

# Saint-Sané church

Rue du Vieux Presbytère in Camors



Détour  
d'Art  
en pays d'Auray

This church is in fact the reunion of two chapels which explains its original feature with two opposite small bell towers. According to the archives, Saint-Sané church was erected in 1640. However adjoining buildings were added at various periods. The church is dedicated to Saint Sané, a patron saint who crossed over from Ireland in the VI<sup>th</sup> century. The gable's pinnacle was recovered from an old chapel dedicated to Saint Suzanne.

## A glimpse of history

The town of Camors draws its name and history from former nobility. The original parish that spread out through this territory was inherited from part of the land belonging to Pluvigner and Baud.

**Various noble families** are recorded in the archives of Camors: de Kamors, de Rohan, de Laval, d'Arradon, de Lannion, de la Rochefoucault.

The châtelanie (feudal territorial division) of Camors, stronghold of the Rohan dukedom belonged to a family named Camors in the XIII<sup>th</sup> and XIV<sup>th</sup> centuries. The château de la Motte (in ruins today) was the seat of the châtelanie. On 15 November 1286, a text mentions how Alain of Camors gave away his fiefdom "within the parishes of Plumelin and Camors" to Geoffroy of Rohan, the younger brother of Alain VI viscount of Rohan.

It was passed on in turn to the Rohan, the Laval in 1524 and the d'Arradon in 1560. By marrying Renée d'Arradon, Pierre de Lannion became the owner of the Camors châtelanie. At the end of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, it belonged to his son Claude de Lannion. The latter was buried in the church in 1695. A marble tombstone that carries an inscription, skull and crossbones is wall mounted on the north side of the chapel to remember him.

The parish of Camors became a town in 1702. Before the Revolution, the tomb of the Counts of Lannion rested in the choir. The Pardon of Saint Sané was celebrated in Camors in March, yet the Pardon of Saint John the Baptist was always more popular (celebrated on the Sunday following 24 June). The fountain dedicated to him still stands along the road leading to Baud.

## QUICK FACTS

- Built during the 17th century, then revamped
- Two chapels merged together
- Remarkable altarpiece
- Claude of Lannion's tombstone lies there



Rue du Vieux Presbytère, Camors

• lat 47.847991,  
• long -3.000210



## Outer features

The porch at the southern entrance boasts a hammered coat of arms, as well as traces of polychrome paintings depicting arabesques, coats of arms and medallions. An ossuary was located to the left. A Breton *lech* formed by a stone tablet supporting a slab can be found just opposite the entrance. It was probably erected during the Iron Age, but assembled in a later era. This stone is sacred. We suppose it may have served as support for the town crier



## Inside the church

The barrel vault nave is wood-panelled and paved with granite. To the West, granite columns support a large rostrum and bannister which probably served as a communion barrier. The baptismal fonts lie at the back of the church.

## A rich collection of statues



Virgin and Child (XVIIth century)



Saint Cornely (XVI-XVIIth century)  
Patron of the horned beasts



Saint Brigitte (XVI-XVIIth century)



Saint Sané (XVIIIth century)  
Patron of the parish



Saint Isidore (XVIIIth century)  
Patron of the ploughmen

## Choir

## North chapel (statues from the XVIIth century)



In the choir area, you may notice the stalls adorned with sculptures of flowers, cherubs and scrolled wing tips. The stained glass - as a gift from people of the parish - represents Saint Sané and Saint John the Baptist. In the northern chapel, the altar's granite cross originates from a well.



Saint Suzanne



Saint Marguerite and the dragon



Saint Joseph (statue from the chapel)  
Sainte-Suzanne

## A remarkable altarpiece

An altarpiece is a vertical structure with sculpted or painted decors standing at the back of the altar table. The altarpiece is a symbol of the XVIIth century Catholic counter-reformation (that began in 1545 with the council of Trent) in response to the Protestant reformation. The purpose was to enforce the power of the Catholic Church through new iconographic representations. It depicts in a rather brutal and realistic style, the beheading of Saint John the Baptist. He is represented blindfold kneeling down in front of a soldier and Salome with a servant holding the platter where his bloody head will be placed.



John the Baptist was arrested after raising the wrath of Herod Antipas, governor of Judé. John had condemned the marriage of Herod with his sister in law Herodias after he repudiated his wife. Some time later during a party, Herodias' daughter Salome performed such a nice dance that the subjugated governor wished to thank her by asking what she would like to have. After consulting with her mother, Salome asked for the head of John on a platter. Although saddened by her request, Herod had John executed.

On the front of the altarpiece, the bust of the Eternal Father holding a scroll bears the conclusion of the story: "The reward of a dancer is the death of a prophet".

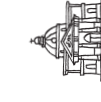
The statues of Saint John the Baptist wearing a lamb skin and Saint Patern bishop of Vannes have been placed in the niches.



