

Villa Mangiacane



A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY



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Preface

Villa Mangiacane's compelling history dates back to the late 14th century. The villa was built by the Machiavelli family and designed by Michelangelo, the famed Italian sculptor, painter and architect of the High Renaissance.

Because of the historical significance of the villa's owners and architects, the original building plans for improvements are housed at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence.

The Machiavelli family sold the villa in 1646 to the distinguished aristocratic Mazzei family. The Mazzei were the longest serving owners of the villa, spanning over three centuries until the mid 20th century.

In 1956, the villa was sold to Guidi da Bagno, whose origins are from an ancient noble family. Bagno held the property for only two decades until 1979 when it was bought by the di Leo family.

In 2001, the property was finally acquired by its current owners, who invested in a multi-million dollar renovation plan to restore the villa to its former splendour. The restoration was completed in 2007 and the villa opened as a small luxury hotel.

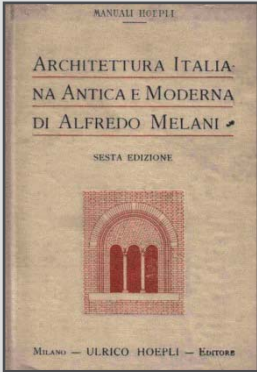
This book was compiled to provide a glimpse into the fascinating life story of this historic building and some of the famous figures associated with it, through the tumultuous historical events it has not only witnessed, but survived. If only its walls could speak, what tales could they tell?

1393-1646

The Machiavelli Family



Portrait of Michelangelo Buonarroti, the villa's original architect.



In 1884, Alfredo Melani (1859–1928), Italy’s most respected historian of the time published a book titled “*Architettura Italiana Antica e Moderna*” (pictured left) in which he confirmed that the villa is the work of Michelangelo.

“*The Chianti Treasures*” written by A. Chiostrini Mannini and published in 1966, also refers to Michelangelo as the architect of the villa.

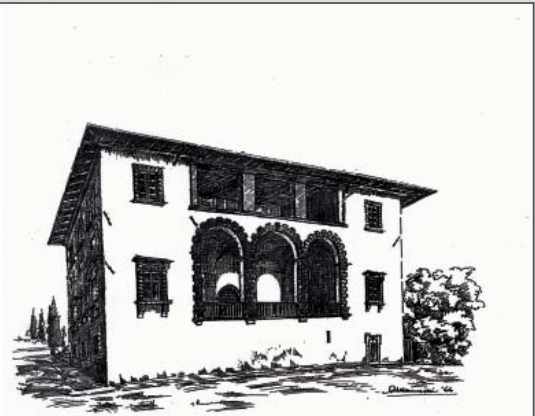
A notable architect

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564)

Michelangelo is considered one of the greatest artists of all time. His versatility plus the volume and quality of the work he produced as a sculptor, painter, architect, poet and engineer, rank him in the highest order of Renaissance artists whose work exerted unparalleled influence on the development of Western art.

He was born Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni in Caprese, Tuscany, and as a young man was apprenticed to the esteemed painter Ghirlandaio in Florence before studying sculpture in the workshop of Bertoldo di Giovanni.

Under the patronage of the Medici family he produced some of the most famous works of art in existence.



Il Palazzo già Mangiacane

An illustration of the villa from Mannini's book published in 1966.

1393

Buoninsegna Machiavelli and Lorenzo di Fillipo inherit the derelict Castle of Montesertoli in the Val di Pesa.

1428

Bernardo Machiavelli, a doctor of law, inherits the property from his cousin, Totto, Buoninsegna Machiavelli’s son.

1527

Niccolò Machiavelli dies in the family home in Florence on 21 June.

The subsequent rise in the family’s wealth and social standing enables them to purchase further properties including a ‘*property on the Roman Road, St Andrea*’, the site of the present day villa, from the then powerful Pitti clan.

Niccolò Machiavelli inherits the estate from his father, Bernardo.

1511

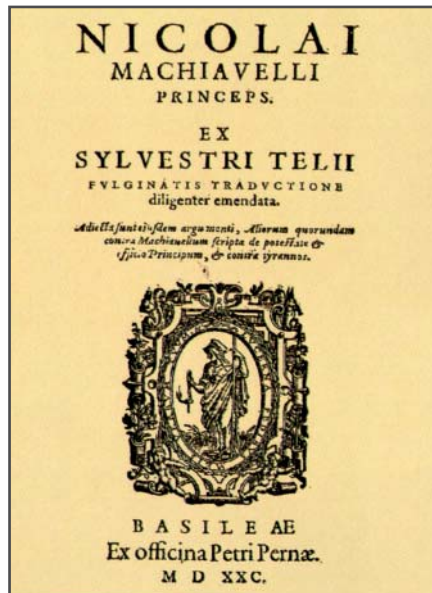
From the early 1400’s, the Machiavelli family were one of the most respected families of Oltr’Arno. The family was registered in the Comune of San Casciano in Val di Pesa and the Village of Sant’Andrea in Percussina as owners of the estate known as Mangiacane, the site of the present day estate and villa.

The original villa, majestically situated on top of a hill, was designed by the Renaissance master, **Michelangelo Buonarroti**, whose father held an official position in San Casciano. Michelangelo designed several grand villas of bold elegance in the Florentine Province with a unique style and an eye for perfect proportions.

The most well-known son of the Machiavelli family is the writer **Niccolò Machiavelli** who was born to Bernardo Machiavelli and Bartolommea de’ Nelli in 1469. Machiavelli is widely



Detail from a portrait of Niccolò Machiavelli.



A Latin translation of 'The Prince' dated 1580.

considered to be the founder of modern political theory, and his most famous work '*The Prince*' was written at his studio in Albergaccio which is connected to the Mangiacane estate.

In 1498 Machiavelli was appointed Second Chancellor and Secretary to the Council of Ten in the new Florentine Republic, a role in which he travelled widely as a political intermediary to various courts and came into contact with many powerful figures of the time. It

was during this period that he was able to closely observe the workings of power and statecraft and this invaluable experience later informed his political theories.

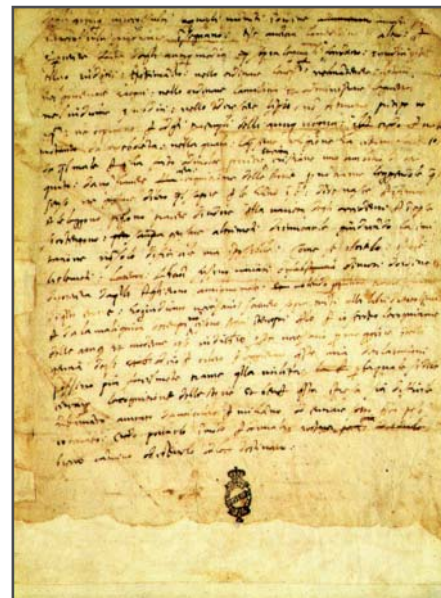
Amongst other things, he was passionate about protecting the autonomy of his beloved Florence and felt it was necessary to remove their reliance on hiring mercenary armies. With this in mind, he set about forming a militia drawn from the civilian population.

After the Medici family returned to power in 1512, he was briefly imprisoned on suspicion of conspiring against the new regime. Although cleared, he was subsequently exiled from political life and left Florence to live at the estate with his wife,

Marietta Corsini, their four sons and two daughters.

His letters and other writings from that time describe the vineyards, olive groves and accommodation on the estate. Although it was difficult for him to have lost his political position and status – a role that he had relished and in which excelled – his new life at Mangiacane enabled him to reflect and draw on his experiences to produce the exceptional writings for which he has since become highly regarded.

