

Piazzale Michelangelo rediscovers the splendor of its historic balustrade

The one-million-euro restoration was financed by Starhotels



Florence, July 18, 2017 – An important gesture for the city of Florence and for worldwide art in general, at a time when preserving our country's cultural patrimony is more necessary than ever before.

This is the message from Piazzale Michelangelo, on the day of the official inauguration of its new balustrades, held by the **Mayor of Florence Dario Nardella** and **Elisabetta Fabri, President and CEO of Starhotels**.

The restoration plan, which involved the cast iron balustrades that surround the Piazzale and those across from the opposite piazza, brought the structure back to its original splendor, when it was designed and executed by Giuseppe Poggi between 1865 and 1875 to celebrate Florence's new role as the Capital of Italy, which saw a number renovation plans throughout the city.

The restoration, planned and carried out by the Direzione Servizi Tecnici, Servizio Belle Arti and Fabbrica di Palazzo Vecchio, began in January 2016 and was financed by Starhotels with the help of the Art Bonus for over one million euro. The Art Bonus allows companies to receive a tax break of 65 percent for donations to cultural activities. The Piazzale's restoration was picked up by Starhotels in December 2015, for their 35th birthday.

Great satisfaction on the part of **Starhotels President Elisabetta Fabri**, who stated, *"As an Italian and Florentine company, we are very proud to have contributed to the restoration of one of the most beautiful symbols of Florence. The City has demonstrated great knowledge and seriousness in bringing this worthy project to fruition in the expected timeframe. The protection and maintenance of our precious cultural heritage is fundamental for attracting good-quality international tourism, creating an added value for our cities and the basis of a booming economic future for our country."*

"When public and private meet over the common objective of benefiting the city and its heritage, they demonstrate foresight and a love for Florence," Mayor Nardella underlined. "For this, we are thankful for the generosity of Starhotels and we hope that other private institutions can follow this example towards an increasing valorization and redevelopment of our cultural and artistic masterpieces. The intervention of the balustrades comes after the decision, in 2015, to pedestrianize a vast area of the Piazzale and will be followed by a repaving of the piazza as we look towards an increasingly impressive restyling of the most beautiful and famous terrace in the city."



The restoration

The Direzione Servizi Tecnici, Servizio Belle Arti e fabbrica di Palazzo Vecchio planned and directed the restoration, with the intent of bringing the balustrades back to their original splendor. The cast iron balustrades include both those overlooking the city and those opposite Poggi's Loggia, and were in a terrible state, with dangerous circumstances that required some sections of the barriers to be closed off many times. After the careful research carried out in the historic archive of the City of Florence, the original colour of the balustrades and the details of how it was assembled were determined. The restoration consisted of dismantling and numbering of every single piece, column and cast iron cymatium, packing and transferring the pieces to the laboratory, removing the extensively oxidized areas, repairing damaged parts, and refurbishing missing or unrecoverable pieces. The work was then sandblasted, stuccoed and treated in an immersion bath of zinc-based primer in order to protect both the internal and external parts of the pieces. The final paint coating, applied with a spray, restored the original colour, which was made to look like pietraforte.

Starhotels has always chosen to celebrate its birthdays with donations both big and small that favour the cities where its hotels are located.

Starhotels

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