

# Different landscapes



Men have always known how to take advantage of the natural resources. Therefore these resources have been part of giving shape to the scenery for centuries. Farmers, forest wardens, potters, tile makers, carpenters etc.. have been able to shape an environment of quality. The traditional habitat is its most remarkable illustration . Indeed, timbered framed houses and tiled roofs are part of the beauty of the landscape.

## The Chalky Champagne

On the eastern side stretches the " Chalky Champagne", which used to be named after a small wild plant growing everywhere called " pouliot ". That plant was particularly loved by the herds of starving sheep... Today, only some patches of woods and fallow lands, or old drinking ponds preserved within the villages, reveal this old pastoral activity. The chalky Champagne became a rich and productive agricultural area, where man seems to have outstripped nature.

## The Champagne wetlands

The heart of the Park feeds on clay, born from the alluvial deposits of a former depression of the Parisian Basin. Water can be seen on the surface everywhere... The ancient Forêt du Der ("Oak " in Celtic) used to spread up to here. Cleared progressively, put in culture or pierced with mysterious ponds by monks from local abbeys, the forest massifs and woods still covers close to 20,000 hectares, where oaks and hornbeam ally to reign as masters.

More than 70 ponds still exist, real aquatic gardens that Men have sown with carps, pikes and roaches, to harvest their fruits in the autumn, by the use of ancestral methods.

In the former glades, stock raising had its golden age and vast meadows dotted with thickets , pollarded willow hedges and majestic oaks still line today rivers and streams, yielding little by little to the advance of contemporary cultures. The villages, jewels of traditional architecture, are hemmed with traditional orchards , real reservoirs of old local varieties.

## The Great Lakes

The Inter-departmental Institution of the Lake-Reservoirs for the Seine Bassin regulates 4 of France reservoir-lakes. The purpose of the lakes is to avoid floods.

There are 2 of these lakes in the Aube district :

- Lake-Reservoir for the Seine river (Lake Orient), near Troyes. Completed in 1966, surface 2300ha, with a capacity of 205 millions m3 of water,
- Lake-Reservoir Aube, near Brienne-le-Château, with 2 parts : Lake Temple on the west side and lake Amance on the East. These 2 bassins were completed in 1990, covering 2500 ha and can hold 170 million m3 of water. These artificial lakes, are fully part of the nature park and help develop the tourism in the environment of quality.

## Aube valley and the Barrois

In the East of the Park, the river Aube firstly cuts through the Barrois plateau, a vast cultivated plateau furrowed with ancient valleys, called "dry". These small hills accommodate prestigious vineyards with here and there thickets of trees and limestone grasslands. Whilst descending towards the river Seine, the Aube winds in loops between wooded banks, with some steep cliffs, then up north, crosses calmly the vast alluvial plain near Brienne-Le-Château.

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[See the interactive map of the park](#) 