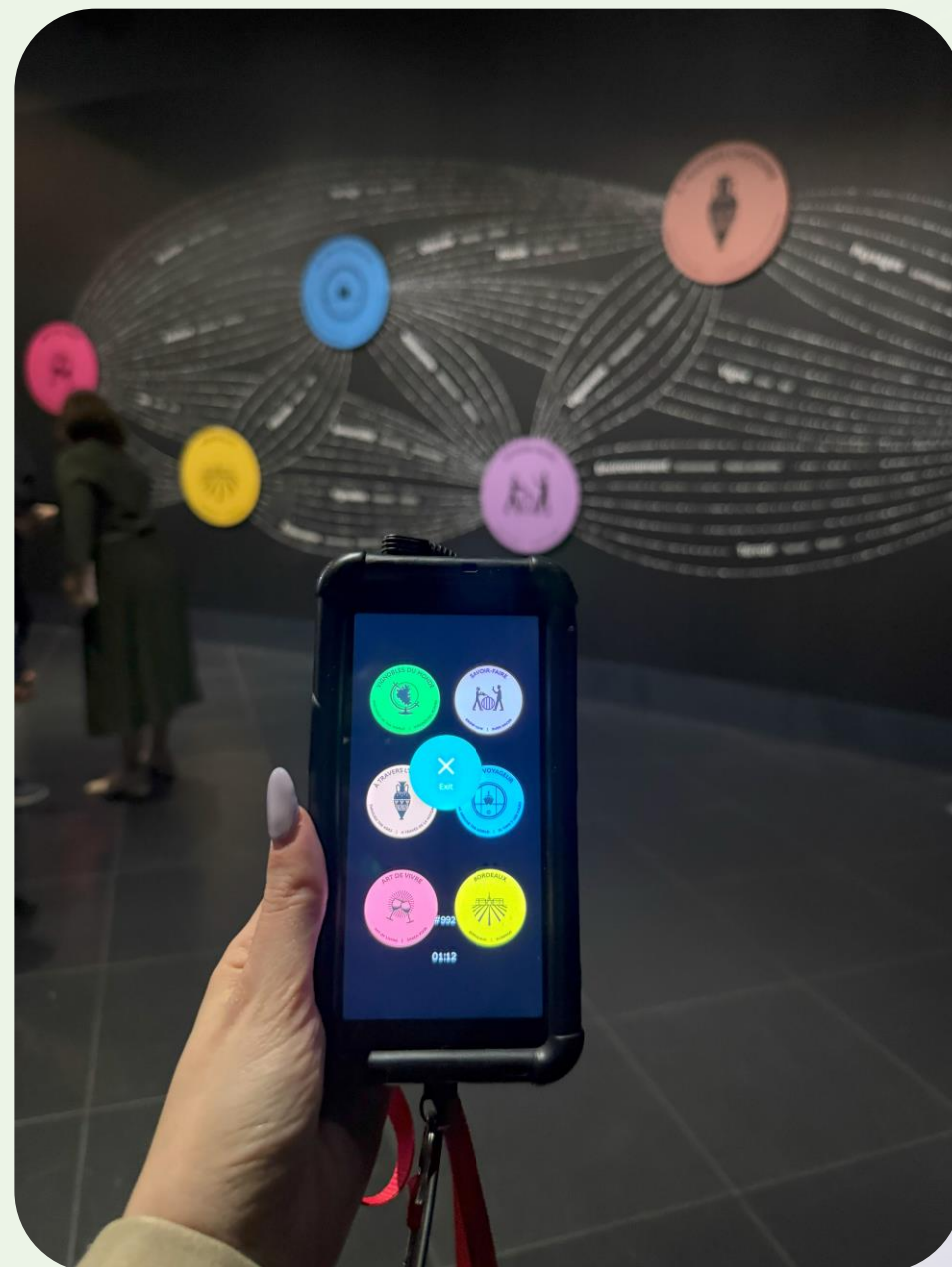




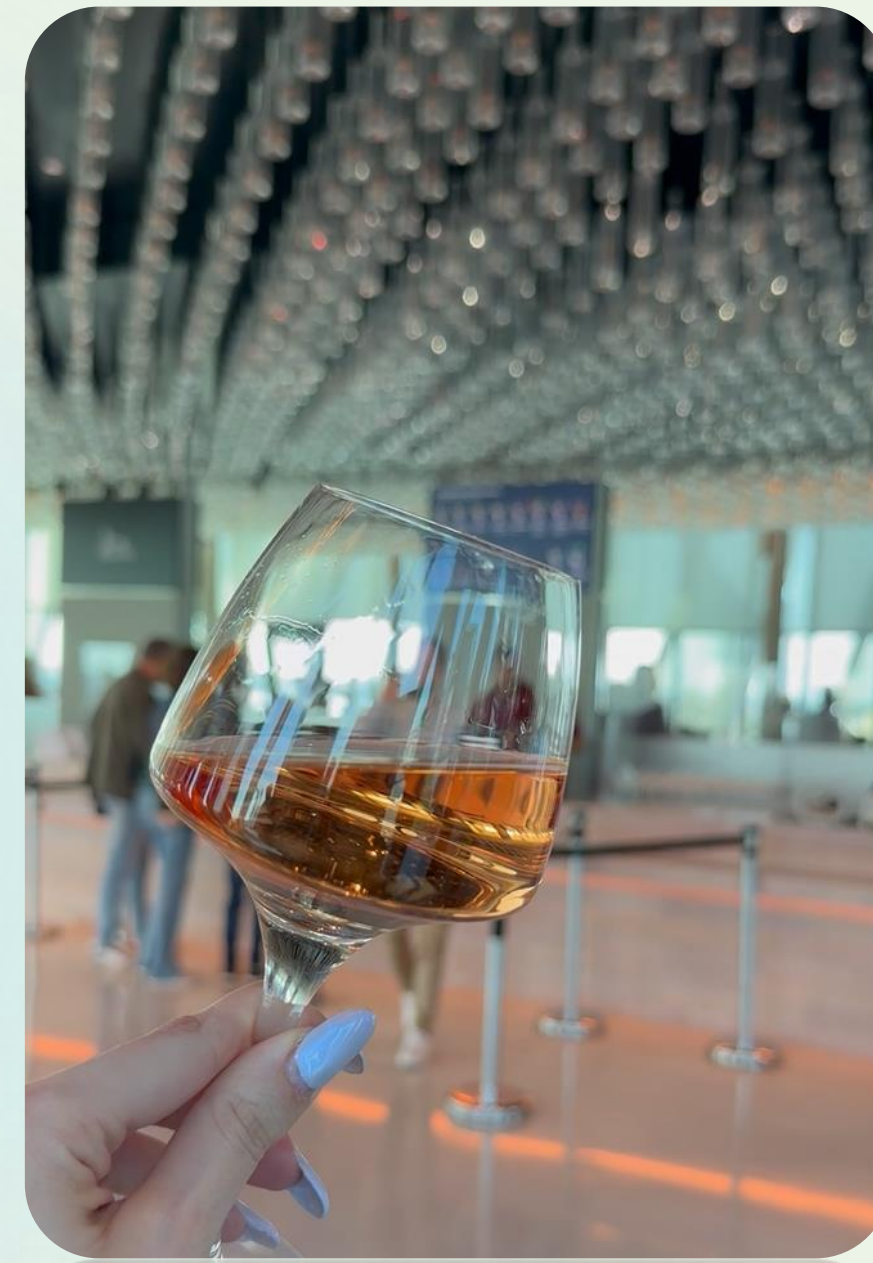
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La Cité du Vin



Location: Bordeaux, France
Focus: Wine culture, digital innovation, sustainable architecture



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Sustainable Cultural Tourism
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Introduction



Name of the Initiative: La Cité du Vin



Location: Bordeaux, France



Managing Organization: Fondation pour la Culture et les Civilisations du Vin



Launch Date: 2016



Status: Ongoing

La Cité du Vin was created to **promote the global heritage of wine through education, cultural programming and immersive storytelling**. It represents a bold fusion of architecture, digital technology and civic purpose. The venue was initiated by the Fondation pour la Culture et les Civilisations du Vin, a public-interest foundation and jointly funded by Bordeaux Métropole and the City of Bordeaux. Since opening in 2016, it has become a landmark example of **how cultural tourism can be immersive, sustainable and globally resonant**.

