

A PANORAMIC STROLL

by Pierre Corajoud



Set on a hillside facing Lake Geneva and the mountains, Lausanne offers walkers a series of extensive panoramic views. This downhill stroll allows you to discover the 10 most beautiful viewing points, offering so many different perspectives from which to appreciate the city and its surroundings.

Start: "Lac de Sauvabelin" stop of bus no. 16

Finish: "Grancy" metro station on the m2 line or the CFF railway station

Length: Approx. 6 km

Duration without breaks: 1hr 45 mins.

This walk, which passes via the city centre, can be done in sections.

*From the bus stop, follow the wooden arrows marking the way so as to reach the tower in 5 minutes. **5 mins. (+10 mins. for the trip to the top of the tower and back)***

1. From the top of Sauvabelin tower



360° views open up multiple vistas from the top of this 35-metre-high tower, which was built in 2003: you can view the Lausanne conurbation, Lake Geneva and the three geographic regions of Switzerland - the Alps, the Jura and the Plateau. This tower was built of wood, principally Douglas fir obtained from local forests. This is just one of many examples of how Lausanne is a city adept at sustainable development.

*At the foot of the tower, you then continue along the wide tarred forest pathway. At the end of this pathway, turn left and go downhill to your right. At the bottom of the slope, cross the road at the pedestrian crossing next to a bus stop, then a little further along take the path that passes in front of a house with a pale orange façade. The end of this pathway brings you out at the Signal de Sauvabelin look-out post. **10 mins.***

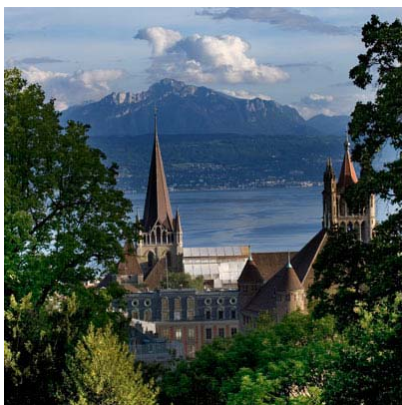
2. At the Signal de Sauvabelin look-out post



The two towers of the cathedral, set against the background of the lake, are revealed from this spot. It also offers broad panoramic views across the city and surrounding area. The name of the site is also closely tied to this ample vista. Indeed, many centuries ago, a watch would be posted there to act as look-out and signal the arrival of approaching enemies. In more recent times, two celebrities who resided just a stone's throw away were able to feast on this romantic view: the fashion designer Coco Chanel in the late 1960s and the singer David Bowie in the 1980s and 1990s.

*From the look-out post, take the only downhill path, then the one that descends immediately to your left. Lower down, near a large left-hand bend, make your way down to the left. Behind the trees, you will be able to make out a large meadow, with tall grass in the summer months. Head down across the meadow via a pretty grassy path that leads you to an orchard. Lower down, you soon find yourself at the "Fondation de l'Hermitage", an art gallery housed in a historic mansion and a nearby outbuilding. Allow yourself some time in the English gardens on the lake side. **10 mins.***

3. In the Hermitage countryside



For almost 150 years this estate has belonged to the Bugnion family, who designed its English garden. In summer, although it is so close, there is no sign of the city as it is hidden behind the ample ring of tree tops, visible only through two small gaps. One of them allows you to see St. Maire castle, the cathedral, the lake and the mountains, all aligned. This poetic vision was immortalised many times by the painter Corot.

*Begin your descent towards the Old City via the path strewn with wood shavings starting to the left of the large tree that stands as straight as a flagstaff; the tree itself is located to the left of the grassy area. Just after a large left-hand bend, turn sharp right downhill via the path situated near a junction of several forest paths. At the bottom of this pathway, turn left towards St-Maire castle, which you will pass alongside. When you reach the castle courtyard, climb the wide stairway to enjoy further panoramic views. **10 mins.***

4. On the St. Maire Castle esplanade



From this esplanade, situated on the Cité hillside, you can see not only part of the city but also the lake and the Jura Mountains. To your right, a large arterial road heads into a hollow. It follows the initial course of the River Louve, which is now buried, but which over time hollowed out a valley in this spot. Together with its "cousin", the Flon, this river created the Cité hillside by eroding the molasse, a grey rock used to build St. Maire Castle and the cathedral.

*Go from the castle courtyard to the cathedral. **5 mins.***

5. On the cathedral esplanade



The view is truly beautiful from this esplanade, with the roofs of old Lausanne in the foreground, St-François church with its green steeple, the lake and the mountains. During cathedral opening hours, it is possible to climb up into the belfry so as to enjoy even more extensive views. When the evening comes, the belfry becomes the residence of the cathedral lookout, who calls out the hour from 10pm until 2am. This tradition has lasted more than 600 years and originally served to warn of fires.