A gregarious character, insatiably curious about the world and people around him, he was a well-known figure at the local inn that was connected to the estate by an internal path. In a letter he describes his walk to the inn:



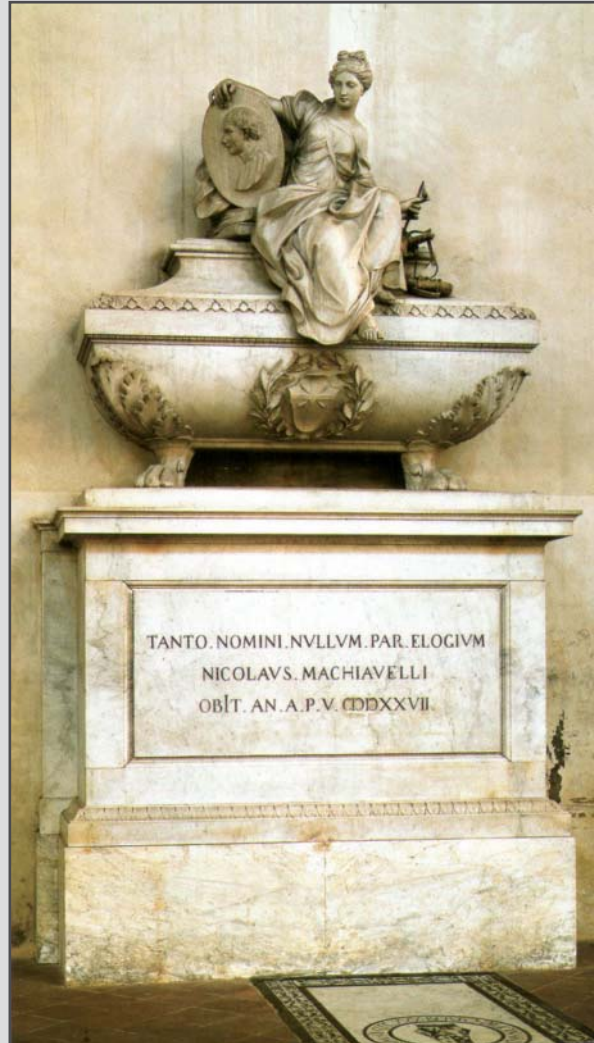
Handwritten manuscript page of Machiavelli's '*Discourses*', 1519.

"Then I make my way along the road toward the inn, I chat with passersby, I ask for their local news, I learn about various matters, I observe mankind: the variety of its taste, the diversity of its fancies."

Later in his life when his political exile was eased, he was once again called upon to undertake tasks and diplomatic missions that took him away from his home and family. His sons would manage the estate during his many absences.



A view from the villa of the village of Sant'Andrea in Percussina, where Niccolò Machiavelli wrote '*The Prince*' at his studio in Albergaccio which was connected to Mangiacane by a private footpath.



The tomb monument of Niccolò Machiavelli, Santa Croce, Florence.

Interesting fact: The inscription *Tanto nomini nullum par elogium* (The greatness of this name is not gauged by praise), was added to Machiavelli's tomb on the 300th anniversary of his death by a British admirer.

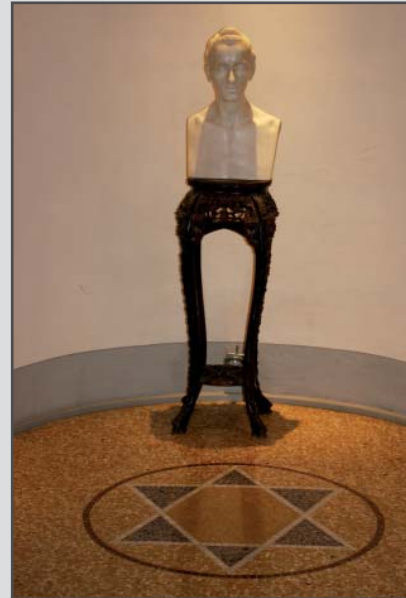
Niccolò Machiavelli died in the family home in Florence on June 21, 1527 and was laid to rest in the Basilica of Santa Croce (Basilica of the Holy Cross).

Otherwise known as the Tempio dell'Itale Glorie (Temple of the Italian Glories), this remarkable Florentine church is also the burial place of Michelangelo, the villa's architect, as well as many other illustrious Italians.

The star design that is located on the flooring close to the villa's study was inspired by the church's 19th century facade designed by Niccolò Matas. A number of other esteemed artists and architects including Giotto, Brunelleschi and Vasari, had a hand in the design and features of the Basilica over time.



The Basilica of Santa Croce where Niccolò Machiavelli was laid to rest.



The star design in the floor of the villa's study.

Notable and notorious

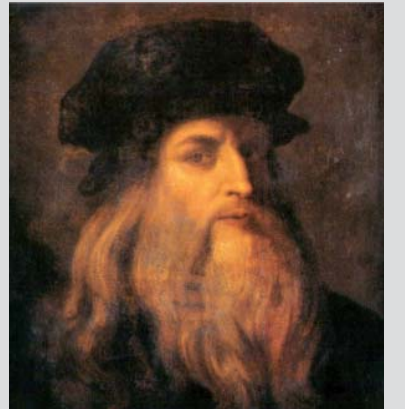
Niccolò Machiavelli's deep involvement in the social and political life of the time bought him into close contact with many influential people of the Renaissance period.

Through his close association with notable and notorious figures, including Leonardo da Vinci, the Borgia, Medici and Vespucci families, he was both witness and active participant in the course of historical events. The lives and achievements of these individuals were irrevocably intertwined.



Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)

Leonardo da Vinci developed a plan to make the Arno River navigable which would turn Florence into a seaport and irrigate the Arno valley. As an administrator responsible for Florentine military and foreign policy, Machiavelli tried to implement the first phase of this project in the early 1500s to divert the river from Pisa in order to deprive that city of water and thereby win a war that had frustrated his fellow citizens for a decade.



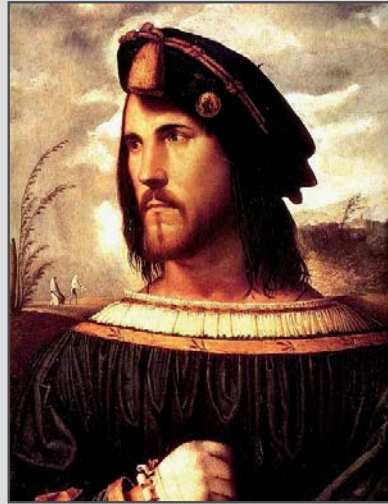
Portrait of Niccolò Machiavelli, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

The Borgia family

The Borgia family were a dominant political force in the early Renaissance period in Italy and Machiavelli's close contact with Cesare Borgia had a profound effect on him.

Cesare Borgia (1475-1507)

During the latter half of 1502, Machiavelli, Leonardo da Vinci and Cesare Borgia were fatefully connected during Borgia's military campaign, backed by his father Pope Alexander VI, to carve out his own personal fiefdom in north-eastern Italy,



A more disparate trio can hardly be imagined. The artist da Vinci, whose role in the campaign was as chief military engineer, was ultimately demoralised by Borgia's brutal tactics and methods.

Machiavelli, as diplomat and emissary from the Florentine authorities (who were keen to ascertain how Borgia's territorial ambitions might threaten the region), spent much time with Borgia. His views on political power were heavily influenced by this association as he recognised the

effectiveness of the Borgia family's methods in seizing and maintaining power. His seminal book '*The Prince*' is said to be inspired by Cesare Borgia's life.

Lucrezia Borgia (1480-1519)

Cesare Borgia's sister Lucrezia is often depicted as a conniving *femme fatale* although it is uncertain to what extent she was complicit in the machinations practiced by her father and brothers, who arranged her three consecutive marriages to powerful men, and their subsequent banishments or assassinations once they had outlived their usefulness to the Borgia family.



The Vespucci family

Niccolo was well acquainted with the Vespucci family from an early age as they were close neighbours and friends during his childhood in Florence.

Agostino Vespucci

Agostino Vespucci became a chancellery official, clerk and assistant to Machiavelli, amongst others. He is most well known for identifying the model of da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* as

Lisa del Giocondo in a comment written in the margin of a book which was discovered by a German academic in 2005. The credible association between Agostino, Machiavelli and da Vinci at the time, has convinced experts of the authenticity of the identification.

Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512)



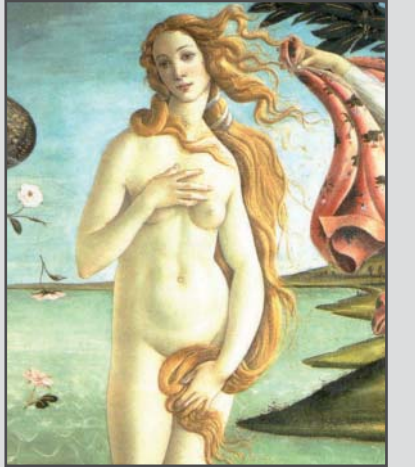
Agostino's cousin, Amerigo was the famous explorer, navigator and cartographer after whom America came to be named. Machiavelli, da Vinci and Amerigo moved in the same scientific and republican circles.

