

THE HIDDEN CIRCLE GAZETTE

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BUILDS

Thélaime

BY CURT ROSEWOOD — 2024-09-27



Thélaime, a Romanesque Abbey

Thélaime (Thélème¹ by its original book name) is a fictional abbey in French literature, imagined by François Rabelais² in 1534, in his famous novel Gargantua³.

This room by **JanLou** presents a very realistic synthesis, inspired by memories of the builder's personal visits: a cloister, a monk's cell, a chapter house-library, a chapel and a crypt, all in Romanesque architecture⁴. It is, in fact, the mid-point of several models visited or studied from photos.

¹https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbaye_de_Thélème

²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/François_Rabelais

³<https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gargantua>

⁴https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanesque_architecture#:~:text=Combining%20features%20of%20ancient%20Roman,large%20towers%20and%20decorative%20arcading.



This room has a feature that is probably unique in the game: there are two versions, one for daytime and one for night-time. As simply switching the lighting mode using the game interface was not enough to recreate the two atmospheres, the builder decided to create two sub-versions of the abbey.



In fact, the night version requires removing the daytime spotlights and adding in 120 or so flames lit on candles, as well as many associated reflections and several other objects reserved for the dark (such as burning chimneys).

In other words, Night mode is a separate file (to be merged) that contains only the flames, reflections and objects specific to the night. Each flame or reflection has been placed individually (and then grouped) in its corresponding daytime location.

This has important consequences in terms of building: if the builder decides to move a candle (extinguished during the day), he has to go to the night file, ungroup the corresponding flame and move it so that it regains its original candle, once the two files have been merged again. This happened many times during the build phase.

JanLou

For example: a candle is extinguished during the day, but at night you will see it lit with its flame and the reflection of this flame.

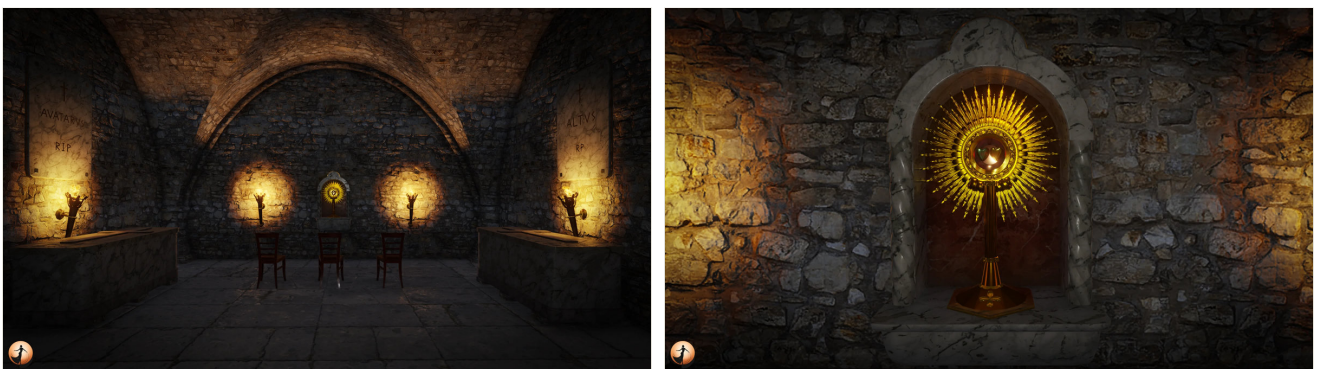
Another example: at night, and only at night, in the ambulatory outside, you can see the light diffusing finely under the doors or through the windows.



By day, as by night, the room also takes into account the position of the sun or the moon, to direct the lighting effects, some of them have been adapted to the builder's intention.

Thélème has around 17,000 build parts, including more than 250 flames and other light sources.

Fortunately, the situation is simpler for the crypt, which by definition is always quite dark, as it receives no outside light. The crypt is therefore pre-lit to recreate this special atmosphere. To visit the crypt in realistic light conditions the visitor has just to change the room lighting mode in the game interface.



A room is not just determined by the visual, the sound plays just as big a role in creating that perfect atmosphere.

So many rooms in 3DX are completely ruined by a jarring disconnect between the visuals and the audio. Romantic beaches enveloped in stunningly beautiful nature forcibly married to thumping EDM beats that pull you completely out of the experience.

Not so here. Jan has a perfect understanding of the impact of music. His builds are always accompanied by a carefully chosen playlist that wraps around you like a comfortable blanket, pulling you deeper into the virtual experience.

Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pB_3rG7KZyU

Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qU_a2ZgO5Ds

Thélaimé is not usually open to the public. It can be visited on request though, privately or in group. Formal dress will be required, as this virtual abbey demands respect for the sacred spirit of an ancient temple.

With special thanks to Jan and May.