



MUSEO DEL **Vino**

AUDIOGUIDE

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WINE MUSEUM - AUDIOGUIDE

30 sections

ROOM 1

1 – WINE IN ANTIQUITY

The Museum of the Wine of the Hills of Parma is part of the circuit of Food Museums of the Province of Parma and it offers a journey to the discovery of history and curiosities tied to the wines of the territory.

The exhibit's path begins with a presentation of the birth and the evolution of wine throughout history.

The impossibility to have access to “safe” water to drink caused mankind to produce fermented drinks since remote times (beer, wine), thanks to the activity of the “good” bacterial strains that would guarantee the healthiness of these beverages.

In Neolithic times, all the necessary premises for the development of wine were present. Historians agree in stating that the first domestication of wild vines dates to these times, as well as the activity of making wine on large scale. They define this as “the Noah hypothesis” since the first act of the biblical patriarch, after leaving the Ark following the Great Flood, was to plant a vineyard (Genesis 9, 20) in the area of Mount Ararat (modern Turkey).

In the glass case, vases of Greek and Roman origin used for the consumption of wine can be seen. The Kylix, a flat cup with two handles, (a specimen in Attic pottery from the V century B.C.) was used to drink wine after this had been diluted with water to reduce its alcoholic grade. The wine was hand warmed to release the aroma of the resin used as a natural preserving agent.

2 – THE LARGE DOLIUM BARREL

Objects of particular interest are the *dolium* wine barrel and two lids coming from the dig of Roman times *Fidentia*, that were discarded furnace production.

The *dolia* were large terracotta containers with a round shape in which the Romans stored liquids (oil and wine) and solids (wheat and legumes). With an average diameter of one and a half meters, these had a capacity that varied from one thousand to two thousand liters. Buried in the ground up

to the brim – as can be seen in the photo and the reconstructed images – they were indeed a type of silo for storage of food provisions.

3 – AMPHORAE

On the platform, a few amphorae coming from digs in the Parma area can be seen.

Amphorae were the most common transportation containers for food provisions in the Roman world: mostly wine and olive oil, but also olives, Fava beans, fish based sauces (*garum*), wheat, fruit and other foods as well were transported using these vessels.

There are many varieties of amphorae classified according to various criteria: the place of origin, shape, and period of manufacturing. The amphorae exhibited here were found in Parma and testify to the importance of wine trading from Central and Southern Italy regions up to the I century B.C., when the change in climate made it possible to cultivate vines in the Parma area as well. Under the window are exhibited fragments of amphorae found in a mound of production waste from the furnace that was active in Sala Baganza in Roman times in the I century B.C.

4 – WINE GLASS AND BLOWN GLASS PITCHERS

The panels and the objects coming from digs in the Parma area testify how the “modern” way to drink wine was born in this area, introduced by Celtic populations that lived here before the Roman conquest. Since the climate made it impossible to cultivate vines, the inhabitants of these lands produced “beer” obtained from the fermentation of fruit, elder, cornelian, arbutus, and blackberries... these were drunk “brisk” (that is, without diluting them with water) and using tall pottery “glasses”. They were tapered, so as to allowed to minimize the foaming and to eliminate impurities at the same. Once the cultivation of vines was introduced in the Cisalpine region, the Celts continued to utilize the same containers to drink wine in the same way. This was new and quite different from what the Greeks and Romans used to do. Thus, they introduced a “modern” way to taste wine that we still use today. In the display case, a specimen of ceramic “glass” from the VI century originally from Golasecca, and two precious pitchers in blown glass from the II century A.D., originally from Cyprus and used to serve wine at the table are shown. These were found in the digs of the Roman necropolis of Saint Pancrazio near Parma. The images in the panel show the various wine settlements discovered by archaeologists in the Parma area. Since the area is close to the Port of Luni that was reachable through the pass of Valoria (now Pass of Cisa), this was a privileged area for food provisions for the Capital. From Luni, through ships, the food provisions reached Ostia by navigating along the coasts in a few days, and from there, they reached the marketplaces of Rome along the River Tiber.

We now continue our journey in Room 2, where the theme of cultivation of vines in the Parma area is dealt in depth. The video documents a year of work in the vineyard, from springtime to midwinter, and shows the tools used in the fields and in the cellar.

