacques' daughter Hélène, Jacques never forgave the Germans for stealing his beloved horse and for the months he spent imagining that the worst had happened to it. 'In 1943 I was given a new horse with a little cart but it was stolen from me along with the cart by the Germans when they beat a retreat in 1944. I never got over it as I know that the Germans had a very difficult retreat.'

He also recalls that his father Jules was 'prudent' during the Occupation and he escaped reprisals. Jacques knew of other locals, considered collaborators, who were shot, or doused with petrol and set on fire, or fled to a new life in South America.

After the war Jules Jourdanne lived the rest of his life at Samary, dying in 1983.



Jules Jourdanne with his daughter-in-law in 1971 in the salon,
now the lounge at Samary



The family eating in the dining room,
now the office at Samary



Jules with his wife and daughter-in-law in the salon



Hélène, pictured (centre) outside the front entrance, with her mother, brother, and grandparents, Jules and Thérèse, circa 1960



Hélène outside the front entrance in 2025

Hélène Rambaud is Jules Jourdanne's granddaughter. She visited Samary in 2025 and was delighted that so much of the Château was as she remembered it. She said:

"It is really emotional visiting my grandparents' home in Samary again today, I can still see them wandering around. It is such a beautiful house."

"I was here in the 1950s and 60s, and loved coming to Samary, to visit my grandparents who were very kind to me. We'd always do a tour of the huge garden in the donkey and cart."

"My grandfather used a trumpet (!) to summon guests to supper as we were invariably playing in the garden."

"I remember that my grandmother was always praying. She even conducted daily prayers with the housemaids in the kitchen."

"Room number 3 was my guest bedroom when I stayed here."



Hélène with her father Jacques, who had a lifelong love of horses

The Ancelme/Jourdanne family's century-long ownership of Samary came to an end in the 1980s when the Château was sold.

It was bought by prestigious French wine producer group UCCOAR, who saw Samary as the perfect setting to host and entertain international wine clients.

The wine group also commissioned the modern artwork in the garden.

In fact, Château de Samary hosted a sculpture symposium in 1990. Participating artists included Jean Suzanne, whose sculpture takes centre stage opposite the Château's main entrance.

Jean Suzanne is a French Postwar and Contemporary artist who was born in 1938. His distinctive signature of 'JS' can be seen on the back of the metal sculpture next to the number 90.



It is thought that the stone artwork in the garden was made by artist Ariel Moscovici who has created numerous outdoor installations across France, especially in parks and urban spaces. Moscovici is documented as having participated in the Château de Samary sculpture symposium in 1990.

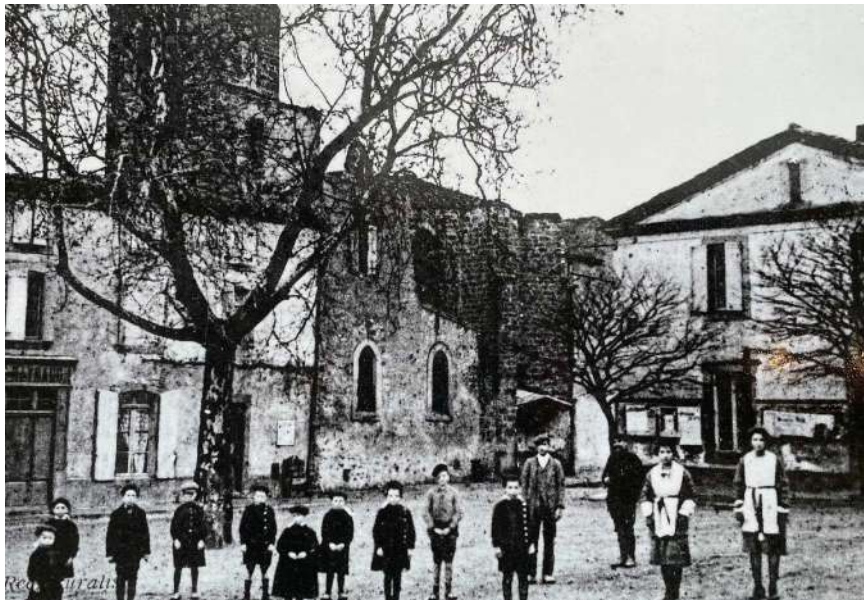
His bibliography states:
'1990 Home, UCCOAR, Samary Park, Aude, France. Bought by the wine company.'

Born in 1956 in Bucharest, Romania, Moscovici graduated in 1979 from L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He now lives in the south of France.





Château de Samary was bought in 2016 by John Spence of the Karma Group. John is passionate about history and keen to preserve the glory of the château for posterity, whilst maintaining its original purpose as a place to entertain and relax - and sample some great wine!



The bistro (to the right of the picture) was once the village primary school



Le Platane bistro today in Caux-et-Sauzens, named after the huge plane tree in the main square

Château de Samary has always had very close ties to the nearby village of Caux-et-Sauzens. And none more so than today, as the Karma Group now run *Le Platane* bistro there. Threatened with permanent closure, the bistro stood empty for a year, but has been revived by Karma and is now the beating heart of the village.

In March 2025 *Le Platane* received a letter from the Deputy of Aude thanking them for 'preserving the warm and friendly spirit of the bistro while adding a touch of modernity ... and promoting the gastronomic wealth of our region.'

The bistro's owners were also thanked for ensuring that 'this symbolic place in Caux-et-Sauzens has regained its central role in the life of the village... a place for meetings and exchanges appreciated by all.'

re vague

120

119
Sol

Mét^{rie}

122
jardin

121 chesnaie
124

121

121

Samary

116 terre

lab.^{le}