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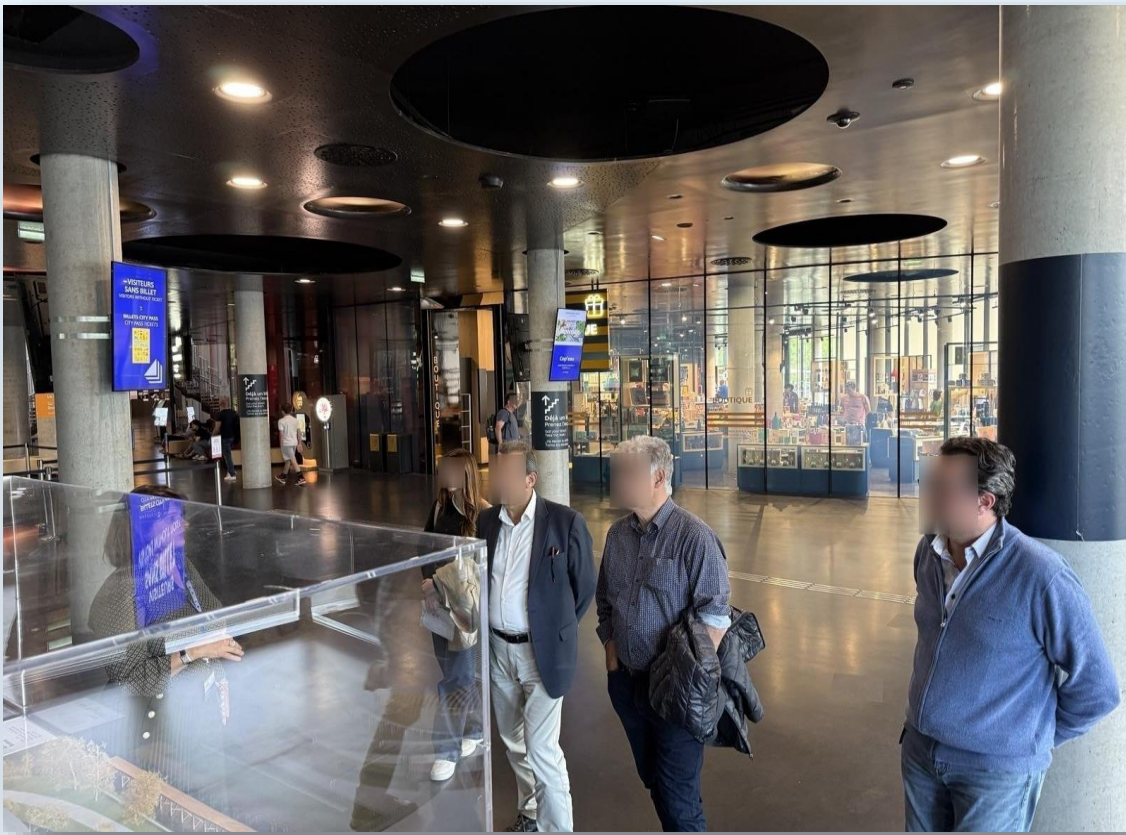


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The practice



La Cité du Vin combines exhibition, education and experience into a cohesive journey. Visitors encounter immersive digital galleries, curated wine tastings in the Salle de Dégustation and weekly themed events. The site also includes a wine book-lounge, group workshop spaces and a virtual passport system that allows guests to tailor their journey by language and interest.



Its programming attracts a **diverse audience**; international cultural tourists (54% of all visitors), local families, school groups and wine professionals. This inclusive approach makes the venue a cultural bridge between Bordeaux's local identity and global engagement.