*Take the market stairs, which start opposite the main entrance to the cathedral. At the very bottom of this stairway, make your way to Place de la Palud; you cross this square, passing in front of a fountain and then along past the city hall. Keep going straight ahead into this pedestrianised area. At first the street descends gently, but then it begins to climb. At the top, when you reach Place St-Laurent, turn left out of this square, taking Rue Pichard. Follow this street, which then heads right and takes you to a pedestrian footbridge. **10 mins.***

6. From the Flon footbridge



This time the lake and the Alps are absent from the panoramic view. Instead, away to your right, it is the Jura Mountains that are visible. In the foreground on the same side, you can now see the new Flon quarter. Initially a warehousing district, it now forms the heart of the modern city. Standing tall on its right is the Bel-Air Tower, one of the first skyscrapers in Switzerland, built in 1932 by Alphonse Laverrière (undergoing renovation work in 2014). As you make your way across the footbridge, the cathedral will appear like magic to your left, with the Grand-Pont Bridge in the foreground.

*Keep straight ahead, use the pedestrian crossing and then veer to your right. Keeping straight ahead, take the Allée Ansermet, a wide path the start of which is bordered by chestnut trees. This will take you to Esplanade de Montbenon and a statue of William Tell. **5 mins.***

7. On the esplanade de Montbenon



This site is surely one of the most beautiful balconies from which to view the lake. Here you will find a statue depicting a legendary Helvetic hero equipped with his crossbow: William Tell. Erected in 1902, this marble statue by Carrare was donated to Switzerland by a philanthropic patron in thanks for the refuge granted, in 1871, to General Bourbaki's routed French army.

*From this statue, continue up Allée Ansermet, which runs alongside the Montbenon Casino further on. At the end of this path, take the pedestrian crossing and continue opposite so as to reach a major crossroads. Cross over and keep straight ahead, then take the Chemin des Croix-Rouges pathway opposite, first on the level and then descending. Almost at the bottom of this pathway, there is a splendid view across the lake. **10 mins.***

8. In the vicinity of Collège du Belvédère



This site offers a further ample overview of the lake, which becomes even more impressive the closer you approach. With such scenery, the name “Belvedere College” must have come as a natural and obvious choice for the college located on your right. Many other city locations echo the attractiveness of these exceptional panoramic views: Beauregard, Bellevue, Bellerive etc. Yet this lure of the lake and the mountains dates only from the 18th century. Previously, a view of the street was much more important in a city encircled by high walls and clustered around the cathedral.

*At the bottom of Chemin des Croix-Rouges, take a right, then cross the bridge on your left that straddles the railway tracks. Then keep straight on, continuing along the Chemin du Languedoc path. After a few minutes and before a down slope, turn right to enter a small park planted with vines. **5 mins.***

9. On the Languedoc hillside



At the heart of the urban area, this council-owned vineyard is one of a kind. It reminds us that for many centuries the lower part of the city was thickly planted with vines. Just a stone's throw east of Lausanne, you will find the start of the Lavaux vineyard, a registered UNESCO World Heritage site. Stretching from the lake to the sky, this vineyard is known for its steep slopes, its old walls, its traditional villages and its white wine, made from Chasselas, a local grape variety.

Retrace your steps as far as the start of the bridge, where you go downhill to your right via Chemin des Deux-Ponts. Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing and take the downhill path opposite, Chemin de Fontenay. Then turn left onto Chemin du Mont-Tendre, and right onto Chemin du Mollendruz. At the bottom of the latter, take a left. Just after the little church, go down to your right via the public footpath. At the bottom of this path, take the pedestrian walkway and this will bring you to a public park, Place de Milan.

*Climb to the top of the wooded hill adjoining the park in order to reach the final viewing point on this walk. There are several routes that allow you to do this, including one via the Botanical Gardens, which begin at the bottom of the park. **15 mins.***

10. On Montriond hillcrest



Completing this beautiful walk, this is where you certainly get the most beautiful view of the lake available from the lower town. From here, practically the whole extent of this crescent-shaped stretch of water can be seen. Lake Geneva was formed when the Rhone Glacier retreated almost 15,000 years ago. It now forms part of the border between Switzerland and France and is crossed by the Rhone.

Make your descent from the hill through the small forest that begins behind the music kiosk. You thereby reach a large gyratory system where you take Avenue du Rond-Point, which ascends diagonally opposite you. This street continues to the right. It finally brings you to “Grancy” metro station on the m2 line, on your right, or to the CFF railway station situated higher up on the left. **10 mins.**