

Villa “La Saracena”

Project architect: Luigi Moretti (Roma 1907 - Isola di Capraia 1973)

Built in: 1955-1957

Location: Santa Marinella (Roma)

Renovation: 2016 - 2020

Architect: Architect Paolo Verdeschi, with architect Flavio Fiorucci, architect Giulio Valerio Mancini, architect Giulia Seppiacci.

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photo 1: street at present



photo 2: front garden at present

The first challenge of the restoration of the villa “La Saracena” was to identify the correct and most adequate methodical *iter*. The debate on the matter of modern restoration is alive and various, with numerous interventions carried out on important architectural projects which are very useful examples but always linked to the uniqueness of the project, to its history, to its building characteristics, and its degree of disrepair. It is always parameters, principles and theories of modern restoration, both critically and scientifically understood, that correspond to those elaborated for the traditional intervention on monument conservation: distinctiveness, minimal intervention, potential reversibility, respect for authenticity and historic materials, physical-chemical compatibility of the additional parts, recognition under both the historic and aesthetic necessities of the project.

In the case of the villa "La Saracena" all of the above principles have been followed to rebuild the original architectural look, adopting the adequate intervention to the various areas to restore.

1) Conservative restoration:

- External plasters detached (chemical analysis, study of the implementation technique, cleaning, reinforcement of the detached parts, reinstallation of missing parts with the same materials);
- External fixtures, windows and shutters (analysis of the state of disrepair, cleaning, restoration - where possible - of the rotten parts with the wood retrieved from the living room windows, painting. Cleaning of the metalware (handles, joints, locks);
- Reinforcement of the internal flooring (detachment of the screed from slab);
- Restoration of the kitchen furniture;

2) Reinstatement of the damaged parts following the original project:

- Replacement of the entire bearing structure of the windows and of the living room sun-shading panel ("*veletta*") and gallery;
- Restoration of the sun-shading panel ("*veletta*") according to the original project;
- Restoration of all the living room windows according to the original project.

3) Restoration, according to likelihood, of the destroyed parts:

- Restoration of the shading wood beams facing the sea.

4) Bringing back the original colors discovered during the restoration works:

- Handrail of stairs;
- Ground floor walls;
- Basement walls

Photo 3: "La Saracena" in 1960





Condition of the villa before the restoration in 2016.



Condition of the villa after the restoration in 2020.

Villa "La Saracena", privately owned, is located in Santa Marinella, a small seaside resort near Rome, very popular in the '50s and '60s, which nowadays is revitalized only in the three summer months. The opening of the "Saracena" to visits organized monthly by openhouseroma.org, has seen an increase in the flow of tourists in Santa Marinella even in the winter months. The reuse of the villa for cultural events fits in well and contributes to the enhancement of the local cultural context also from an architectural point of view. It should be noted that Santa Marinella, with the near municipalities of Cerveteri, Tolfa and Allumiere have been for 2020 Cities of Culture of the Lazio Region and Cultural Pole of Etruria Meridionale, where we remember the Necropolis of Banditaccia, UNESCO site, the Castle of Santa Severa and the archaeological area of Pyrgi . Now Villa "La Saracena" plays it's role perfectly.