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The practice



La Cité du Vin's **architecture is strikingly modern and symbolic**. The design is inspired by the **shape of a wine bottle and the swirling motion of wine in a glass**. This fluid form evokes movement, continuity and sensory richness.

- **Materials**: Concrete and wood (sourced from wine barrels), connecting the building's structure to the elements of winemaking.
- **Sustainability**: Designed with environmental responsibility in mind—uses natural ventilation, promotes bicycle access, and supports durable tourism.

It was one of the first institutions in its region to prioritize sustainability at such a scale.

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Local Benefits and Impact

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- La Cité du Vin attracts **over 200,000 visitors annually**, contributing significantly to Bordeaux's tourism economy through direct ticket revenue and indirect spending in nearby restaurants, hotels, and transport services.
- The site serves as a **flagship cultural venue**, drawing international attention and reinforcing Bordeaux's global brand as both a wine capital and a destination for high-quality cultural tourism.
- It stimulates year-round economic activity, as it operates **364 days a year**, reducing seasonality-related income fluctuations common in other attractions.
- The foundation structure and diversified funding model reduce financial dependency on public budgets, while revenue from events, workshops and the wine boutique helps sustain operations.

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Local Benefits and Impact

CULTURAL IMPACT

- The museum promotes **wine as an expression of global cultural heritage**, going beyond regional pride to connect visitors with millennia of human civilization and viticultural tradition.
- Its **immersive exhibitions and digital storytelling tools** make complex, intangible heritage accessible to global audiences, including those unfamiliar with wine culture.
- By combining architecture, narrative design, and experiential learning, La Cité du Vin enhances **cultural literacy** and emotional engagement in a way that traditional museums may not.
- The venue functions as a **cultural bridge** by showcasing wines, stories, and rituals from a wide range of countries and producers, reinforcing values of openness, appreciation, and exchange.
- La Cité du Vin has ambitions beyond Bordeaux, fostering **international cooperation** through long-term partnerships with wine regions and brands around the world. These collaborations support traveling exhibitions, educational initiatives, and cultural events that bring global narratives into local space and vice versa.
- By positioning Bordeaux not only as a wine capital but as a **facilitator of international cultural dialogue**, the site strengthens both regional pride and global engagement.

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Local Benefits and Impact

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- The building was designed with **sustainability in mind**, using natural materials (such as wood reclaimed from wine barrels) and a semi-open design that incorporates natural ventilation and lighting to reduce energy consumption.
- Accessibility by public transit and proximity to cycling routes supports **low-carbon visitor mobility**.
- As a built-from-scratch project on a previously underused site, it avoided major land disruption, helping integrate sustainability with urban regeneration.
- The educational programming also includes **themes of biodiversity, terroir and environmental change**, raising awareness about sustainability within the wine world itself.

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Local Benefits and Impact

SOCIAL IMPACT

- The site is run by a **public-interest foundation**, ensuring that its mission and governance align with civic values and broad cultural access, not commercial profit alone.
- It offers a **multilingual, inclusive visitor experience**, with accessibility features and programming for diverse audiences, including families, school groups and non-experts.
- Through tastings, workshops, and events, the site becomes **a social and educational space** where locals and visitors can share in Bordeaux's identity and engage in dialogue about culture and sustainability.
- La Cité du Vin also serves as a point of pride for residents; a landmark that reinforces Bordeaux's self-image as a global cultural and wine capital..

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Visitors Benefits and Impact

La Cité du Vin offers a visitor experience that is immersive, educational, and emotionally resonant. It brings together architecture, digital technology and storytelling to make the complex world of wine heritage accessible and engaging to a wide international audience, regardless of background or wine expertise.

Deep cultural immersion through storytelling

Visitors are not just presented with static displays but are taken on a narrative journey through the history, geography and rituals of wine. This approach transforms passive observation into active learning and emotional engagement, creating a more memorable and meaningful visit.

Inclusive and multilingual access

The venue provides materials and guided experiences in multiple languages, making it highly accessible to international tourists and enhancing the learning experience for non-French speakers. This reinforces the site's mission to promote wine as a global, shared cultural heritage.