ROOM 2

5 – THE PO RIVER VALLEY “COUPLED” VINEYARDS

Grapevines are a type vine capable to climb to the top of large trees or to grow on rocks and inclines thanks to their prehensile organs. They are perennial plants whose life cycle can last several centuries. Modern vineyards though, to ensure productivity, do not last more than 20-25 years. The *vitis vinifer* is a species very rich in variability (polymorphic). Starting from its wild variety, which

varies little, humanity has selected a large number of varieties bearing fruit with different characteristic and suitable to wine making, to be eaten raw or dried through the millennia in the various terrains and habitats.

The rigid climate and the humidity of the soil have always made it impossible to cultivate grapes at ground level in the Po River Valley as well as in the Mediterranean regions. Instead, it was necessary to raise the plants using supports that could be poles or live trees. The system that “married” the vines to supporting trees – poplars, country maples, elm, mulberry– rather than leaving the plants on the ground is mentioned by Columella and Virgil and it is known with the name of “piantata” (vineyard planting).

Originally Etruscan, this system required the arranging of vines “coupled” with rows of trees along the borders of the fields that hosted different cultures in a rotation system, since it was thought that the lymph of trees would save the vines from freezing spells.

6 – THE HISTORY OF THE CULTIVATION OF GRAPEVINES IN THE PARMA AREA

The illuminated panels show visual testimonies of the cultivation of grapevines in the Parma area starting from medieval times to the last century. After the fall of the Roman Empire and the barbaric invasions, the use of beer prevailed and many vineyards were abandoned. Only monastic communities continued the cultivation of vines for liturgical needs and later, in the Middle Ages, it was revived anew. The sculptures of Benedetto Antelami in the Parma Baptistery representing the cycle of the months, the painted pergolas of the Renaissance period, the landscapes painted by foreign visitors who came to Italy for the “Grand Tour”, the sculptures by Jean Baptiste Boudard that decorated the Ducal Park by commission of the Bourbon family in the Eighteenth century are all traces of this history. We must also mention the noteworthy “Treatise about vines”, a manuscript from the XVIII century preserved in the Archives of State of Parma, and the interest that Giuseppe Garibaldi had for the Malvasia of Maiatico plants, who he transplanted in Caprera, and the farming activity of Giuseppe Verdi, and the first plantation of specialized vineyards on the hills of Torrechiara and Sala Baganza.

7 - THE TOOLS OF THE VINEYARD

On the pedestal at the center of the room, tools and objects in use for the cultivation of grapevines in the last century can be seen: pumps to spray verdigris mounted on wheels and carried on back, an outrigger with buckets for watering, a basket to transport grape clusters, wooden boxes for harvesting, and a steelyard to weigh the grapes.

8 – THE SMALL TOOLS OF THE VINEYARD

In the wall mounted showcase, tools – various types of hoes and spades – used by farmers to work the soil of the vineyard can be seen, together with small tools – shears, hooks, picks, pliers, and tools used for grafting – used in the daily care of plants.

9 – THE MALVASIA GRAPE CLUSTER

Next to this display, a remarkable model of a cluster of aromatic Malvasia of Candia grapes in blown glass dating from the XIX century can be seen.

This variety, originally from the Greek island of Monemvasia from which its name derives, has perfectly adapted to the climate of the hills of Sala Baganza, contributing to shape their landscapes.

Now we continue our journey to Room 3, where themes linked to wine production in the Parma area are presented in depth.

ROOM 3

10 – OENOLOGY

The room features the necessary tools for wine production. The grape harvest takes place between September and October, at first for white grapes, and then for dark ones. The operation engages the entire farming family, women and children included. In the afternoon, the grapes are gathered in wicker baskets or in panniers and carried at the entrance of the vineyard, where they are poured into a wagon with sides. The gathered grapes are laid flat on a rough table in the courtyard and are left there in the sun for no more than four days. At night, they are covered.

Crushing by foot is once again an operation that involves the participation of the entire family, particularly of the women. Expert cellarers, instead, did not enter into the crushing vat, but followed the delicate phases of this process like the opening and closing of the small sluice gate through which the must came out. Must is wine mixed with grapeseed that is collected into barrels and then poured in large vats where the following day it is stirred to favor a homogenous fermentation process.

