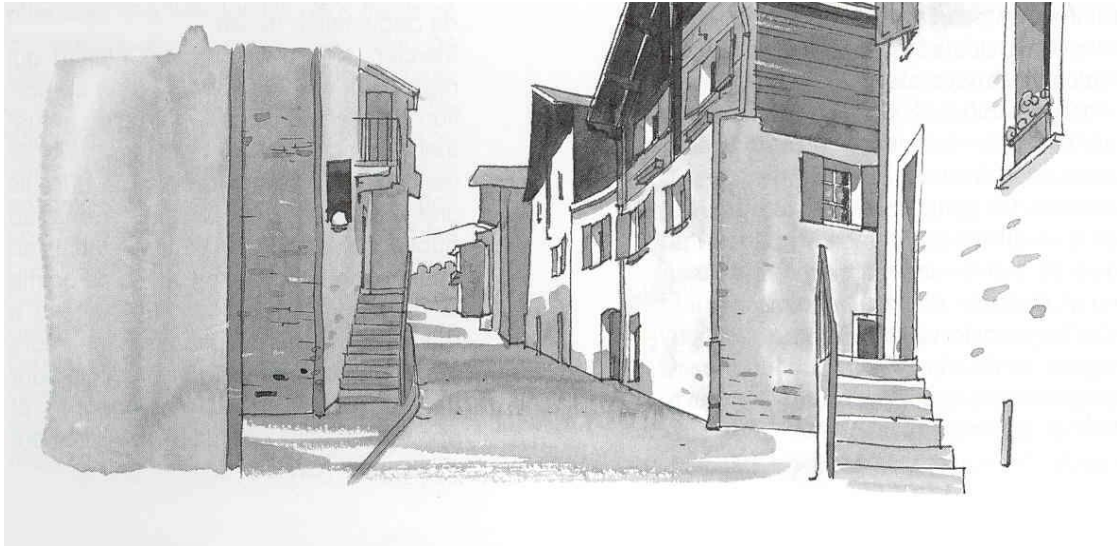


# Sierre ...



...the quarters' story



## **A historical port of call...**

“A district, a quarter. Quarters make me think of oranges, a train of thought that moves to sorbet, and then ice. Ice. The cursed glaciers keep calling me back. Shaping hills here, hollows there, leaving a river meandering along the valley floor, they have conditioned my whole life. Bygone Sierre, my centre of gravity, was nothing but a small market town near the railway station. All around, people settled in clusters, in the places where they were least threatened by the Rhône floods: at Villa, Borzuat, Zervettaz, Muraz, Champétroz, Noës, Glarey, Plantzette. They came from the Anniviers valley, and each group established its own quarter around the town.

Sierre has offices and banks, politicians and shopkeepers – but also district cafés, small grocery stores and local fêtes. On the old maps each district was separate from the rest. As I grew, they merged, but never swallowed one another up. They hold on to their independence and defend their territory. The first inhabitants of these districts were people like us, and the weather has never succeeded in withering their roots. The districts have their own character, their societies, their jealousies.”