Amerigo was tutored by the renowned cartographer Toscanelli. His fellow pupils were Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de Medici (who became Machiavelli's patron, sponsoring his election into his political posts in 1498) and the future *Gonfalonier* of the Florentine Republic (and Machiavelli's close political partner), Piero Soderini.

Di Pierfrancesco de Medici was also instrumental in sending Amerigo to Spain where he met Columbus and later embarked on his own voyages of discovery. Amerigo wrote many letters to Di Pierfrancesco de Medici and Soderini describing his voyages to the 'new world'.

Simonetta Vespucci (1453-1476)

Simonetta was married to Piero, Amerigo's cousin. She was renowned for her great beauty and is thought to have inspired many prominent artists in Florence, including Botticelli, who is reputed to have modelled his famous painting '*The Birth of Venus*' in her image.



The Medici family



The Medicis were a wealthy banking family in Florence who consolidated their power through patronage and favour. They were well known for supporting intellectual, artistic, cultural and scholarly life in Florence.

The 16th century popes Leo X (pictured left), Clement VII and

Pius IV were all drawn from the Medici family.

Machiavelli was born into a time when the Medici family's *de facto* rule was entrenched and Florence was dominated by the patronage of Lorenzo de Medici, who was known as Lorenzo the Magnificent (pictured right).



He witnessed the Medici dynasty's expulsion from Florence in 1494 after the inept rule of Lorenzo's son, Piero, and his own political career subsequently flourished in the new Florentine republic but he fell out of favour when the Medici's returned to power in 1512.

As with the Borgia family, the Medici also influenced Machiavelli's political theories.

Lorenzo de Medici, Duke of Urbino (1492-1519)

When Machiavelli fell out of favour in the volatile politics of the time, Lorenzo de Medici, Duke of Urbino was responsible for ordering his imprisonment and torture. Machiavelli sought to persuade the



Medicis that his experience in politics and knowledge of the ancients would make him an invaluable advisor, but they mistrusted his intelligence and suspected him of conspiring against them.

Catherine de Medici (1519-1589)

Catherine de Medici was Lorenzo's daughter. Her uncle Pope Clement VII orchestrated her marriage to Henry of Orléans, who became heir to the French throne after the death of his older brother, Francis.

After Henry's death, Catherine was thrust into the political arena as the queen mother of her three young sons who all became kings of France during her lifetime. She had significant power in French politics during this time, and is known to have been influenced by Machiavelli's ideas.

She was held partly responsible for the St. Bartholomew massacre in 1572 which started in Paris and quickly spread to other regions. Thousands of Huguenots were killed which ultimately led to their global diaspora when they left France to settle in the Cape Colony amongst other places, to escape persecution.



Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540)

Francesco Guicciardini was a prominent Italian historian and statesman and close friend to Machiavelli on both a personal and intellectual level. He was a regular visitor to Sant'Andrea and the two maintained a lively correspondence until the end of Machiavelli's life. Both innovative thinkers, they clearly influenced each other's ideas and writings.

17th century descendants of the Guicciardini-Strozzi family were united in marriage in London to the Marlborough's, the family of Sir Winston Churchill.



Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574)



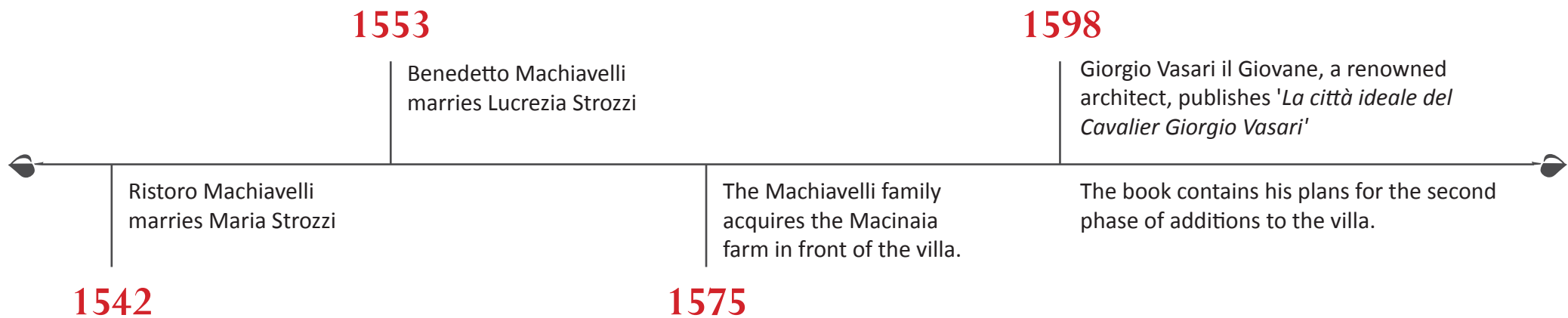
Vasari was a painter, architect, writer and historian most well-known for his seminal work *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, still considered to be the most important source book on Italian art.

Arriving in Florence at the age

of thirteen to receive a wide-ranging humanist education, he came into close contact with Machiavelli and Michelangelo amongst others, who inspired his style and ideas. Among his most important projects as an architect was the Uffizi Gallery in Florence.

Interestingly, his nephew Giorgio Vasari il Giovane (1562-1625), who was heavily influenced by his uncle's work, also became a sought-after architect in his time and was commissioned by the Machiavelli family to design an addition to the villa at Mangiacane, the plans for which are now housed in the Uffizi.