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Visitors Benefits and Impact

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Multi-sensory and emotionally engaging exhibits

The use of sound, light, visuals and even scent diffusion makes the experience accessible across age groups, learning styles, and levels of prior knowledge. This ensures broader audience engagement, including children, non-experts and those who may not typically visit museums.

Opportunity for guided tastings and experiential learning

Visitors can apply what they've learned through curated tastings, led by sommeliers, that tie wine to place, season and cultural ritual. This elevates the visitor journey from information consumption to embodied, sensory understanding.

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Visitors Benefits and Impact

La Cité du Vin offers a visitor experience that is immersive, educational, and emotionally resonant. It brings together architecture, digital technology and storytelling to make the complex world of wine heritage accessible and engaging to a wide international audience, regardless of background or wine expertise.

Access to global wine cultures

Through rotating exhibitions, international partnerships, and themed events, visitors are introduced not just to Bordeaux wines, but to viticultural traditions from around the world. This global scope encourages intercultural appreciation and positions the site as a gateway to global wine heritage.

Comfortable, well-serviced environment

Architectural design, visitor flow and on-site amenities (e.g. lounges, bookshops, scenic tasting spaces) are built for comfort and reflection. This encourages longer stays, return visits, and slow tourism, aligned with sustainable tourism values.

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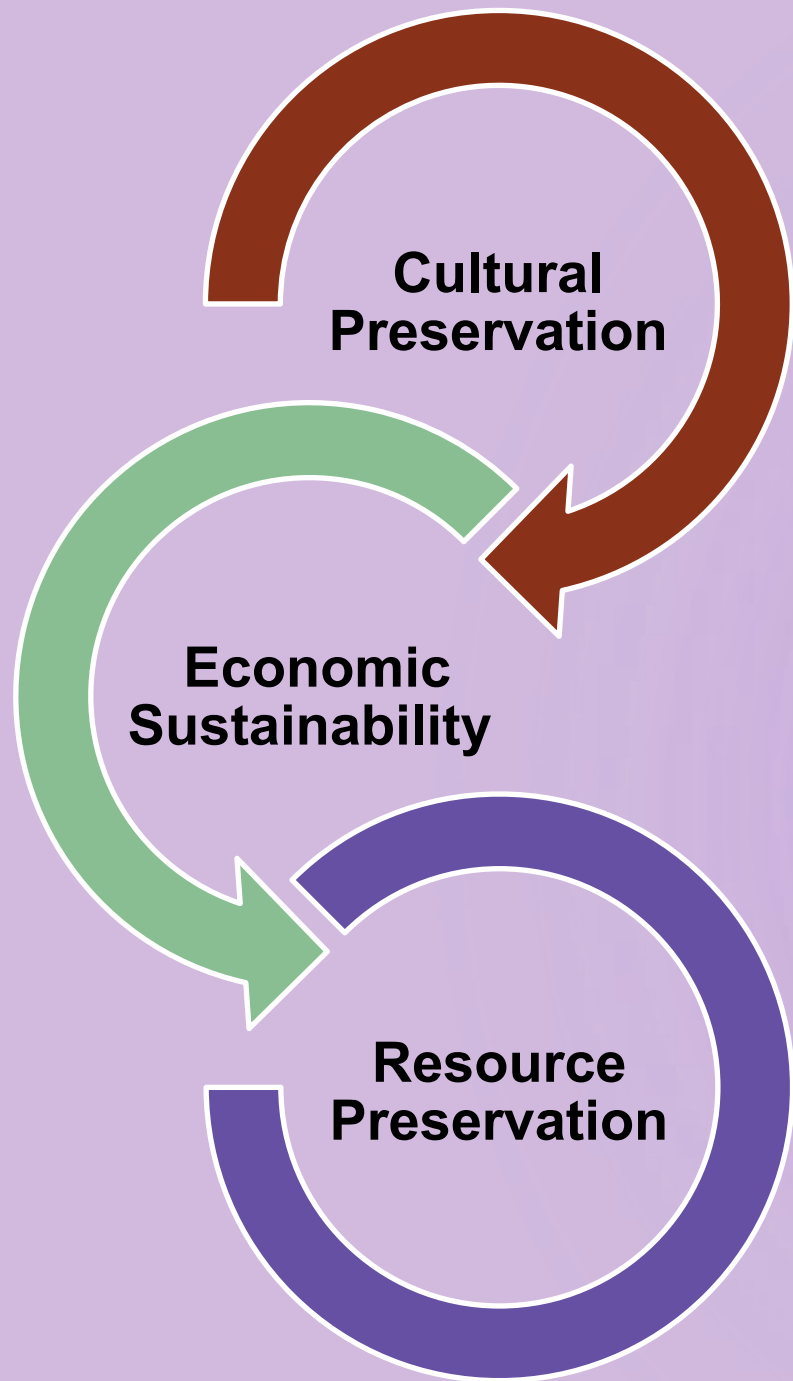