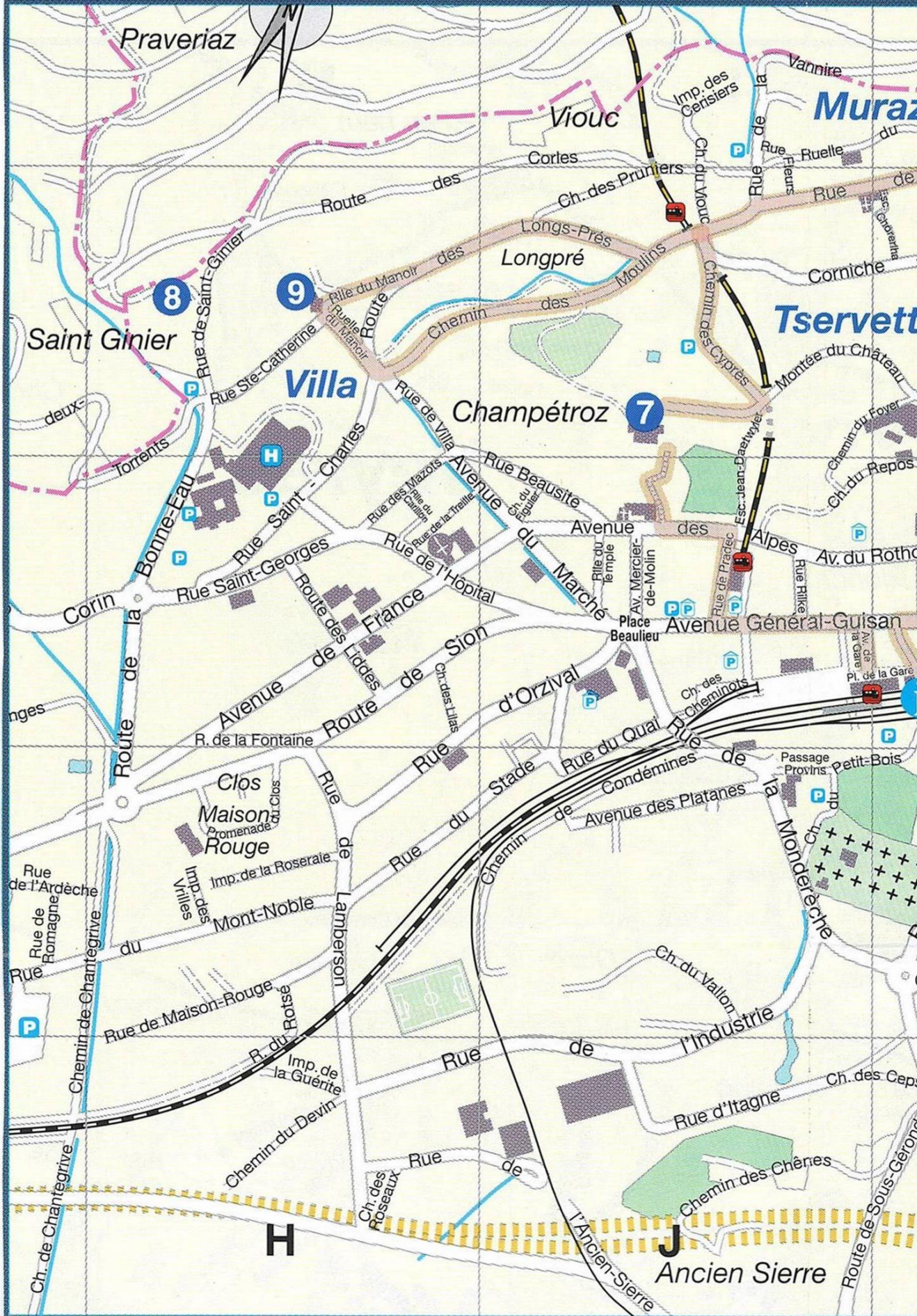
This passage, an extract from the comic book “Le Ventre du Doryphore”, published in 1997 to coincide with the centenary of the Sierre Development Society, expresses the unique spirit that characterises the towns and villages of the Sierre region.

A life, a soul, fascinating districts and local characters.