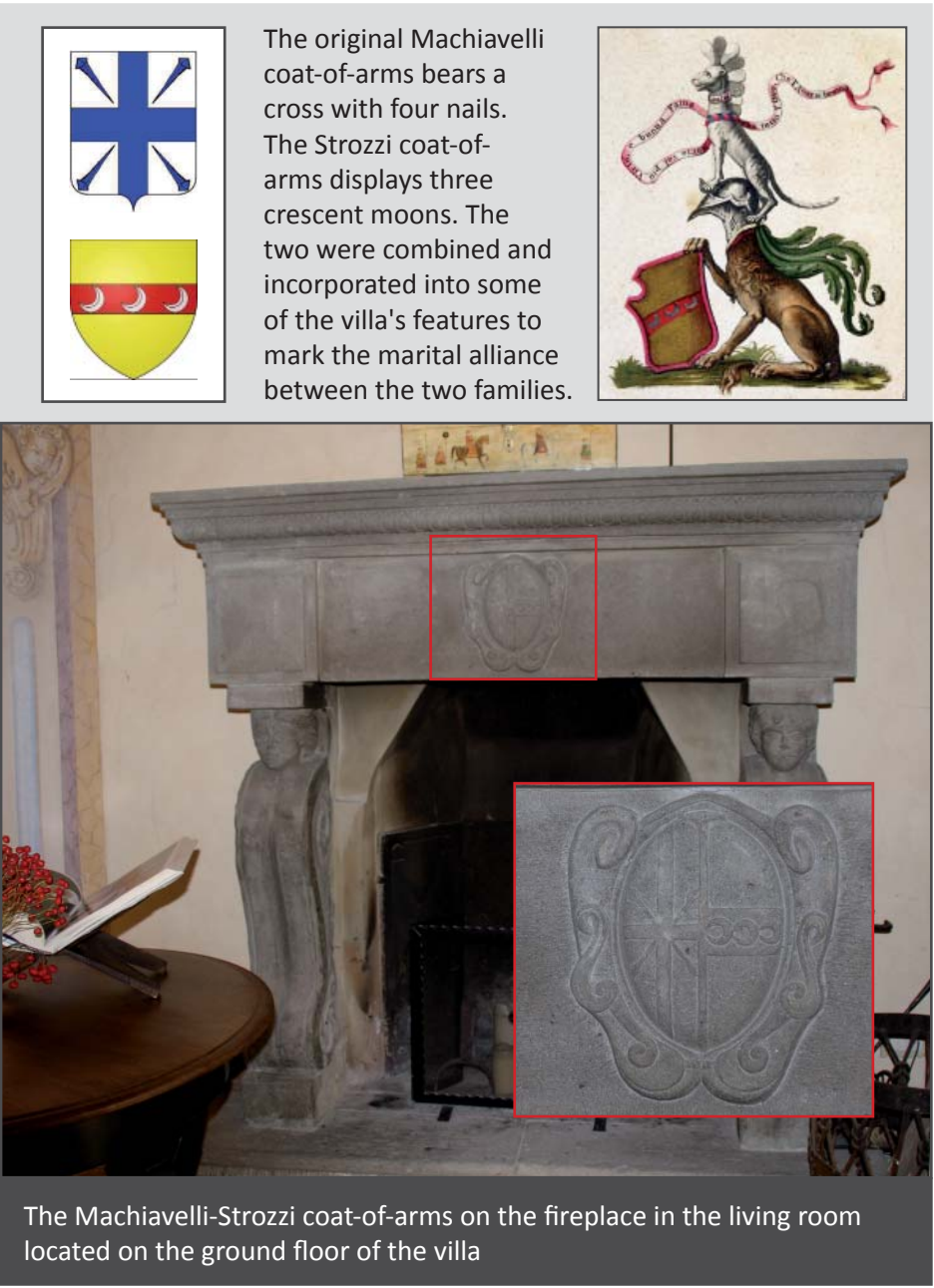


Significant alterations were made to the villa during the mid 16th century and features added during this period are evidence of a marital alliance between the Machiavelli and Strozzi families. The Strozzi's were a wealthy Florentine banking family who rivalled the powerful Medici's.

Ristoro Machiavelli (1507-1553) married Maria Strozzi in 1542 and Benedetto Machiavelli (1506-1575) married Lucrezia Strozzi in 1553. It is unclear which of the two brothers commissioned the renovations to the villa, but records show that in 1557 Benedetto Machiavelli was in debt to Piero da Bernardino, a mason from San Casciano, for work performed at the property, which may indicate that he was primarily responsible.

Recently restored painted frescoes can be dated to this period and a combined Machiavelli-Strozzi coat-of-arms was also incorporated into some of the villa's features. The latter can be seen on the keystone of the central arch of the ground floor

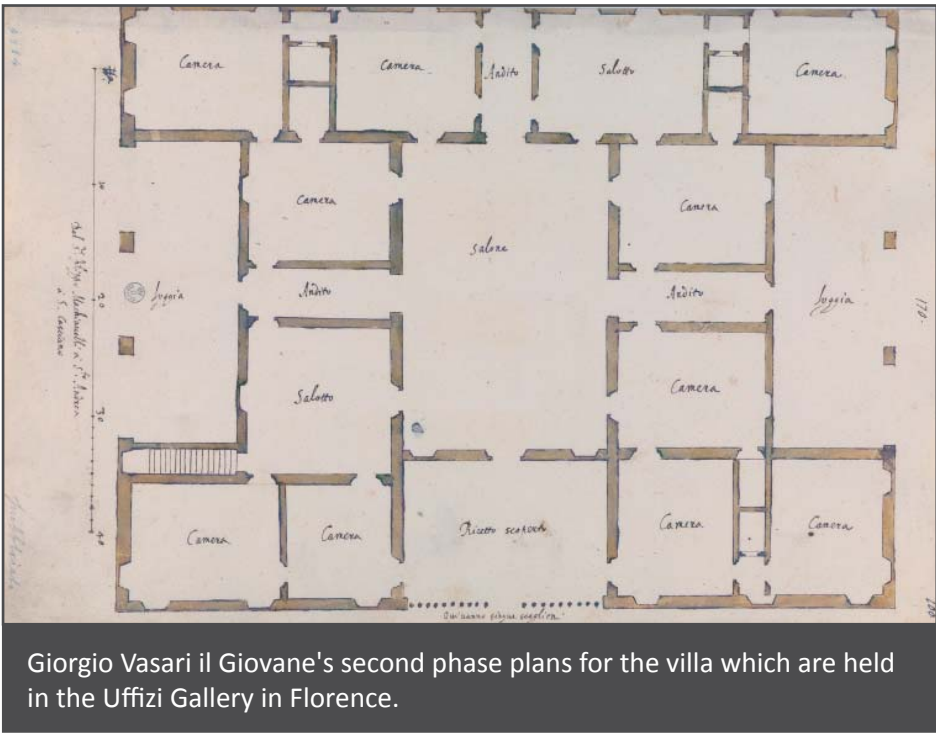
terrace and on the fireplace located on the ground floor of the villa. The cross with four nails from the original Machiavelli family coat-of-arms is depicted on the left hand side with the Strozzi coat-of-arms on the right.



The Machiavelli family continued to acquire other large properties and villas in Sant'Andrea, including the Macinaia farm in front of the villa in 1575.

Filippo Machiavelli commissioned architect Giorgio Vasari il Giovane (1562-1625) to design a new addition to the villa with a mirrored wing. Vasari was the nephew of the esteemed painter, architect and art historian, Giorgio Vasari (1511-1527).

Vasari also designed a second phase adding on a wing which was not built. He included this plan in his published work, '*La città ideale del Cavalier Giorgio Vasari*' in 1598. The original plan is preserved in the Uffizi.





The piano lounge. The restored painted frescoes in the villa date back to the mid 16th century when they were commissioned to mark a marital alliance between the Machiavelli family and the influential Strozzi family.

1614

Filippo Machiavelli purchases the Certo farm adjacent to Mangiacane.

1624

Filippo Machiavelli dies, leaving his assets, including the Mangiacane Estate, to his children.

Filippo Machiavelli purchases the Trebbio estate and the properties are consolidated.

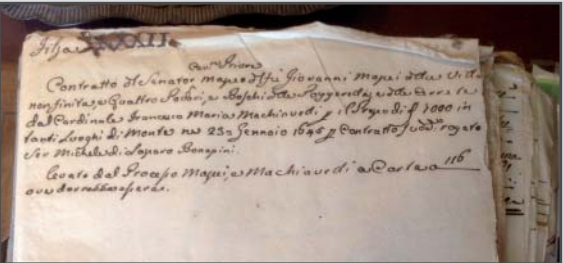
Villa Mangiacane and its four adjoining estates are sold to Senator Mazzeo Mazzei, ending more than two centuries of ownership by the Machiavelli family.

1618

From 1614 to 1618 Filippo Machiavelli continued to expand and consolidate the property when he purchased the adjacent Certo farm and Trebbio estate. After his death in 1624 his assets, including the Mangiacane Estate, were bequeathed to his children.

1646

Ownership of the Mangiacane estate by the Machiavelli family finally ended in 1646 when it was sold by Cardinal Francesco Maria Machiavelli to Senator Mazzeo Mazzei.



The original sale contract of Mangiacane between Machiavelli and Mazzei, 1646. (preserved by private Archive Mazzei at Fonterutoli)



Cardinal Francesco Maria Machiavelli (1608-1653)

Francesco Maria Machiavelli was made a cardinal in 1641 by Pope Urban VIII. He was the nephew of cardinal Lorenzo Magalotti and the cousin of cardinals Francesco Barberini the elder and Antonio Barberini the younger. He was bishop of Ferrara from 1638 until his death in 1653.

With his death, this branch of the family was extinguished and the inheritance was passed onto the Rangoni of Modena bearing the name Rangoni-Machiavelli.

1646-1956

The Mazzei Family

1646

Senator Mazzeo Mazzei purchases Villa Mangiacane and its four adjoining estates.	Zanobi's son, Filippo, inherits the estate after his father's death.
Mazzeo Mazzei dies without heirs, leaving his property to his nephew, Zanobi Mazzei.	Filippo Mazzei, who became a well-known physician, libertarian and close friend to Thomas Jefferson, was born in this year.

1649

The Mazzei family name is synonymous with the history of winemaking in Tuscany. Also active participants in the cultural, social and commercial life of the region, their name appears on official records as far back as the early 11th century.

The Mangiacane Estate was acquired by Senator Mazzeo Mazzei (1590-1649) in 1646.

