

FONDATION DU  
CHÂTEAU DE CHILLON  
Avenue de Chillon 21  
CH - 1820 Veytaux  
Tel.: +41 (0)21 966 89 10  
Fax: +41 (0)21 966 89 12  
Email: info@chillon.ch  
www.chillon.ch



Veytaux, 14 January 2020

## PRESS RELEASE

### 2019 and 2020 – two historic years for Chillon

**2019: all-time record smashed, with 432,000 visitors to Chillon Castle. 2020: the outcome of a strategy laden with success thanks to landscaping and the opening of a brand-new cafeteria pavilion!**

For the third time in a row, Chillon Castle welcomed over 400,000 visitors, closing the 2019 fiscal year on a total of 431,977 tickets. Never before in the castle's history have so many people visited. These figures are the fruit of a visitor strategy that is constantly being improved. And 2020 is set to be just as historic: this coming year will see the completion of the exterior maintenance and decoration works, as well as the opening of *Café Byron* in May 2020.

### Excellent 2019 results

The Chillon Castle Foundation (*Fondation du Château de Chillon* - FCC) is delighted with its 2019 visitor numbers; 431,977 visitors passed over the drawbridge, a 7% increase compared with 2018. From Easter 2020 with the opening of Café Byron, Claude Ruey, President of the FCC, highlights 'the castle's visitor number success and the development of new visitor facilities as the result of a strategy that has been in development since the creation of the private-law Chillon Castle Foundation in 2002. The State Council got it right when it created the Foundation in 2002, distancing Chillon as an organisation from its former administrative framework and enabling a more dynamic and entrepreneurial management style. And today, we are reaping the rewards for the greater good of this cultural site and of the tourism industry in our region.' Backed by its management, the FCC has seen excellent results stemming from its strategic and cultural choices, and in its ticket numbers, most notably thanks to its two successful temporary exhibitions '*Mouthwatering – Eating and drinking in the Middle Ages*' and '*Christine Sefolosa – Casting off*'.

In terms of visitor origin, the results have remained stable. The Swiss proved to be biggest fans of the fortress on Lake Geneva and represent 22% of visitors. In second place came Chinese visitors (15%), closely followed by the Americans (12%). French visitors came in fourth place (6.5%) and South Korea rounded off the top five (4%). There was also an undeniable overall progression in the North American and European markets, including France, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom. In addition, since 2019 the FCC has been offering castle room guides in Thai, Hebrew and Arabic. These guides are issued to visitors at the ticket office and are available in 17 languages in total (the most highly requested). In 2019, Korean was the latest addition to the FCC audioguide offering, meaning the application is now available in nine languages. There were 3,257 guided tours carried out in 2019, compared with 2,688 in 2018 – an increase of over 21%. The most popular choice is still the guided tour followed by a Chillon Castle wine-tasting session in the *Verrée vaudoise*.

Of the 40 events organised annually, *Christmas at Chillon Castle* was the cherry atop 2019, bringing in 20% more visitors than in 2018. The event showcases storytelling, music, dance, and traditional arts and crafts over the first three weekends in December. The blend of artisans and re-enactment groups with candle-making, nativity scene and origami workshops was a huge hit.

FONDATION DU  
CHÂTEAU DE CHILLON  
Avenue de Chillon 21  
CH - 1820 Veytaux  
Tel.: +41 (0)21 966 89 10  
Fax: +41 (0)21 966 89 12  
Email: info@chillon.ch  
www.chillon.ch



During the *Fête des Vignerons* vineyard festival Edouard Bertholet, Chillon Castle's chief winegrower, was awarded a bronze medal on 18 July 2019. The Vevey chapter of the *Confrérie des Vignerons* (Brotherhood of Winegrowers) rewarded his professionalism and the great care taken with the castle's vines, day in, day out. The FCC saluted his work and thanked him immensely for his commitment, along with loyal partner Badoux Vins. They oversee the making of the Clos de Chillon in barrels in the castle cellars, the proceeds of which go towards restoring the fortress.

### **Inauguration of *Café Byron* and large-scale historic exhibition for 2020**

From 1 January 2020, the castle to rival all castles is extending its opening hours: October-March, 9:30am-6pm (last entry at 5pm) and April-September, 9am-7pm (last entry at 6pm). 2020 will be punctuated by two pivotal moments for Chillon Castle among the [40 or so events organised](#): the unveiling of *Café Byron* and its gardens, as well as the temporary exhibition *Living Like a Princess? The Women of the House of Savoy (13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century)*.

