



Some information for our English-speaking guests:



## Welcome to our Museum of Wine in Speyer

The oldest and first public of such in the world

Our museum of wine was opened in 1910. Most parts of our unique collection were gathered between 1909 and 1910 and originate from the Palatinate and nearby wine regions. This has never happened before. Among other things you will be informed about the history of wine, so consequently most of our exhibits are about wine growing, cellar work, but you will also face fascinating objects like **the oldest wine in the world** or barrels made in extraordinary places. So, if you want to know more about wine growing and its history you are definitely at the right place. We hope you will leave our museum with a new insight about the rich heritage of this region.

Wine drinking and wine culture have been known in the Palatinate since the Celts and still play an important part in our everyday culture. Interestingly the Celts neither grew grapes nor did they make wine themselves. Since the time around 400 B.C they just imported the wine approximately. They drank out of metal and ceramic bowls of a very artistic quality made by the Etruscans. (Some very precious wine vessels from the Etruscans also exhibited in the museum. See the rooms before.)

The Romans came into this area in 10 B.C. Since wine was a staple food for them, they soon began to cultivate wine here. Thus winegrowing commenced in the Rhine and Moselle regions about 2000 years ago. When the Romans left, the knowledge about viniculture remained and became a major part of the local culture which you can see even today. For example every year nearly every village in the wine region of the Palatinate has its own unique wine festival.

On the following pages you will find some explanations about interesting exhibits. (The exhibits with explanations in English are marked with the *Union Jack*.)



## Wooden winepress, 1727



This big wooden winepress originally comes from Metz (France) or thereabouts and was modelled on an ancient paragon. The press exerts controlled pressure in order to free the juice from the grapes. Its pressure is applied through the construction of a lead screw at the end of the press, which is linked to a lever that has to be pressed down onto a basket filled with crushed grapes. By spinning up the lead screw, the lever (made of a whole tree) is forced down on the other side and now strains various types of plates, balks and timbers which for their part are now forced down onto the grapes. Then the juice is collected in a trough under the press.

## Bacchus Cults on a Roman Column, 100 A.D.



This part of a Roman column depicts scenes from ancient Bacchus cults, called “Bacchanalias”. As everybody knows Dionysus is the god of wine and a major figure in Greek mythology. He was also known as Bacchus (which means “the one who roisters”) to the Romans. He is the patron deity of agriculture. This item apparently belonged to a column erected on a market place in Speyer dedicated to Jupiter. You can see the harvesting of grapes on our exhibit.

## Neck violin, around 1750



Body and disgrace punishments were frequently used for minor offences before modern jurisdiction (that is before the Criminal Code was passed by Napoleon I. in 1805). If, for example, somebody stole fruits from the field or vineyards, the neck violin was placed upon the “sinner”. He or she would have to walk along the village streets, so everybody could hear the bell. This kind of punishment served primarily as a deterrent, because the thief was exposed to public disgrace.



## Ornate Wine Cask of Carl-Theodor, 1766

*(Fire and ice)*



This rich ornamented barrel was specially made for the silver wedding of Carl Theodor, the elector of the Palatinate with Elisabeth Auguste in 1766. It has a capacity of 5660 litres. It is worth mentioning that this barrel was built by Adam Bieth, cellarer at Carl Theodor`s court, **on** the River Rhine on January 17th in 1766. In this year the river was completely frozen. What a fascinating sight must this have been for the public viewers to see **fire (necessary** for the building process) and **ice** at the same time on the Rhine!

## Cooper's Cutlery, around 1760



This rich ornamented cutlery was originally owned by a cooper from Esslingen. The sheath is decorated with ornaments of brass, which depict a barrel beneath a cluster of grapes on the front. This representation indicates that the owner was specialized on wine casks. Such ornate cutleries had mostly representative functions.

## Cellar work 100 years ago



After the grapes had been picked and pressed, the juice was pumped into the cellar. Here it was filled into large oak casks, so it could mature into the desired wine. It was not until to the end of the 19th Century when wine was filled into bottles on a larger scale. Before that it was either sold directly out of the barrel or filled in cans or people just bought the complete barrel.



## Hall of emblems



With the opening of the museum in 1910 this beautiful hall of emblems was decorated by the famous German artist Otto Hupp (1859-1949). Here you can admire 50 coats of arms of small and bigger states which had wine-growing estates in the Palatinate until the French revolution. Do not try to count all of them as you might get a stiff neck and then need to consult a local physiotherapist. 😊

## The Oldest Grape-extracted Wine of the World (about 325 A.C.)



One of the most fascinating and sensational items in our museum is this bottle with ancient Roman wine, which is considered to be the oldest grape-extracted wine of the world, that has stayed liquid until today. The Romans have seasoned and sweetened their wine with spices and honey and used olive oil to encapsulate the wine completely from contact with air. A large stopper of resinated olive oil and honey has conserved the wine in this bottle until today. The bottle was found in a Roman stone coffin in 1867, when a new vineyard was laid in the south of Speyer. No one has ever tasted the “wine” and will...

## What is more ...?



You can enjoy looking at numerous photographs, precious pots, filigreed glassware, wine goblets, fancy latches for casks and artfully ornamented bottoms...

There are also some beautiful paintings by local artists of the 19th Century illustrating wine growing and wine drinking in a romantic manner.

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