Mazzeo had been appointed Senator in 1637 by Ferdinand II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and in 1639 he was sent to Spain to the court of King Philip IV. He was also a minister and general superintendent for the Grand Duchy of Mount Mercy.

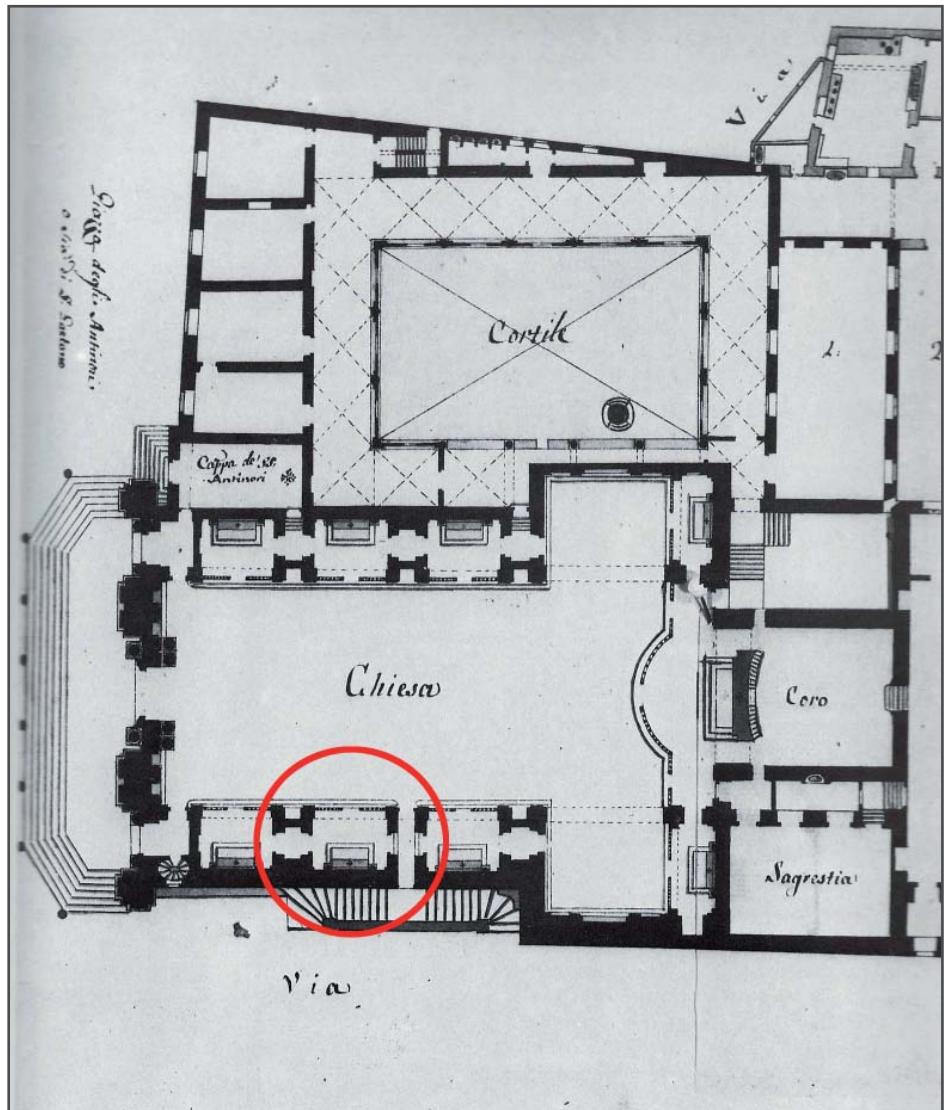
When he died in 1649, the senator was buried in a chapel in the St. Michele and Gaetano Church in Florence which was completed in 1642. It is a great honour to be buried in a chapel and he was assigned the second chapel on the right side of the main nave.

1660

1730



The replanted vineyards at the Mangiacane Estate.



Plan of the ground floor of the St. Michele and Gaetano Church in Florence that is the burial place of Senator Mazzeo Mazzei, the first of the Mazzei family to own the Mangiacane estate. The red circle shows the position of Mazzei chapel on the right hand side of the main nave.

Having died without any heirs, Mazzeo Mazzei left the property to his nephew, Zanobi Mazzei (1625-1660).

During his ownership of the estate, Zanobi modified the stone window surrounds on the first floor of the villa by surmounting them with a triangular pediment. He also affixed the Mazzei coat of arms above the door of the second villa that is now known as Villa Mazzei.

After his death in 1660, the estate was passed on to his son Filippo and the property remained in the Mazzei family for the following three centuries.



The original Mazzei coat-of-arms bore the image of three wooden hammers, but this was changed in the 14th century to display three iron maces.



1



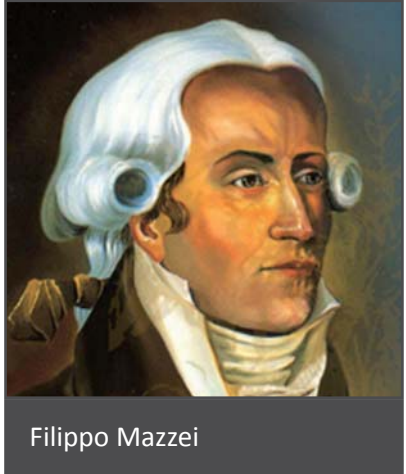
2



3

1. Mazzei coat of arms located at the entrance of the barricaia (the ancient cellar in the villa basement)
2. The coat-of-arms at the Villa Mazzei reception.
3. Trigramma di San Bernardino da Siena on the frame to the entrance of the private chapel. This emblem was commonly found on Mazzei owned estates.

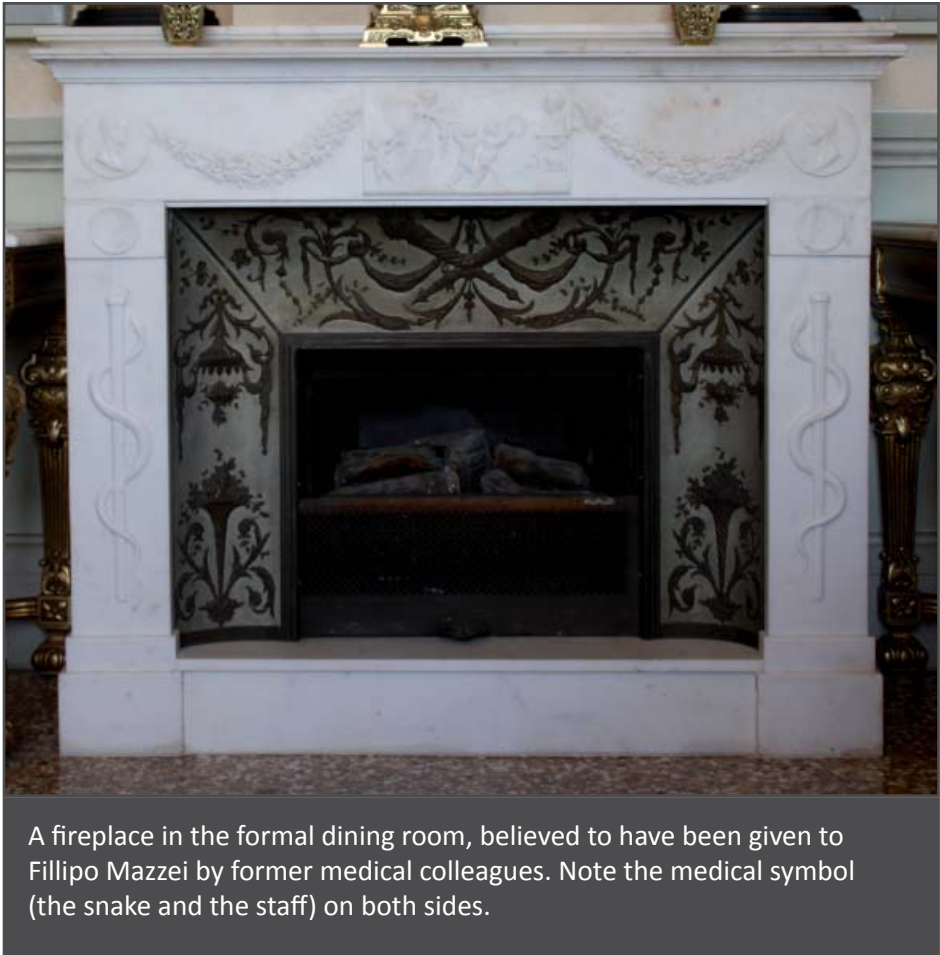
Not much is known about the history of villa in the intervening years until the late 19th century, although it is thought to have been in the possession of another **Filippo Mazzei** (1730-1816), a doctor and promoter of liberty, who was closely associated with the American founding father and president Thomas Jefferson.



