

CIRCUIT DE DÉCOUVERTE DE ZELLENBERG

Zellenberg



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68340 Zellenberg

+ Description

Located on the Alsace Wine Route between Ribeauvillé and Riquewihr, the village of Zellenberg is perched on a hill overlooking the plain of Alsace, a true natural promontory and exceptionally strategic site. The houses in the old part of Zellenberg huddle closely together along the 2 parallel roads (rue de la Fontaine and rue du Schlossberg) that run through the village.

The market town is laid out in a rectangular pattern with a tower at each corner of the village:

- 2 towers, located to the east have survived up to now (northeast tower and southeast tower),
- of the 2 towers located to the west no trace remains now and they were not shown on the etching made by the engraver and cartographer from Basel, Mathias Merian, in 1640, visible from the Schlossberg (location of the old Zellenberg fortified castle).

The first record of the name "Celeberch", whose etymological translation is "a mountain of the monk's cell", goes back to the beginning of the 9th century. Owned by the Bishop of Strasbourg, the village of Zellenberg which formed part of the Seigneurie of Riquewihr, was granted to the counts of Horbourg as a fiefdom. From 1252, Walter III of Horbourg converted the manor house located at the southern end of the village of Zellenberg into a fortified castle and surrounded the entire market town with a fortified wall. In about 1324, the counts of Horbourg who had no male descendants, sold their properties (including the Seigneurie of Riquewihr that had been granted to them as a fiefdom but did not belong to them) to count Ulrich of Wurtemberg, their cousin. In 1332, the Bishop of Strasbourg decided to attack the town of Riquewihr in order to recover the Seigneurie of Riquewihr that included the villages of Riquewihr, Ostheim, Mittelwihr, Beblenheim, Aubure, Zellenberg, Bennwihr and Hunawihr. This attack caused Bennwihr and Zellenberg to be returned to the Bishop of Strasbourg by the Wurtemberg family in exchange for a sum of money. The village of Zellenberg was then granted as a fiefdom to the Ribeaupierre family who became its owner in 1436; the village remained in the hands of their successors (the Dukes of Birkenfeld-Deux-Ponts) until the French Revolution. During that period, Zellenberg was one of the principal towns of the Birkenfeld-Deux-Ponts family bailiwick, which comprised Bennwihr, Houssen, Wihr-en-Plaine and Zellenberg.

At the end of the 18th century, the fortified castle had become uninhabitable and was purchased as a national asset by a tiler from Ribeauvillé and the stones used in the construction of the château were sold one at a time.