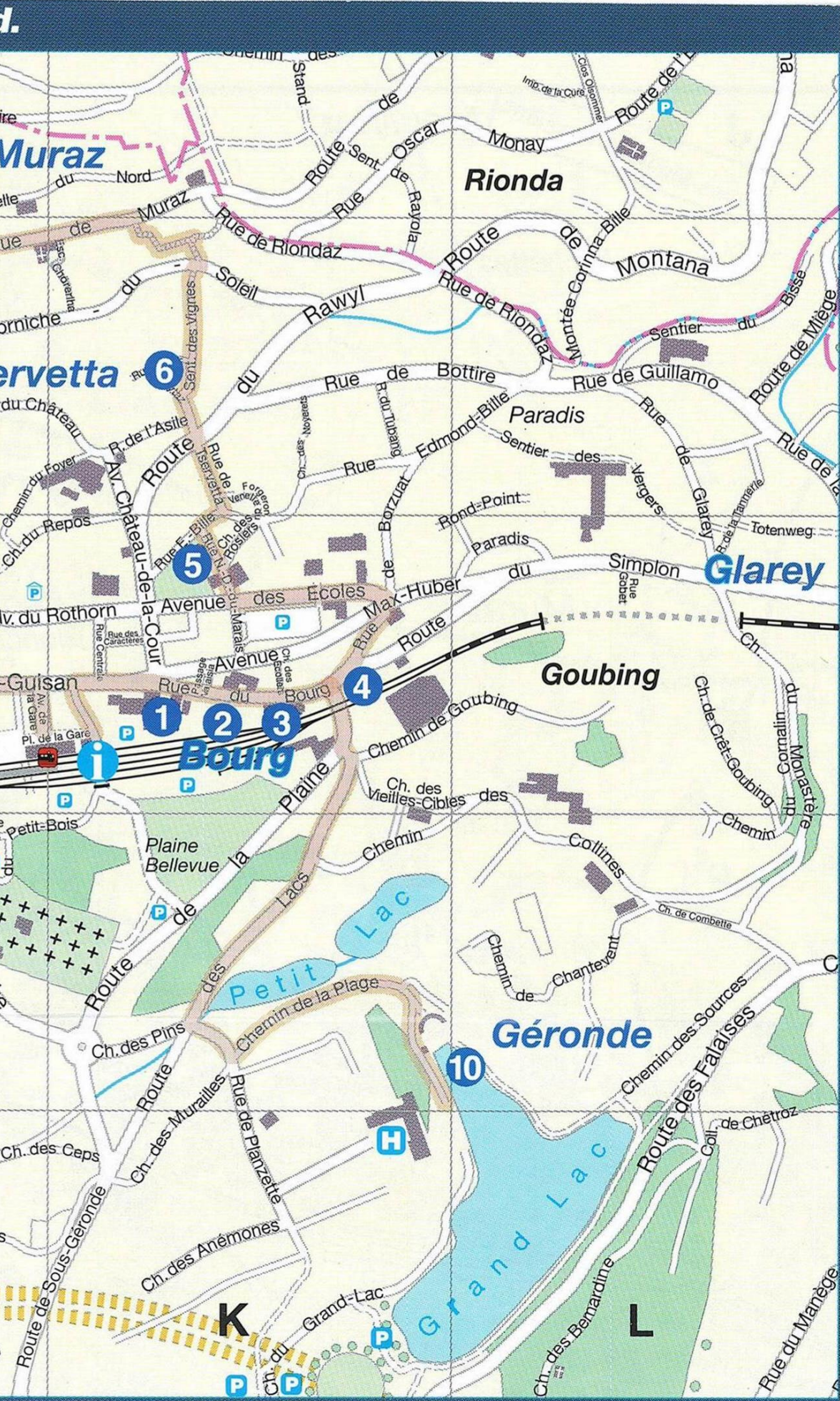
Take a walk through our history and sense the unique atmosphere.



# Tour des quartiers / Rundweg env. 1 1/2 h / Std.









# The Bourg Quarter

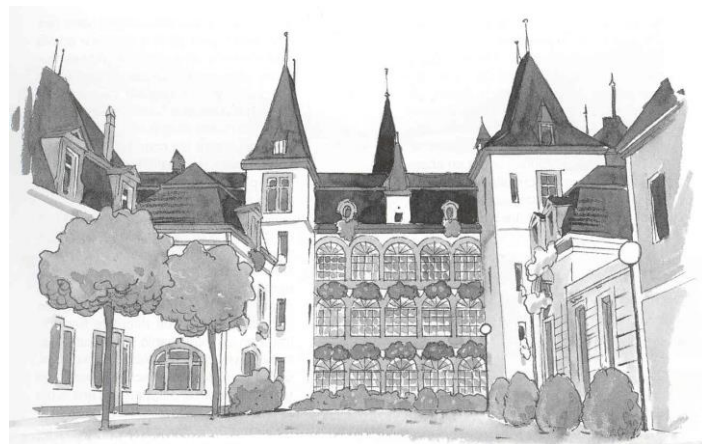
DIRECTION : small paved road on the right hand side of the Tourist Office

You will find the cobble stoned Bourg road only a few steps away from the Tourist Office.