11 – STORIES OF WINE IN PARMA

The long panel presents the traces of a history of wine in the area of Parma from medieval times to the last century. The cycle of the months sculpted by Benedetto Antelami shows an artisan preparing the barrels and the winegrower intent in harvesting grapes. Similar figures appear on the portal of the Parma Cathedral as well, that is older. The miracle of wine of the Abbot of the Monastery of Saint John the Evangelist that took place in the year 987 A.D. is remembered and testified by a painting. The work of “brentatori” who carried grapes and wine in conical shaped baskets and barrels and were in charge of extinguishing fires, is illustrated (in the corner of the room a specimen of “brenta” basket is visible). Also collected here, are citations of wines of the Parma area by Sante Lancerio, the bottler of wines of Pope Paul III. We can also see a section on the banquets on board of the “burchiello” (a small fluvial boat), the “boat of delights” of the Bourbon Family that sailed along the Po River, and a section about the wine provisions to the Court of Maria Luigia.

12 – THE TOOLS OF THE CELLAR

Tools and ancient objects are shown on the footboard that goes along the room. They tell the story of winemaking, from pressing the grapes to bottling: starting from right, the “boat” for pressing grapes, or the more modern winepress, a wooden basket, demijohns and flasks, an impressive vat for the fermentation of grape must with related tools built in 1922, small wine caskets and washtubs, and pumps for racking.

13 – BOTTLING

At the center of the room, along the footboard, tools used for bottling wine are shown. First, the bottles are cleaned with a specific mechanical brush, then rinsed and placed upside-down on the dripping tray for best drying. Later they are filled with a bottling machine with three spouts, and then the corks are inserted in the neck of the bottles with a piston machine. The Museum features an interesting series of these, from various eras, made of wood and metal, with different degrees of automation. A remarkable series of large cellar bottles in blown glass coming from the

Bormioli glass factories of Parma can also be seen, along with the baskets used to transport the bottles from the cellar.

14- THE PLAQUE OF THE CANTEEN

In a niche on the wall, is a reproduction of the painted wood plaque that can be found on the cellar door of the monastery of Saint John the Evangelist in Parma. A rather comprehensible Latin text reminds us: “This is the way to the cellar. Be careful not to come back up tipsy!”

15 – SMALL CELLAR TOOLS

The vertical case features a series of small tools used in canteen activities: two specimen of “alzavino” (a blown glass cruet commonly called “thief”, used to take the wine directly from the opening of the barrel to sample the degree of ageing); a glass funnel; a rare glass funnel used to fill barrels to the brim; candle holders and cellar oil lamps; wooden and ceramic bowls for tasting; wooden plugs and taps for barrels; gas valves for barrels; spiral tools to clean pipes; chain corkscrews and bottle openers; oil removers and a glass pitcher.

16 – DEVOTIONAL OFFERINGS...OF WINE

Two devotional *ex-voto* painted boards from the XVII and XIX century are reproduced here. These come from the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin of Fontanellato, in the province of Parma, and the stories represented on them are tied to wine and cellars and testify the daily life of those periods. Now we proceed down to the fascinating icebox.

ROOM 4

17 – THE FARNESE ICEBOX

Built in 1723 in the times of Antonio Farnese to guarantee conservation of snow throughout the entire span of the year, this large hypogeal room with a vaulted ceiling was filled with snow in winter using the large window visible on the western side. It was suitable to preserve venison from the nearby Tenure of the Woods and to keep wine cool. Along the staircase, on the left, the first overlooking can be seen, that was used to enter the ice room when the level of snow was high. Here are exhibited a few centenary trunks of grapevines of the Parma area. Going down the cotto stone staircase, the lowest level of the ice room can be reached. Walking along the footboard, a 360° projection narrating the role of vines and wine in mythology, history and art is activated. We go back up to ROOM 3 and, exiting from the door, we cross the trench of the Castle that leads us into ROOM 5, dedicated to barrels.