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Sustainability Measures



- La Cité du Vin promotes wine as a shared global heritage through immersive, multilingual exhibitions that connect visitors to traditions from around the world. By highlighting both renowned and lesser-known wine regions, it preserves cultural diversity and fosters international exchange while reinforcing Bordeaux's identity as a center for wine culture.
- The site operates under a mixed funding model and draws income from tickets, events, and sponsorships, ensuring long-term viability. Its partnerships with global wine producers create opportunities for co-programming and visibility, while year-round operation supports steady tourism and local economic development.
- Sustainable construction and design elements, such as natural ventilation, use of recycled materials, and minimal land disruption, reduce the site's environmental impact. Accessible by public transport and bike paths, the site encourages low-carbon mobility while promoting environmental awareness through its educational content.

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Community Involvement

La Cité du Vin may not be community-run in the traditional sense, but it plays a vital role in **connecting local identity with global narratives**. It was conceived and developed with strong **public support and civic alignment**, and continues to serve as a **cultural and social asset** for the people of Bordeaux and beyond.

As a **public-interest foundation**, the institution is guided by values of **openness, education and cultural exchange**. Its content, design, and services are tailored to be accessible to a wide audience — from school groups and local families to international tourists and wine professionals.

La Cité du Vin actively **involves the local community** by:

- Partnering with **local educational institutions** and cultural networks for learning programmes, events, and internships
- Creating space for **public events**, seasonal programming, and citizen engagement through lectures, tastings, and interactive exhibitions
- Representing the **identity and pride of Bordeaux** as a world-leading wine city, making residents feel ownership and visibility on a global stage

Though not a community-run space, La Cité du Vin **enhances public engagement** by making heritage approachable, by supporting inclusive access, and by integrating the voices of diverse wine regions — including those from the local terroir. It stands as a flagship example of how **public-facing cultural infrastructure** can connect communities to both their own traditions and those of the world.

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Monitoring, Evaluation and Financing

La Cité du Vin uses multiple mechanisms to monitor success, including visitor tracking, satisfaction surveys, and engagement analytics. Programming is adjusted based on user data and cultural trends. Repeat visits are common, highlighting visitor satisfaction and engagement.

✓ **The project was realized with a budget of €82 million, relatively modest for its scale.**

Funding sources include:

- 30% from the Bordeaux Wine Council
- 20% from private patrons and sponsors
- €4 million from EU and relaunch funds

✓ **The museum operates with a diversified income model:**

- 70% from ticket sales
- 10% from hospitality (restaurants and cafes)
- 10% from boutique sales
- from cultural programming (local events, performances)

The rest equally shared between Bordeaux Métropole and the City of Bordeaux

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Replicability and Scalability

La Cité du Vin offers a highly replicable model for developing immersive, theme-based cultural centres rooted in regional identity. Its approach by merging cultural interpretation, sustainable infrastructure and experiential design can be successfully adapted in other contexts, particularly in regions with strong agricultural, artisanal or intangible heritage.

What Makes It Replicable?