It developed in the 14th century and was Sierre's first town centre. It's an open space without surrounding walls. From the 17th century, beautiful patrician houses were built here and it became the gentry's quarter, where, in the 19th century, traders and craftsmen came and settled.

## The Town Hall (1)

Jean-François de Courten began building this patrician house in the 17th century. Formerly known as the "Château de la Cour", it became the hotel Château Bellevue in 1888 under the influence of Michel Zufferey. The English appreciated its large rooms and comfort. The hotel received famous visitors such as The Writer Rainer Maria Rilke or the German Philosopher Rudolf Kessner who stayed in the hotel for 17 years. In 1967 the hotel was bought by Sierre's council and became the town hall.



-The Town Hall-

## The Vidôme Castle (2)

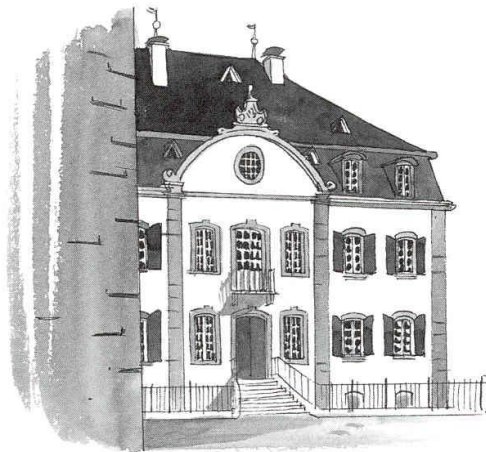
The Chevron family built this castle in the 15th century. It is the oldest building in Sierre and its construction marked the beginning of Sierre's affluent era. This house is privately owned and not open to the public.

## **St Catherine's Church (3)**

St Catherine's Church was built in the 17th century, as the Notre-Dame-des-Marais church became too small. The centrepiece of the church is its altar inspired by the one in St Peter's Cathedral in Rome. The choir vault shows stucco decoration constituted of a cartridge (sculpted ornament in the shape of a rolled card) with St Catherine in its centre. It is one of the most representative examples of Baroque architecture in the Valais. The church was restored between 1991 and 1996.

## **The Courten House (4)**

Built in a French style between 1769 and 1773, this house is one of the most remarkable patrician houses of the 18th century. Various events are held in its cellars, such as theatre plays, exhibitions and lectures. But this residence is above all, since 1986, the centre of the Rainer Maria Rilke foundation. A permanent exhibition of the artist's work such as letters, manuscripts, books, photos and paintings are on display. The foundation also has links with the 13th century Muzot Tower in Veyras, one of the reasons why Mr Rilke chose to live in the Valais.



- The Courten House -

# The Tservetta Quarter

DIRECTION : Rue du Bourg – chemin des écoliers – rue N.-D.-du-Marais

From the 13th century, out of necessity, the inhabitants of the villages in the Val d'Anniviers, started to move the entire family down to the plane. These migrations called transhumance occurred twice a year, in the spring when numerous agricultural tasks had to be accomplished, notably vineyard work, and for autumn grape picking. At the end of November after having sold their produce and bought necessities during the St. Catherine fair, the families returned to their mountain village. The cultivated lands were shared between the villages of the Val d'Anniviers: Vissoie, Saint-Luc, Chandolin, Grimentz, Zinal, ..

## Notre-Dame des Marais Church (5)

In 1310, the last major of Sierre founded and built this church first dedicated to St Theodule, then to St Catherine. It became the parish church in 1331. The building's architecture originates from the flamboyant gothic style. The choir place built in 1524, is characterised by its ribbed vaults. The nave, modified in 1721 is covered with intersected groins. In the south of St Antoine's chapel one can also see the remains of the original mural painting.

## The House of "Remuage" (6)

This house dating from 1724 is typical of the houses in the valley built by the people of Anniviers. They were used as living accommodation for several months of the year. This way of living that is commonly called transhumance, is the essence of the Sierre way of life.