ROOM 5

18 – THE WORDS OF WINE

The walls of the entrance at the sides of the door are lined with barrels that bare writings with the definitions of the main terms linked to the cultivation of vines and the production of wine, almost a tridimensional dictionary of cellars. The various sections of this room lead us to the discovery of all that “turns around” wine: barrels, bottles, corkscrews and labels are illustrated in the panels and by the objects on exhibit.

19 – THE LARGE BARREL

The use of wooden barrels was known since prehistoric times and later underwent a remarkable evolution, as these took the well known “round bellied” shape in the Greek and Roman world beginning from the IV century A.D.

The Greek geographer Strabo tells us that the Celtic people who lived in the Cispadane region made barrels as large as houses (that in reality were simple huts). After a period of crisis in late antiquity, the production of barrels had a new development in the Middle Ages when it spread throughout Europe as a container for liquid and solid goods of the most varied nature. Even books produced in the Venetian print shops travelled protected inside barrels, as these were not permeable to humidity and to the saltiness of maritime travel. An Oak barrel of large dimensions used for the ageing of wine in the cellar is on exhibit in the room.

In the course of time, alongside with wood, new production materials were introduced as cement, enameled iron, and fiberglass in the 1900s.

20 – THE TOOLS OF THE COOPERS

The cooper was a craftsman who knew both the skills of a woodworker and of an iron smith, and was strictly tied to the rural world.

In order to resist the pressure of fermenting liquids and to withstand transport, barrels required long periods to be built, great precision and special construction abilities.

In the glass case, tools coming from the shop of a cooper of the Parma area can be seen. Large images of Remo Lottici from Noceto, the last cooper of the Parma area, and a video showing the various phases of production of barrels complete this section.

21 – PITCHERS, MEASURING TOOLS AND GLASSES

The glass case presents a selection of wine containers. Shown from the top, some enameled ceramics pitchers dating from the XIII to the XVI century, coming from Fidenza, from the digs of the Castle of Basilicanova and the Castle of Berceto; the “Coséta d’or”, a traditional turned hard wood bowl used for wine tasting, symbolically used by the local cultural committee of Sala Baganza starting from 1996 to award a prize to people and institutions that distinguished themselves in the promotion of the wines of the territory; a drinking glass and turned wood and ceramic bowls; wine pitchers; a wine bottle in cut crystal with glasses; wine measuring tools in blown glass from the XIX century produced in the Parma area.

22 – THE BOTTLE

The first traces of glass container used for liquids date from the I century A.D., when the craftsmen of modern day Syria fine-tuned the technique of glass blowing. In the XIV century, the flagon – an ampoule made of blown glass with a straw protection – was invented and found wide use in Tuscany. The diffusion of the bottle in Europe is recorded around the mid-1500s, thanks to the activity of the Murano furnaces. However, it was in England that the production of dark bottles began, thanks to the use of carbon to feed blast furnaces. This was imposed by a limitation to the use of wood, indispensable to naval industries. These bottles were thicker and sturdier, and thus became the ideal containers to transport wine. By the end of the 1800s, the technology of pouring melted glass into pressure molds was fine-tuned. Since 1898 this has been done with semi-automatic machines, and from 1905 with automatic machines with rotating barrels. From 1917, automatic machines fed with drops of melted glass were used, and these can be seen in the video as well. Today, this technique is completely automatized and allows for low cost series production of quality bottles in numerous shapes and dimensions.

23 – THE CORKS

Legend tells that Dom Perignon, the French monk who devised the method of production of Champagne, had the intuition to use corks as lids, copying the Spanish pilgrims who used them to seal their travel flasks. In reality, cork was used from Roman times and this section explains the modalities of production and extraction of this material. The various types of corks that exist today can also be seen. In Italy, the first modern production of cork lids in the Gallura region of Sardinia is documented between 1860 and 1861 by the plantations of oak trees used for cork established in 1830. Italy, today the third worldwide manufacturer, transforms about one and a half billion cork stoppers destined to the wine making sector, which absorbs 70% of the natural production.