- **Thematic Focus with Global Relevance:** The museum's success lies in elevating a specific theme, such as wine, into a universal story about culture, geography and human civilization. This model can be replicated using other regionally significant topics like olive oil, cheese, tea, spices, textiles, herbal medicine etc.
- **Flexible Content Model:** The use of digital storytelling, immersive installations, and AR/VR allows for scalable exhibition strategies that are cost-effective and adaptable to various cultural topics and audience profiles.
- **Public-Private Governance Structure:** The foundation model ensures financial sustainability while aligning with public interest. It avoids over-commercialisation and can be applied in other cities where a public body partners with private donors, industry groups, and EU-level funds.

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Key Conclusions & Takeaways

- La Cité du Vin transforms a regionally specific product (i.e. wine) into a global cultural narrative, showing how food and agriculture can serve as powerful storytelling tools in tourism.
- Its approach can be replicated by cities or regions with a strong cultural product (e.g. olive oil, cheese, tea, spices) seeking to translate local identity into an immersive visitor attraction.
- The project demonstrates a sustainable model for cultural infrastructure, combining public-private funding, foundation-based governance, and long-term programming impact.
- Digital and sensory tools enrich engagement, offering immersive experiences that foster learning, repeat visits, and emotional connections with heritage.
- Its international collaborations confirm the adaptability of the concept, which balances local authenticity with global relevance.