Filippo apparently left Florence for the estate after an argument with his brother, Jacopo, regarding the management of the family's assets. A fireplace, currently in the villa's formal dining room, is believed to have been a gift from two of Filippo's colleagues in the 1700s.

Mazzei's association with Jefferson began after he led a group of Italians to America in 1773 to cultivate vineyards in Virginia. Jefferson was his neighbour and invited him to plant a vineyard on his estate. They became close associates, creating the first commercial vineyard in the region and often exchanging ideas on liberty and freedom.

It is believed that Filippo may have had some influence on the wording of the American Declaration of Independence, in particular the phrase '*All men are created equal*'. The latter idea is expressed in a handwritten letter Mazzei wrote several years before the drafting of the declaration. He maintained an active correspondence with Jefferson throughout his life.



A fireplace in the formal dining room, believed to have been given to Fillipo Mazzei by former medical colleagues. Note the medical symbol (the snake and the staff) on both sides.

In his later life Mazzei travelled through Europe promoting Republican ideals and was actively involved in French and Polish politics before returning to Italy where he died in 1816. His remaining family returned to America after his death, and his daughter married the nephew of John Adams, the second president of the United States.

Filippo Mazzei's American legacy

In the United States Filippo Mazzei is considered to be an American patriot.

In 1980 the United States Postal Service, in conjunction with its Italian counterpart, issued stamps commemorating the 280th anniversary of his birth.



His libertarian values and interest in politics led him to take an active part in the revolutionary war effort.

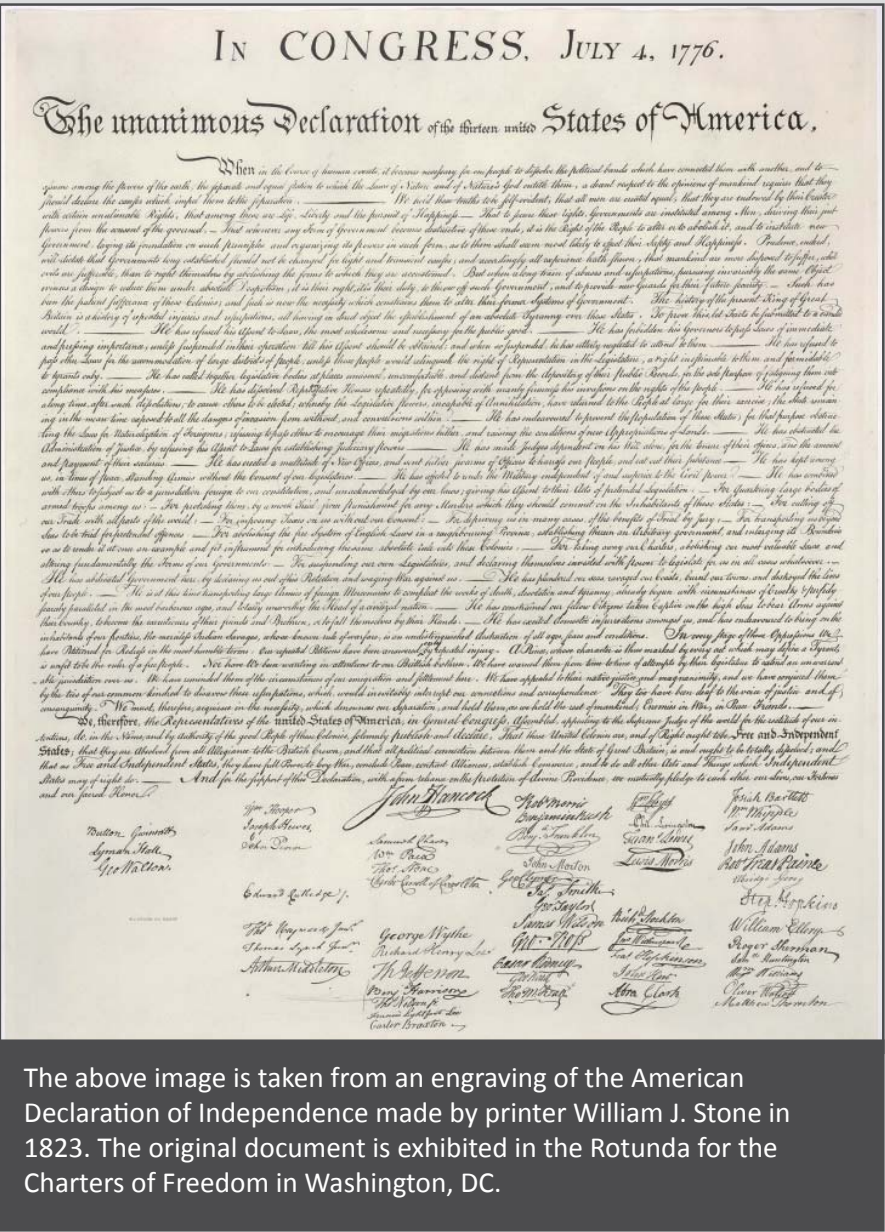
His close association with Thomas Jefferson, with whom he shared and exchanged ideas, was significant. The immortal declaration '*all men are created equal*', which was written into the Declaration of Independence (*pictured*) by Jefferson in 1776, has been partly credited to Mazzei.

Historians support this claim with prior documents written in Italian in Mazzei's own hand. An article he wrote for the *Virginia Gazette* in 1774 (two years before the Declaration was written) was translated into English and published as follows:

“All men are by nature equally free and independent. Such equality is necessary in order to create a free government. All men must be equal to each other in natural law.”

In 1778 he was deployed by Jefferson and others to return to Europe to raise funds and gather useful political and military information for their cause.

Insert map of Roman road (dated 1779) after this page]



The above image is taken from an engraving of the American Declaration of Independence made by printer William J. Stone in 1823. The original document is exhibited in the Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom in Washington, DC.



A map from the Florentine archives dating from 1779 showing a section of the old Roman road (Strada Regia Romana) with the village of Sant'Andrea in Percussina (*inset*). This part of the road also served as a main way from Florence to Siena and Sant'Andrea was an important place of rest for weary travellers.



A map dating from 1832 of the General Cadastre of Tuscany Section Z Territory of San Casciano in Val di Pesa. Villa Mazzei and its gardens are outlined here and enlarged (*inset*).

1890

Raffaello and Eugenio Mazzei inherit the Mangiacane property.

1895

A severe earthquake on 18 May causes severe damage to the villa.

1884

In 1890 the Mangiacane estate was inherited by Raffaello and Eugenio Mazzei. Five years later, the villa suffered serious damage as a result of a severe earthquake that struck the region. In 1913, Raffaello and Eugenio signed an act to protect Mangiacane as a historical building of great importance.

Raffaello died in 1922 and his daughter, Giuseppina, partly inherited the villa in 1926. She married Armando Buresti the same year and the property remained in the Mazzei and Buresti families until 1956.

During the Second World War, the Germans used Mangiacane as a command centre and dug a series of trenches in the forest in front of the villa, giving them a good visual position with a 270 degree view of the whole area.

