

## Novelda's Modernista House-Museum

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**N**ovelda lies in a strategic location forming a natural link between central Spain and the Mediterranean coast. In the early 20th century the town experienced a major economic and building boom thanks to the marble industry, spices and grapes and was declared a city by royal decree. The prosperity of its inhabitants was reflected in the building of elegant public edifices such as the Theatre, Casino and Library. Equally, splendid private houses were raised, with heavily laden eclectic façades and beautiful Modernista interiors that owe more to Franco-Belgian Art Nouveau or Viennese Secession than to Catalan neo-historicism or the rounded soft Gaudí-like forms in the Santa Maria Magdalena shrine outside the city.

The showiest of all these private houses was Casa Navarro, then known as "Pitxoxa's House" (due to the owner's nickname) and now Novelda's Modernista House-Museum. It was built in grand style in 1900-03 by the Murcian architect Pedro Cerdán Martínez

*The majority of the rooms were conceived for public relations*

(1862-1947), who left behind close to a dozen important Modernista works around the area, for a wealthy lady who wished to make a symbolic

statement of her rapid rise in society. Antònia Navarro Mira, aka La Pitxoxa, was the only child and heiress of Lluís Navarro, a country property owner who had made his fortune as a local banker and acquired a series of houses on the main street of the town, Carrer Major, with the idea of demolishing them to make way for a



*The spectacular stairwell is one of the best-known features of the house*

*L'espectacular escala és un dels trets més coneguts de la casa*