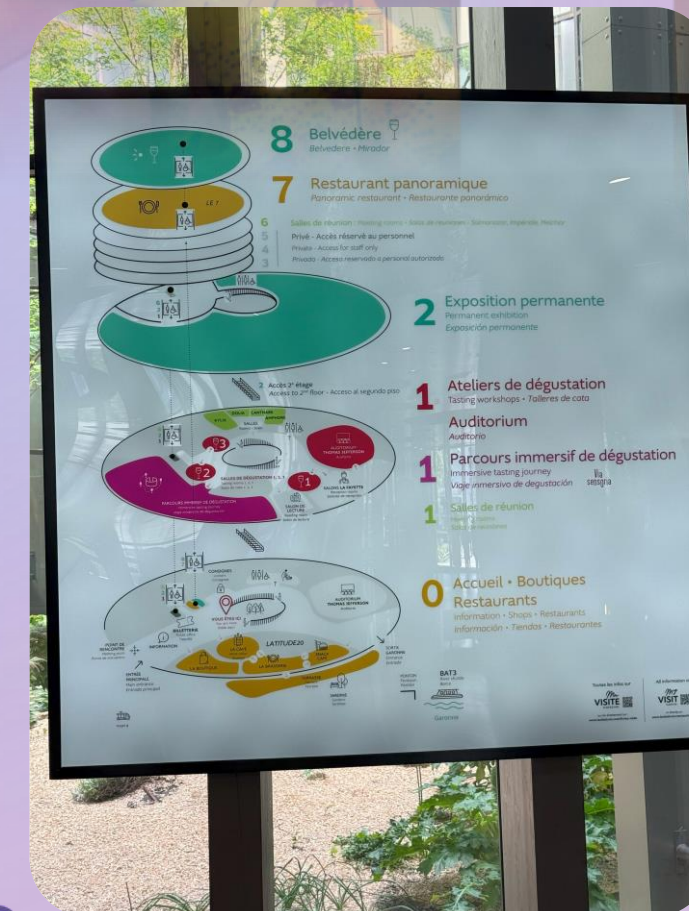
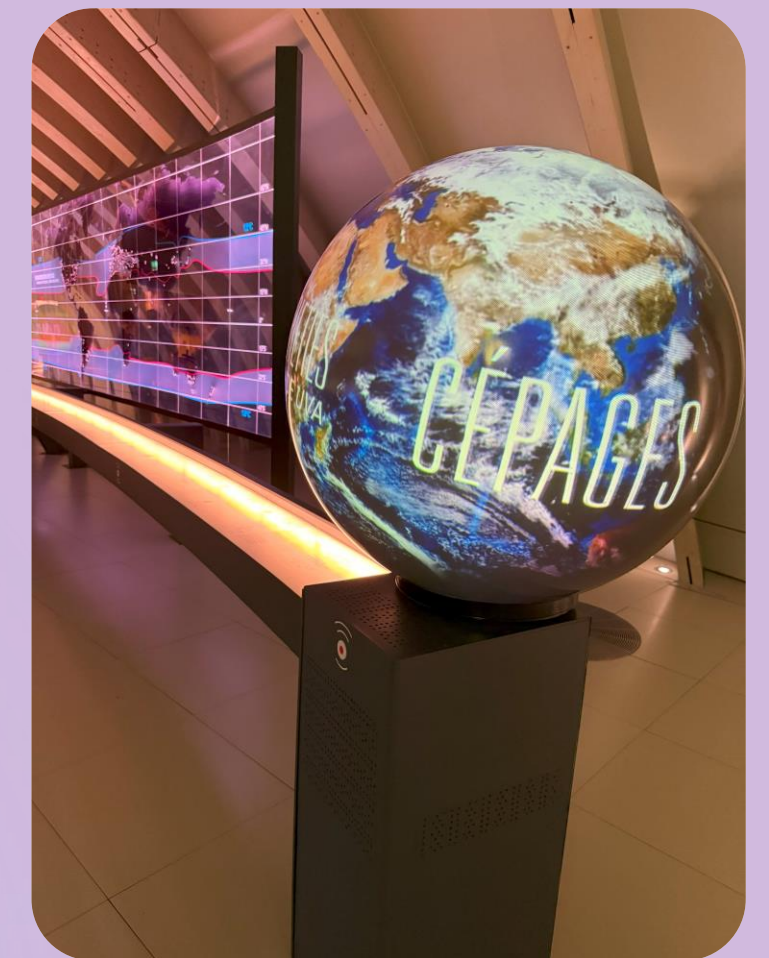
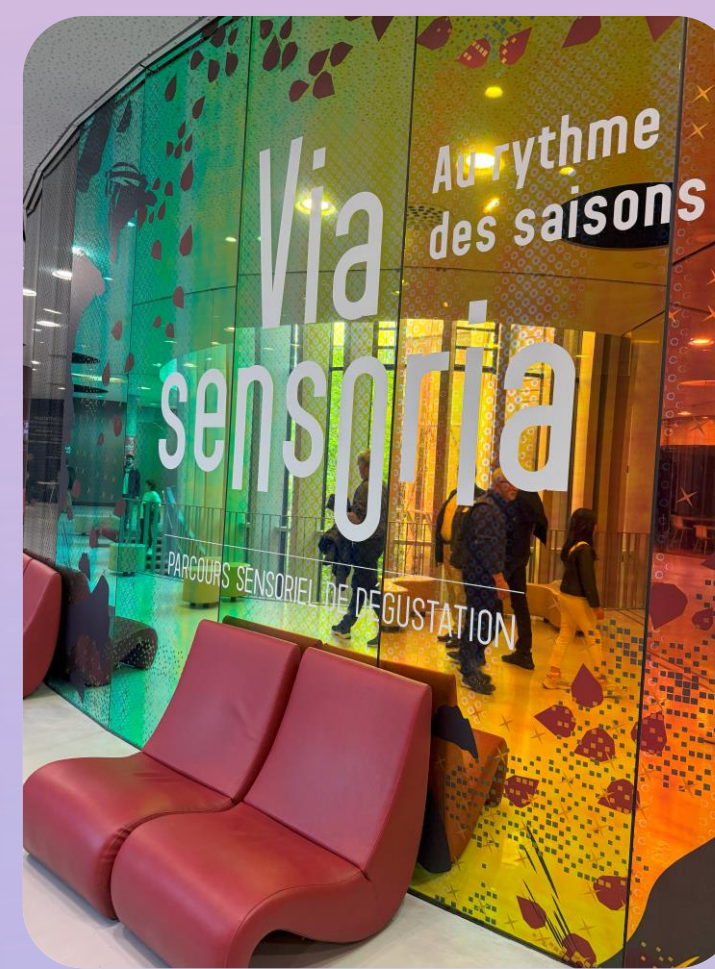
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