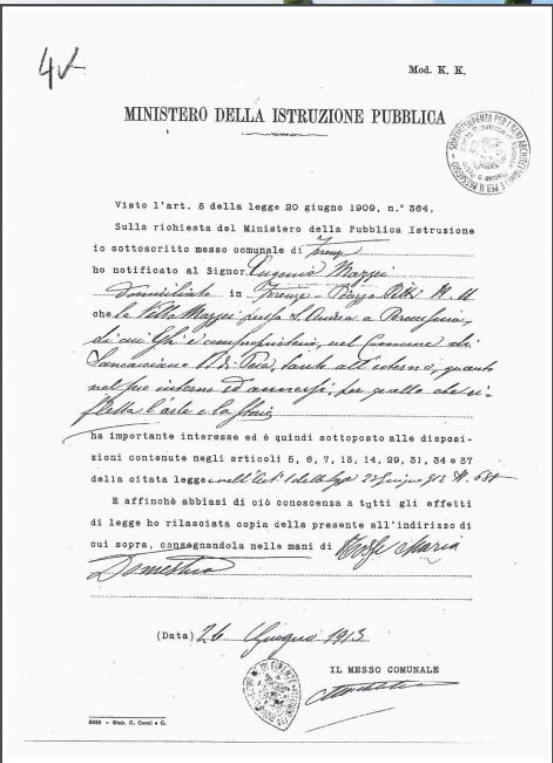
Florence and the surrounding area was liberated by the South African 6th Armoured Division with the Rhodesian 11th Armoured Brigade on August 3rd 1944 and New Zealand's division claimed San Casciano on 26th July 1944.

1913

Raffaello and Eugenio Mazzei sign an act protecting the villa as a historical building of great importance.



Pretoria Regiment Sherman on the summit of Monte Albano north west of Florence after crossing the Arno River.



In 1884 respected historian, Alfredo Melani, confirmed that the villa was the work of Michelangelo, and in 1913 Raffaello and Eugenio Mazzei signed an act protecting the villa as a historical building of great importance (*inset*).



1926

Giuseppina Mazzei, Raffaello's daughter, partly inherits the villa and marries Armando Buresti.

1956

The Mazzei dynasty's ownership of the Mangiacane estate finally ends when Adriana Buresti and Lapo Jacopo Mazzei sell the property to Ferdinanda Quintavalle and Guidi da Bagno.

During the Second World War the German army used the Mangiacane estate as a command centre. After the area was liberated in 1944, the allied forces used it as a hospital.

1943–1945

Inevitably, the whole area suffered as a result of the fighting and Mangiacane was damaged during an aerial bombing by the British. The allied forces subsequently used the villa as a hospital and during this time both loggias were closed in to create extra space.

The American war cemetery which honours 4402 American graves is situated at the bottom of the hill below the villa. The site was selected for its beauty and location for burials from the hospitals established in the surrounding area.



In 1956 the many generations of Mazzei ownership of Mangiacane ended when Adriana Buresti and Lapo Jacopo Mazzei (on behalf of himself and his sisters Fioretta Mazzei, Carla Mazzei and their mother Egidia Chierichetti) sold the estate to Ferdinanda Quintavalle and Guido da Bagno.



The American war cemetery.



Towards the end of the Second World War the allied forces used the villa as a hospital and enclosed the loggias on the lower terrace to create extra space (*inset*).

A 20th century Mazzei family album



Above and below: Old Mazzei Family photos taken at the villa's front entrance.



An early 20th century image of the hamlet in front of the Mangiacane estate.



The last Mazzei to own the Mangiacane estate (above, left to right): Lapo Mazzei, Fioretta Mazzei, Carla Mazzei.



The top images of the hamlet in front of the Mangiacane estate were published in *Guida illustrata della Val di Pesa* in 1904. Below are the same scenes as they appear today.

1956-2014

A New Era

1979

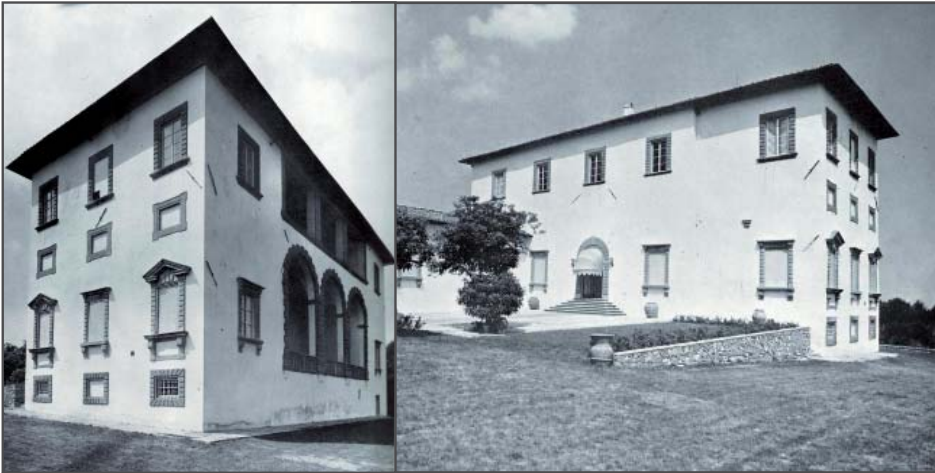
Guidi da Bagno sells Villa Mangiacane to Antonio, Pasquale and Massimo di Leo.

The estate is acquired by Ferdinanda Quintavalle and her husband Guido da Bagno. During this period, the ruins of the East wing are removed and the front entrance and piazza modified.

Pasquale di Leo sells the property to its current owners who aim to restore the villa to its former glory.

1956-1979

The Mangiacane Estate entered a new era in 1956 after being owned by the Mazzei family for more than three hundred years. For the next 23 years it was owned by Guido da Bagno and



Pictures of the villa published in “Mangiacane a S. Andrea in Percussina, imponente villa cinquecentesca che non fu mai terminata” by G. Lensi Orlandi Cardini in 1965.

2001

his wife Fernanda Quintavalle. During this period the ruins of the East wing were removed and the front entrance and piazza were modified.

In 1979 the villa was bought by Antonio, Pasquale and Massimo di Leo who subsequently sold off parcels of the land and some of the buildings. The new owners continued to run it as a farm, as well as renting the second villa to a series of tenants over the years.

During this period many functional alterations were made to the building and grounds. The frescos were painted over, the ceilings were lowered and the windows were made smaller in an attempt to save energy costs. The upper terrace was converted to keep pigeons, the gardens were turned into a fruit orchid, and the swimming pool was used as a hydroponic pond to grow tomatoes.



The front entrance to the restored villa. Inset: the front entrance as it was when the villa was sold by the di Leo family in 2001.

2002	While replanting the vineyard close to the villa, an unexploded Allied bomb is uncovered and safely detonated by the local bomb disposal unit.	2005	The new Mangiacane winery is completed with a technical cellar equipped with modern technology for the production of a fine Chianti Classico wine.
	The Mangiacane Art Foundation finalizes plans to install a Shona sculpture exhibition in the gardens. In addition, a South African art collection is installed in the villa.		The restoration work of the estate is finalised and the villa opens as a small luxury hotel.

2004

The di Leos intended to convert the main villa into several apartments but this was never completed. Only the western wing of the villa was used as their home.

Finally, in 2001, Mr di Leo sold all the property in Percussina to its current owners whose aim was to restore the villa to its former glory and replant the vineyards for the production of a premium Chianti Classico wine.

A restoration team was assembled and architect Gianclaudio Tacca Papasogli was appointed to lead the sensitive and historically important restoration.

The front piazza, villa entrance and internal works were converted back to the original plan that is saved in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. The entire infrastructure was modernized including a new borehole and water storage.

The Mangiacane Art Foundation installed a Shona sculpture exhibition to support the artists of this ancient art form, which originates from 13th century Kingdom of Mapungubwe. In addition a South African art collection was installed into the villa.

A technical cellar was installed and equipped with modern technology for the new Mangiacane winery. The winery achieved instant success with award winning wines after the first 2001 vintage.

The restoration works around the villa uncovered a variety of interesting discoveries including an ancient olive press. German military equipment including ammunition, grenades and helmets were also found in the front courtyard. In 2002, while replanting the vineyard close to the villa, an unexploded Allied bomb was unearthed that had to be detonated by the local bomb disposal unit.

The restoration was finally completed in 2007 and the villa was opened as a small luxury hotel, Villa Mangiacane.



A front view of the restored villa. The Shona sculptures in the gardens were installed by the Mangiacane Art Foundation during the restoration project.

The restoration in pictures

The restoration work on the villa was started in 2001 and finally completed in 2007.



Before and after

The following series of pictures show aspects of the villa before and after their restoration.



