

GUIDE TOUR



DECORATIVE ARTS  
MUSEUM  
RIOJA PALACE



## DECORATIVE ARTS MUSEUM RIOJA PALACE

The Museum was created in 1979 with the objective of preserving the historical and artistic heritage of the Rioja Palace for the present and future generations to be able to know and enjoy it. Thus, it is helpful to know of the different styles and techniques used by architects and designers to decorate the upper-class family homes in the early XX Century.

Strengthening this objective, the building, its park and the collection were protected by law in 1985 by listing them as National Historical Monument.

Rioja Ruiz's family home was built between 1907 and 1912 and was their home until 1956, when it was sold to the Municipality of Viña del Mar.

## TOUR

At the access by the side of the palace, from the foyer, there are two areas, one to the **left** with rooms oriented to the **public life**, such as the main hall, the study, the smoking room, the dining room and the rooms where the daughters, Sara and Elena, pink and light blue, respectively, would receive their guests. The housewife, Sara Ruiz, had her own room, to the left of the lobby; while the main hall was used as the great family living room. The **private area** -mainly to the **right** and to the end- held the bedrooms and bathrooms.

The gardens surrounding the palace create a park that offers a very special setting to this former home, where we can currently find different species of palm trees and beautiful trees such as the cockspur coral tree. By 1956 there was a greenhouse or palmarium in this area where orchids and other exotic plants were cultivated.

## STYLES PRESENT AT RIOJA PALACE

**Alfredo Azancot** was in charge of the building design and **Arnaldo Barison** of the interior decoration and furnishing, bringing the curtains, furniture and carpets from Europe, inspired in older times to create a new proposal or interpretation.

Azancot followed a French neoclassical style adding curved or dynamic elements to the Rioja Palace, such as the great access stair and the apse holding the dining room.

The Museum has decoration and furniture of different styles, which make it eclectic since it does not follow one style in particular. However, **baroque**, **rococo** and **neoclassicism** (English and French) highlight among the main styles.

## MAIN STYLES AND ELEMENTS

### ECLECTICISM



In theory, most of the furniture collection of the Rioja Palace Museum is eclectic since that was the prevailing style in such times, even when one style may stand out compared to others. Several pieces classified as merely eclectic are the ones mixed without a clear trend such as in the **Great Dining Room**, with the set created by the table and chairs, or in the **Music Room** with its chairs.

### NEO-GOTHIC



Evidenced by the gothic decoration in the different rooms in the palace, you can see wooden utilitarian furniture, with straight structures and themes inspired in architectural elements such as pointed arches, ceiling roses, pinnacles, crosses and other elements mainly present in cathedrals, such as the bench and chair found in the **western corridor** of the building.

### FRENCH BAROQUE



Also called Louis XIV after the French king promoting the style, the Rioja Palace has furniture of this style standing out by their sumptuous character, where the decoration exceeds the structure, with luxurious curved lines and symmetry. The furniture collects ornamental elements such as shells, acanthus leaves, grapevines and other plants, ribbons, trophies or shields that can be found in the beautiful bronze clock of the **Empire Hall**, as well as in the console table of the **Hall of Mirrors**.

**FRENCH ROCOCO:  
LOUIS XV**



Promoted by Louis XV, it highlights the organic lines, curves and asymmetries in different designs of the period, prevailing marquetry or painted wood in pastel colors, white and gold. With vegetables, animals and love scenes, or asymmetric bead work inspired in shells, this style can be observed in the **Hall of Mirrors** and the glass case of **Louis XV Hall**.

**FRENCH  
NEOCLASSICISM:  
LOUIS XVI**



Unlike rococo and inspired on the archaeological findings in the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, the designs are clean straight lines with geometrical shapes. The Rioja Palace Museum has hardwood furniture with marble cover, decorated with gold bronze appliqué, straight or cone-shaped even or grooved legs such as the table and the sofa in the **Light Blue Room**.

**FRENCH  
NEOCLASSICISM:  
EMPIRE**



Though similar to Louis XVI style because of the geometrical shapes, the use of wood, marble and bronze decorations, the iconographic difference is in its origin, as it dates back to Napoleon and his admiration to Roman and Egyptian empires. It uses sphynxes, mythological beings, animals representing power such as eagles and lions, Roman busts and caryatids. The furniture of this style usually has animal-shaped or column legs, as the console table of the **Central Hall** and main table of the **Empire Hall**.

**ENGLISH  
NEOCLASSICISM**



The structure of the English neoclassical furniture is visibly clear and simple because it seeks beauty, simplicity, elegance and utility, and although the decoration varies depending on the furniture designer, it usually includes vegetables, cameos and trophies not exceeding the furniture general structure. The most influential furniture makers of this style are the Adam brothers, George Hepplewhite, Thomas Chippendale, and Thomas Sheraton, with designs that can be observed in the great bookshelf and the sofa of Fernando Rioja's **Studio Room**.

**ORIENTALISM**



Since the XVIII Century and specially in the XIX Century, a particular taste on Eastern art was developed, represented by the arabesque, Chinese and Japanese styles, since it was considered exotic to have elements from faraway lands, and at the same time, it revealed high status, luxury and power. The Rioja Palace has objects corresponding to these characteristics with Chinese dragons or Chinese, Japanese or Arabian traditional scenes; for instance, the Chinese vase at the **Entrance Hall** and the cabinet of the **Central Hall**.



## THE HOUSEHOLDER FERNANDO RIOJA MEDEL

He was a Spanish immigrant who arrived in Valparaíso in 1879 and was firstly engaged in the trade of fabric and then traded tobacco, creating the Chilean Tobacco Company. He also founded the Spanish Bank and successfully participated in the editorial business –among other business areas. He was also dedicated to support charity, sport and cultural organizations linked to the local Spanish community.

## THE RESIDENTS OF THIS PALACE

The Rioja Ruiz family moved to Viña del Mar definitively when the Valparaíso earthquake occurred in 1906.

*The Rioja Palace Decorative Arts  
Museum invites you to visit its halls,  
enjoy the exhibitions and a wide  
variety of activities oriented to  
children, teenagers and adults.*

**CALLE QUILLOTA 214, VIÑA DEL MAR - CHILE**

---

 /palaciorioja

 /museopalaciorioja

 @palaciorioja