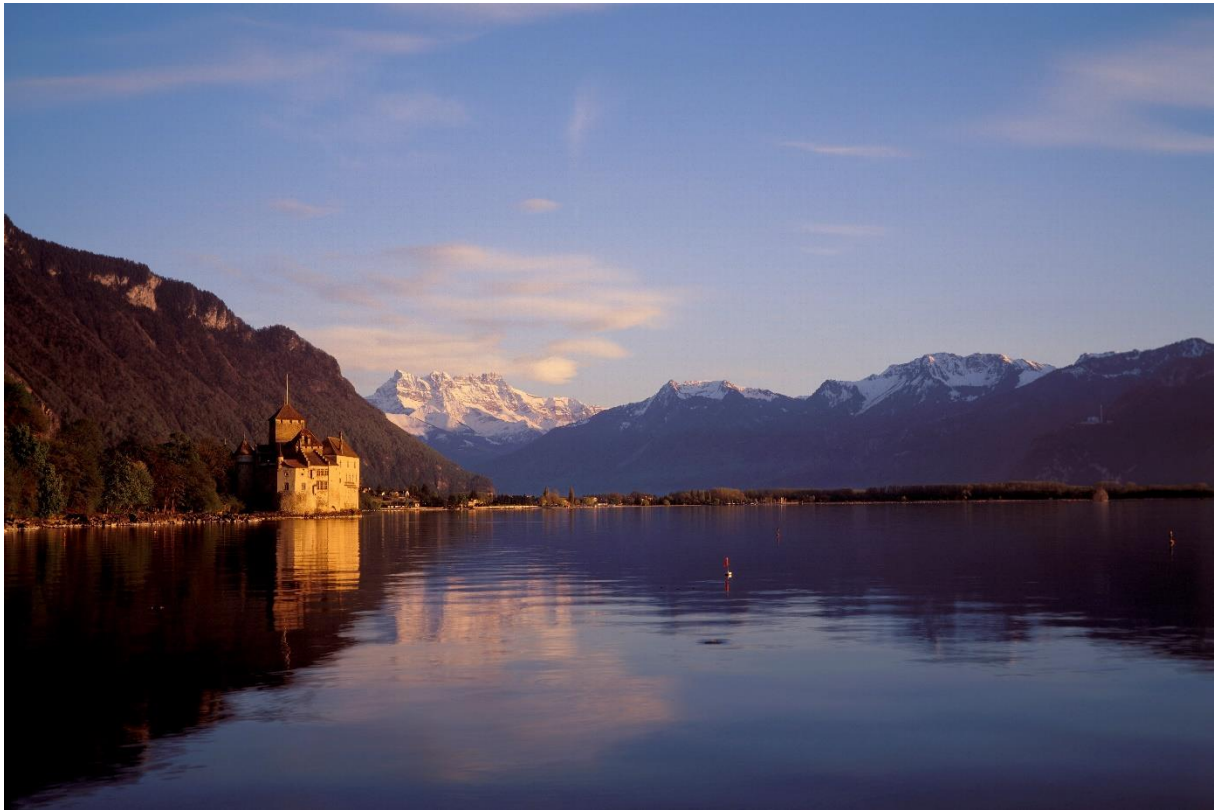
After three years of work, the landscaping and construction works on the *Café Byron* cafeteria pavilion in front of the fortress are complete. This addition embellishes the site, while helping preserve nature and improve our offering for visitors wishing to eat at the castle. The site is set to open around Easter 2020, with a public opening ceremony on Sunday 10 May 10am-7pm.

The *Living Like a Princess? The Women of the House of Savoy (13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century)* exhibition will open in October.

For two years, the FCC has been operating as a training organisation and in 2020 it will, once more, have an opening for an apprenticeship. The Chillon Castle team is made up of 75 staff members in peak season, which is the equivalent of 35 full-time positions. The FCC generates the vast majority of its income through its own activities (over 90%, with 65% from ticket sales) and receives only 5% in subsidies for restoration and maintenance work on the castle.

The cultural heartbeat of the castle – kept alive by the Savoy family, the Bernese Bailiffs and the people of Vaud in turn – emanates from this fortress to spread Swiss history across the world. Chillon Castle is the most visited monument in Switzerland.

FONDATION DU  
CHÂTEAU DE CHILLON  
Avenue de Chillon 21  
CH - 1820 Veytaux  
Tel.: +41 (0)21 966 89 10  
Fax: +41 (0)21 966 89 12  
Email: info@chillon.ch  
www.chillon.ch



Chillon Castle © FCC Stephan Engler

Photos for media use:

[3D image of Café Byron](#) © Fondation du Château de Chillon and a [wooden model](#) © FCC Stephan Engler

[English Garden and the laying of the first cafeteria pavilion stone](#)

[Chillon Castle](#)

[Guided tours and interiors](#)

[Tour and wine tasting](#)

[Christine Sefolosha- Casting off](#)

[Mouthwatering - Eating and drinking in the Middle Ages](#)

Media contacts:

- Mr Claude Ruey, President of the Chillon Castle Foundation: +41(0)79 210 84 13
- Ms Marta Sofia dos Santos, Chillon Castle Foundation Manager: +41(0)21 966 89 29 or +41(0)79 944 87 66
- Ms Lise Leyvraz Dorier, Chillon Castle Foundation Communications Manager: +41(0)21 966 82 45

#Chillon #ChateauChillon #ChillonCastle #SchlossChillon #siteculturelsuisse