## **The Muraz Quarter**

DIRECTION : rue de Tservetta – sentier des Vignes – escaliers des Vignes

The name Muraz comes from the Valais dialect « moura » which means wall and refers to the numerous walls that had to be built to stabilise vineyards soil. Generally speaking, the rural housing of Muraz used to be similar to the one that was found in the mountain villages and in particular in the Val d'Anniviers with the "Raccards" to thresh wheat, the granaries for storing cereals or the barn-stables for hay and cattle. The Muraz church with its neo-gothic decor is equally worth a visit. This town quarter is also renowned for its numerous wine cellars.

## **The Château Mercier (7)**

DIRECTION : rue de Muraz – chemin des Cyprès

The Pradec or Mercier castle was built between 1906 and 1908 on a hill in Sierre by Jean-Jacques Mercier and his wife Marie Mercier de Molin. This family residence was designed by the architect Alfred Chabloz. It is composed of several different styles. The exterior is in a neo-medieval style with a few Gothic and Renaissance elements. This ornamental diversity is also noticeable inside the house where you will find an English style hall, an Empire style lounge and a dining room reminiscent of the German Renaissance. Marie Mercier de Molin designed the garden in a typical European, end of the 19th century style. The main characteristic of this picturesque English garden is its effect of contrast in copying nature. A large variety of trees can be seen here including Lebanese cedars and cypress trees from Arizona. Since 1992 the castle has been run by the foundation for cultural and political use. The aim has been to use the castle as a meeting place open to the general public, a site for working groups or as a location for official receptions.

The garden is open to the public.

## The Villa Quarter

DIRECTION : Château Mercier - chemin des Cyprès –  
chemin des Moulins – ruelle du Manoir

### The St Ginier Chapel (8)

The site of the chapel was already built up in the 2nd century. The most spectacular discovery in these excavations is a funerary “cippe”, small roman stele, which has been placed, since its renovation, on the Southwest corner of the choir’s chapel. From the 13th century, Vila formed a parish with St Ginier as its Church. The altarpiece is the main feature of the church. A tombstone closes the burial vault of the De Preux family with the family coat of arms in stringcourse-rimmed medallions.

### The Château de Villa (9)

Built during the 16th and the 17th century by the De Preuy family. Firstly Gothic, this house evolved according to its various owners.

It belongs to a foundation and is nowadays called “Relais du Château”. There, you will find a restaurant serving traditional Valaisan dishes, a “oenothèque” which proposes a choice of more than 500 of the best wines in the Valais and is also a part of the Wine and Vineyards Museum.

## Wines Museum

The vineyard walk, open all year-round, is a marked out discovery circuit with explanatory signposts. It links the 2 sites of the Wines museum: The Château de Villa (focusing on wine and its cultural aspects) and the Maison Zumofen in Salgesch (dedicated to vineyards and the winegrowers’ work).



- The Château de Villa -

## **The Glarey Quarter**

DIRECTION : rue du Bourg – rte du Simplon

The name Glarey comes from the Latin word « Glaretum » which literally means “place where flooding leaves gravel”. This town quarter is the frontier between the 2 languages spoken in Sierre (French and German). It's a picturesque quarter renowned for its pubs and their friendly atmosphere.

## **The Géronde Quarter**

DIRECTION : rue du Bourg – Goubing underpass– route des Lacs –  
follow « Lac de Géronde » signpost

## **The Hill**

Géronde is one of the earliest inhabited places in the centre of the Valais. Objects and burial places from the Neolithic period, the Bronze Age and the following centuries have been found there. Some archaeological discoveries confirm the existence of the first rural church dating to the 5th century. Between 1963 and 1970 the convent, which houses Cistercian nuns, underwent restoration in the simple Cistercian fashion whilst maintaining the different styles of preceding eras.

## **The Lake (10)**

Lake Géronde is a place for relaxing much appreciated by the locals. It became popular in the thirties. It is a mini aquatic centre with a swimming pool, lawn beach and a foot path going round the lake.





**Sierre Tourisme**  
Avenue Général-Guisan 6  
CH - 3960 Sierre (VS)

Tél.: +41(0)27 455 85 35

[www.sierretourisme.ch](http://www.sierretourisme.ch)  
[info@sierretourisme.ch](mailto:info@sierretourisme.ch)