

### The best wine museum on Earth?

I know what you're going to think: oh no, not a wine museum! Because most wine museums are not really a lot of fun. They tend to be predictable and repetitive. But the Museo de la Cultura del Vino created by the Vivanco family in the village of Briones is unlike any other wine museum I know in the world. They have an incredible and enviable collection of old artifacts, especially wine presses, corkscrews, antique paintings, even archeology pieces and everything else, all wine related. And it's a private museum, a collection created by a family who loves wine and has amassed an incredible collection of pieces, some really valuable, including art from names like Picasso, Sorolla and Joan Miró. There are Roman and Egyptian mosaics and vessels and everything you can think of, giving a much larger perspective on the relation between wine and civilization. It's all displayed with great taste and in a simple way that makes it really enjoyable.



*Rafa (left) and Santi Vivanco (right), in charge of the family wines and museum, respectively*

It's impossible to explain a place like this, which has to be seen to be believed. It's 4,000 square meters spanning five different rooms where you could spend hours. I was lucky enough to be shown around by Santi Vivanco, who is responsible for the museum. His father started collecting mostly old presses and then everything else. And Santiago was the one who personally bought all the paintings and all archeological pieces they have, so he had background information and anecdotes for most of them, which made it a fascinating visit. Their corkscrew collection has to be one of the most complete in the world and contains some unique pieces. And they told me that what they have in the museum is only a fraction of all they have in storage, so they can create temporary exhibitions and rotate some of the stuff they show. It's just like when you go to a great restaurant and cannot wait to go back again... You now have some excuses to make it to Rioja—and for me to return!

