

PRESS TEXT

**Conservative restoration of the *Grotto of Diana*
at the Villa d'Este gardens in Tivoli**

Through the synergy between FENDI, Roman luxury Maison, and Villa Adriana and Villa d'Este, works for conservative restoration of the *Grotto of Diana* will start in the coming months at the Estense Garden in Tivoli. The aim is to fully recover the legibility of this decorative cycle and to reopen one of the site's most characteristic and crucial locations. Particular attention will be paid to improving motor accessibility to the *Grotto*, as well as meeting the needs of people with visual, hearing and cognitive disabilities through a dedicated path.

Located in a particularly suggestive and panoramic point of Villa d'Este, elected UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001, the *Grotto of Diana* is a cruciform plan nymphaeum located in the Cardinal's Walk. Built between 1570 and 1572 by Paolo Calandrino, probably inspired by Pirro Ligorio, the architect who designed the Villa and park, the space is dedicated to *honest pleasure* and chastity personified in Diana, goddess huntress symbolizing virtue. Inside, mythological episodes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are depicted along with Tritons, Nereids and Caryatids canephora. The entire surface of the grotto is covered with a rich and complex polychrome and polymateric decoration (stuccoes, glass pastes, shells, glazed majolica tiles, stone materials). The *Grotto of Diana* has been an important reference model fundamental for the development of grottoes and nymphaea in European gardens during the 16th and 17th centuries. Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este himself was particularly fond of strolling through these places, which condensed an ideal synthesis of the peculiar values of late 16th century Mannerist culture.

"The overall conservative intervention," - says Andrea Bruciati, director of the Villa Adriana and Villa d'Este Autonomous Institute - "aims at ensuring the protection of this heritage by working on the decorated surfaces as well as on the adjacent structures and paths, to fully recover the legibility of the decorative cycle. The objective is to reopen to the public one central junction of the visitor route and an architectural and decorative space that is essential to the understanding of Villa d'Este itself."

"It is an honour for FENDI to extend its Roman borders to Villa D'Este in Tivoli, acknowledged worldwide as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, an iconic place that represents a masterpiece of the Italian-style garden with a vast concentration of fountains and water features, an element strongly celebrated by FENDI. This initiative renews our commitment in protecting and enhancing Italian cultural heritage, which in the past has led us to the restoration of symbolic places in Rome to preserve beauty for future generations." declares Serge Brunschwig, Chairman and CEO of FENDI.

The restoration is in line with the primary objectives of protecting and enhancing the cultural heritage set by the director of the Villa Adriana and Villa d'Este Autonomous Institute, Andrea Bruciati, who strongly soughted this partnership with a company connected to the pursuit of beauty such as FENDI. In the past, FENDI has already played a leading role in similar initiatives with the '*FENDI for Fountains*' project restoring various emblematic fountains in Rome like the Trevi Fountain, Complex of the Four Fountains, Mostra dell'Acqua Paola, the fountains del Mosè and del Peschiera and Mostra della nuova Acqua Vergine until the recent *Temple of Venus and Rome* atop the Palatine Hill.

