

“FRANCE AT CANTIGNY” DRIVES 2024 VISITOR PROGRAMS

French-themed garden displays, Jazz and Wine Fest, and special exhibits honoring the 80th anniversary of D-Day are among planned attractions.

Wheaton, IL, April 18, 2024 – Big plans with a French twist are taking shape as [Cantigny](#) prepares for a season filled with new experiences and the return of popular events. The former Wheaton estate of Col. Robert R. McCormick presents “France at Cantigny,” interpreting the theme throughout the First Division Museum and Cantigny’s gardens and grounds through exhibits, displays, and festivals.



For Cantigny, the connection to France runs deep. The park is named for the French village and battle site where Col. McCormick joined in the first American victory in World War I as a member of the U.S. Army’s 1st Infantry Division. Eighty years ago, the Division, known as the “Big Red One,” returned

to France on D-Day, storming Omaha Beach and beginning the liberation of Europe during World War II. In honor of these momentous events of 1944, Cantigny is looking back to France throughout 2024.

“The 80th anniversary of D-Day calls for a significant commemoration of those ‘24 hours that saved the world,’” said Matt LaFond, Cantigny executive director. “We’re presenting that here this summer and much more. With France’s history and culture as our inspiration, we are enlivening the gardens and creating new musical, artistic, and cultural events for guests of all ages. ‘France at Cantigny’ is an experience, not just a theme.”

Signature 2024 events and attractions include:

- **Cantigny Spring Fest**, Saturday, May 18. Enjoy a curated marketplace inside the historic McCormick House; grand opening of the South Grove Beer Garden with musical guest [Gleeson Irish Trio](#); annual bulb sale; “backstage” greenhouse tours; and Family Walk with garden gnome scavenger hunt!
- **“Nothing But Victory,”** opening June 6, is an immersive outdoor exhibit commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-Day. A fusion of art and history, the installation spans more than 300 yards across the grounds, recalling the pivotal day of World War II: June 6, 1944. Inside the museum, a complementing exhibit highlights the D-Day service of seven well-known personalities. Additional D-Day programming will include lectures, guided exhibit tours, and drop-in events for kids and families. West Suburban Symphony will perform a free “D-Day in Music” concert on Saturday evening, June 8.
- **Summer Garden Displays** will recall the 17th century fables of Jean de La Fontaine, such as “The Lion in Love” and “Battle of the Two Roosters.” During World War II, celebrating traditional French history and culture was a form of resistance and comfort under Nazi occupation. Cantigny is reintroducing these fables and bringing them to life in the gardens.

- **Cantigny Jazz and Wine Fest**, Sunday, June 23. A highly popular event returns, in partnership with College of DuPage jazz station [WDCB-FM](#). The 2024 version features European flair including French wine selections. As with other Cantigny signature events, special tickets offering VIP experiences are available.
- **Paris Saint-Germain Academy Soccer Camp**, July 8-12. [PSG Academy Chicago](#) presents skills training for ages 6-19. For camp registration, visit [psgacademychicago.com](#). On Saturday, July 13, a free Soccer Day with PSG offers skill clinics for ages 6-14 along with fun and games for all ages.
- **Voyage en France**, Saturday, July 20. A full-day cultural festival celebrating the sights, sounds and flavors of France. Experience demonstrations, live entertainment, special garden displays, children's activities, French marketplace by [Bensidoun](#), and replica Eiffel Tower. A simulated Moulin Rouge at the South Grove Beer Garden promises an exciting evening for adult guests.
- **Cantigny GLOW**, Saturday, August 17. Party in our own City of Light while enjoying fluorescent cocktails, colorful fashion, glow-in-the-dark games, and pulsating live music. Cantigny will transform into a French discothèque at this glowing adults-only evening event—a rare chance to gather friends and experience the Cantigny gardens after dark.

Events throughout the summer will extend the excitement and learning opportunities of France at Cantigny. For example, a series of French-themed art classes for adults offers lessons in *en plein air* sketching. Drop-in activities for families include garden scavenger hunts and Monet's Garden, where kids can do take-home crafts inspired by French artists.

Also new at Cantigny in 2024: Free parking every Wednesday for those who register online in advance. Frequent visitors, including weekend concert fans, can pick up a season pass offering unlimited free parking every day along with five guest passes—yet another new option.

Cantigny's summer concert series begins on Sunday, May 26, with "Elvis My Way" starring Brandon Bennett. At least 13 other Sunday concerts are on tap along with three Saturday evening symphonies. The beer garden will stage live music Wednesday through Saturday.

To plan a visit, view pricing, and purchase daily admission, a season pass or special event tickets, go to [Cantigny.org](#). The website features a full schedule of upcoming events.

To join Cantigny's email list, visit [cantigny.org/subscribe](#). To receive event updates via text message, text PARK to 331.200.4773. Those who prefer notifications only about concerts can text MUSIC to the same number.

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About Cantigny

Cantigny, in Wheaton, Illinois, is the 500-acre estate of Colonel Robert R. McCormick (1880-1955), long-time editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, and founder of the Chicago-based [Robert R. McCormick Foundation](#). It is home to display gardens, walking trails, a museum dedicated to the 1st Infantry Division of the U.S. Army, a highly ranked 27-hole public golf course and a golf academy for all ages and ability levels. More information is online at [Cantigny.org](#), including hours, admission fees and upcoming events.

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