French Renaissance



Baroque, Classical style



Neoclassical architecture and Eclecticism



Modern architecture

Antiquity	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV	XVI	XVII	XVIII	XIX	XX
Over time			1163 Building of Notre-Dame de Paris starts	1345 Notre-Dame de Paris is completed	1532 Brittany and France are united	1545 Council of Trent	1710 Blessing of the chapel, chateau de Versailles	1789 - 1799 French Revolution	1905 Separation of the Church and State	



## The legend of Comorre, Brittany's "bluebeard"

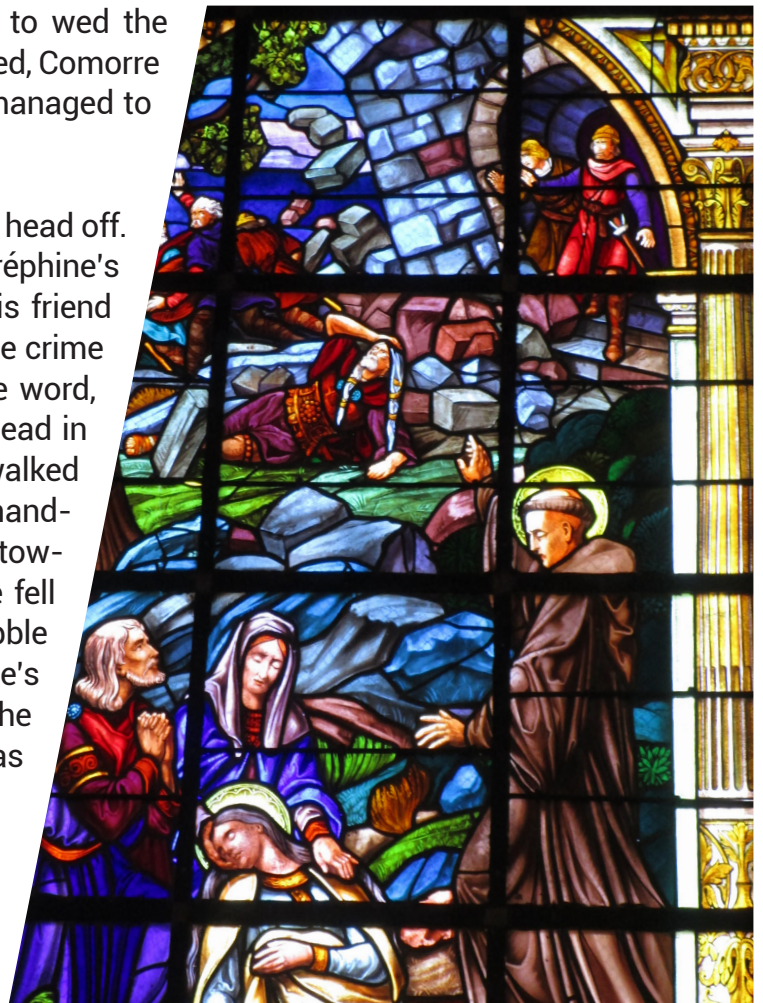
A legend tells that the Château of the Count of Comorre stood in Camors and it gave his name to the parish. There is no evidence of a link existing between the parish of Camors and the Count of Comorre. It seems that the confusion came from an antique dealer who mixed up the names in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. It is the Count of Comorre legend that inspired the "Bluebeard" fairy tale.

**Comorre, or Conomor "the great chief", reigned in about 550.** This blood-thirsty historical figure and conqueror used to kill and pillage for pleasure. Legend has it that Comorre married a young woman of rare beauty and gentleness. Soon after, he learned from a soothsayer that he would be killed by his first-born son. When he found out his wife was pregnant, he beheaded her immediately. He took five more wives, and every time followed the same blood-filled ritual.

Wanting to get married once again, he asked to wed the beautiful **Tréphine**, and she got pregnant. Enraged, Comorre locked her away in his castle. Desperate, she managed to escape and gave birth to a son during her flight.

When Comorre caught up with her, he sliced her head off. He abandoned her body and the new-born. Tréphine's father was miraculously warned, spoke with his friend Saint Gildas and they both travelled to where the crime took place. The illustrious Father said just one word, and the beheaded Tréphine rose up, took her head in one hand and her child in the other. She then walked to Comorre's castle. The child then took a handful of earth and threw it towards the castle's towers, shouting "The Trinity's justice". The castle fell to the ground, and Comorre perished in the rubble alongside his men. Saint Gildas put Tréphine's head back on her shoulders, and christened the child Trémeur. Since then, both are worshipped as saints by the Breton people.

In another version of the story, Saint Gildas himself took the handful of earth to destroy Comorre's castle. This episode is narrated through one of the stained glass windows in Saint-Gildas church in Auray.



Stained glass window of the Saint-Gildas church, depicting the legend of Comorre.