24 – CORKSCREWS

Its origin could be dated to the mid-XV century, probably deriving from a spiral tool used by soldiers to remove led projectiles that stuck into the barrels of muzzle loading rifles. Leonardo da Vinci left us a design for a model of corkscrew. The ample and capillary diffusion of the corkscrew was registered only after the first half of the 1600s, with the use of aging wine in bottles promoted by the English and tied to the production technology of dark bottles, more robust and regular. This section features a history of this tool and shows its constituent elements and various typologies, exhibited in the case.

From right to left, we see the “simple T shaped” corkscrews; the “mechanical” corkscrews that make extraction easier thanks to mechanical devices; those with levers; the pocket ones; the multitask corkscrews that feature tools near the metal spring; and finally, the figurative ones, often the work of creative artists and designers.

25 – THE LUNAR CALENDARS OF THE CANTEEN

The space of the cellar with its particular climate, the silent dim light and the subterranean ambiance have always evoked stories and tales. The panels located before ROOM 6 show images and narration taken from two 1800s lunar calendars from the Parma area. In addition to the list of the months of the year, these show a certain dose of irony and satire: a choir of animals in the cellar and a young Bacchus riding a barrel

26 – WINE LABELS

An essential element in our modern culture of wine, though already found in antiquity – as for example in writings on amphorae – or in historical times – like in metal cartouches or manuscript strips that were applied to various containers – wine labels as we know them today are invented in the XVIII century with the advent of glass bottles to store wine. Initially produced in monochrome typography set, with the advent of lithographed print, since 1836, labels dress up in colors and shapes and reach the graphic refinement and design of our days. The second panel shows some specimen of labels of wines of the Parma area from the 1900s, among which the ones designed by Giovannino Guareschi, the “father” of Peppone and Don Camillo, for his tavern in Roncole Verdi.

ROOM 6

27 - TESTIMONIALS FOR WINE

The last room of the exhibit offers an in depth look at grapevine farming in Parma in the 1800s and 1900s, evoking the pioneers of this sector and the characters of the world of culture and entertainment who wrote and spoke about the wines of Parma. The *touch screen* allows you to see their portraits and learn their stories.

28 – HISTORICAL BOTTLES

The excellence of the Parma wines is testified since the 1800s by documents and memoirs, and by the presence of a few precious century old bottles with their relative manuscript cartouches, coming from the Basetti House Canteen of Vairo and produced in the course of the 1800s in Monte delle Vigne. On the left, an exceptional bottle coming from the Felino Corral and produced by Henry Caumont, award winning in London and Paris.

These are a rare and precious heritage of the work of those pioneers who, with passion and sensibility, were able to lift to fame the name of Parma starting from the mid-XIX century. This fame was destroyed by the diffusion of the Phylloxera infestation in the 1920s and only in recent times, with new awareness and knowledge, it has reprised its journey.

29 – WINES AND VINEYARDS

The top case presents a selection of wines produced by the farms that adhere to the Consortium of the Wines of the Hills of Parma. Among these, the bottle that was specifically created to celebrate the “Parma-Poggio of Berceto” race of regularity for historical automobiles that is held every year in this territory. The touch screen allows you to learn about the varieties of grapes that are cultivated and the types of wines produced, and to localize the wine farms on the map, to learn the in depths of their history. You can also consult the registry of the “Coséta d’or” prize given to the best Malvasia wine of the territory.

30 – TASTING AND SAMPLING

Ideally, the visit ends with a tasting of the wines and the products of the territory in the sampling room annexed to the museum. This is furnished with historical objects tied to wine production. The western wall of the courtyard features a series of graphic panels where wine in mythology and art is presented. A panel with a jovial drinking Bacchus invites visitors to take a souvenir photo to send to friends. At the end of the path, the historical gardens of the Castle that can be accessed free of charge from the trench, and the monumental halls of the Rock decorated with mythology and allegorical scenes by Orazio Samacchini and Sebastiano Galeotti, deserve a visit.

The circuit of the Food Museums offers other interesting visits: at about 10 minutes by car, the Salame of Felino Museum hosted in the fascinating cellars of the Castles. At a distance of 15 minutes, riding through the Regional Park of the Carrega Woods, the Court of Giarola is found – an ancient Benedictine complex that hosts the Museums of Pasta and Tomato.

Thanks for being with us and we wish you a lovely stay in the land of Parma.