The front entrance to Villa Mangiacane. The name of the villa is derived from the Latin 'Magna Cane', the literal translation of which is 'great dogs.' The local Italian dialect transformed the name into 'Mangiacane'. The dogs to which the name refers are Neapolitan mastiffs that were originally used to guard the villa, and today the imposing stone dog sculptures atop the gate's pillars pay homage to this aspect of the villa's history. *Inset*: a mastiff who was living at the property when the reconstruction work on the villa began.



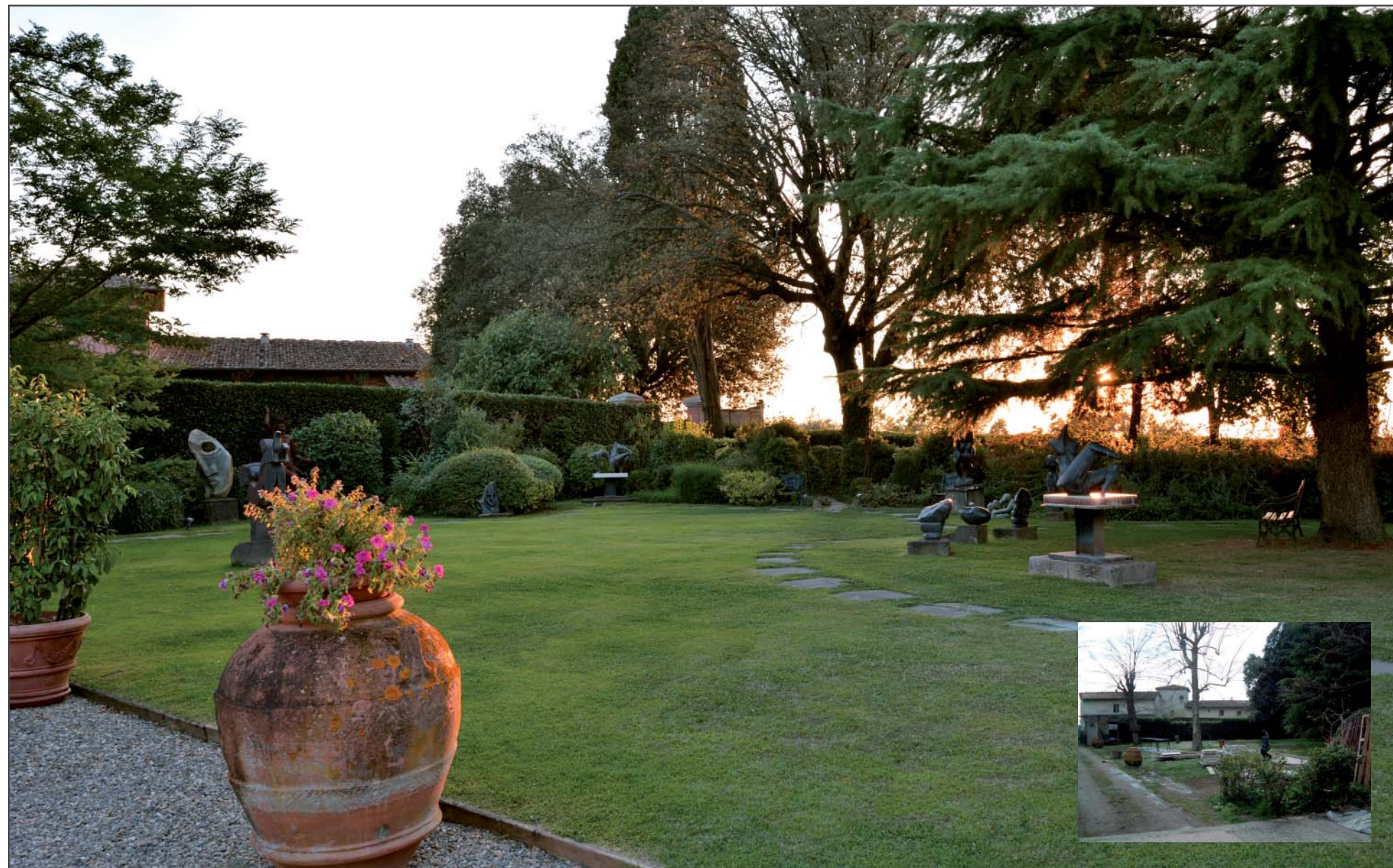
The driveway.



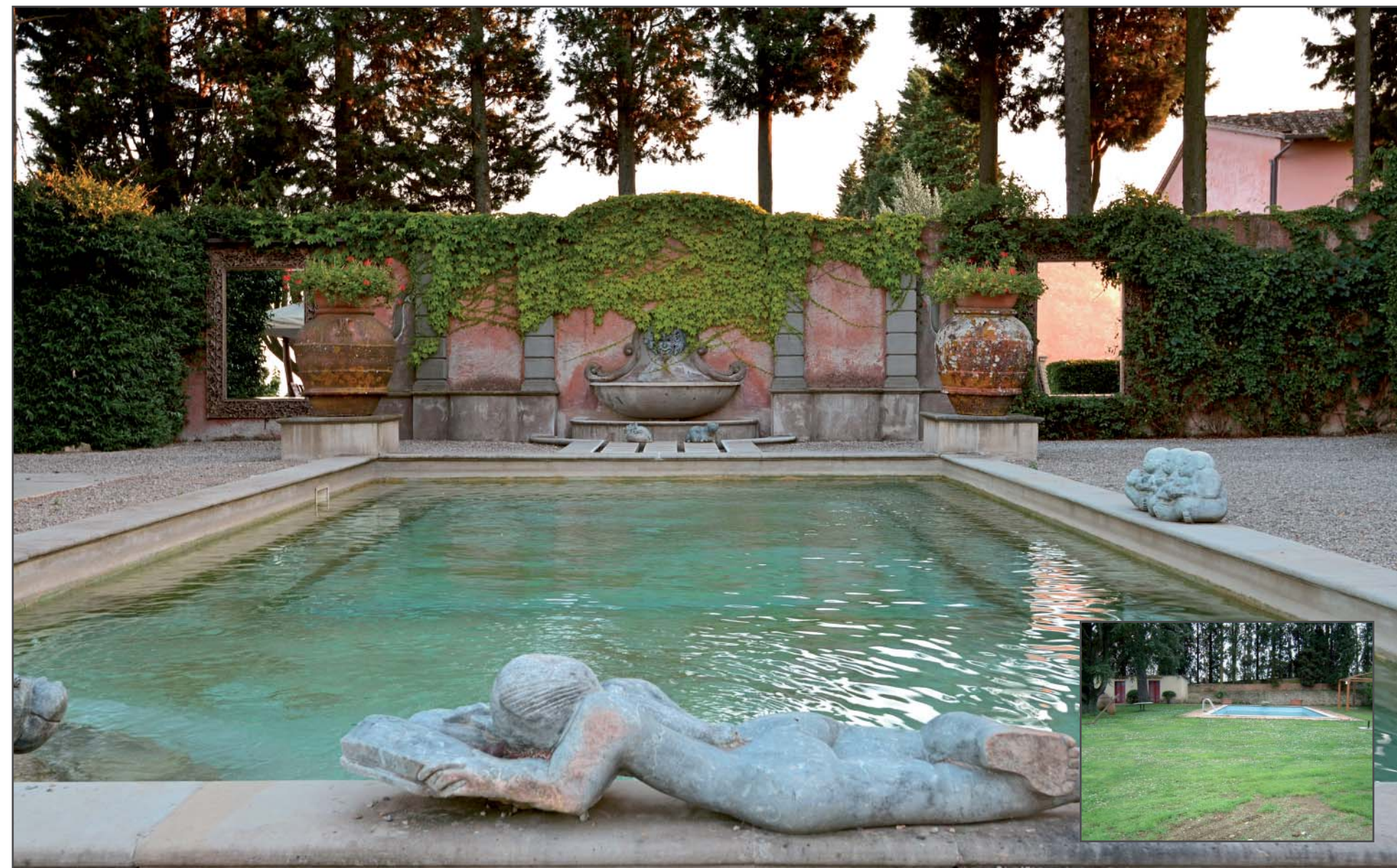
The front door.



The front garden.



The front garden.



The pool.



The pool.



A view of the pool area from the house.



A side view of the back of the villa and its back gate.



The back gate.



A back view of the villa.



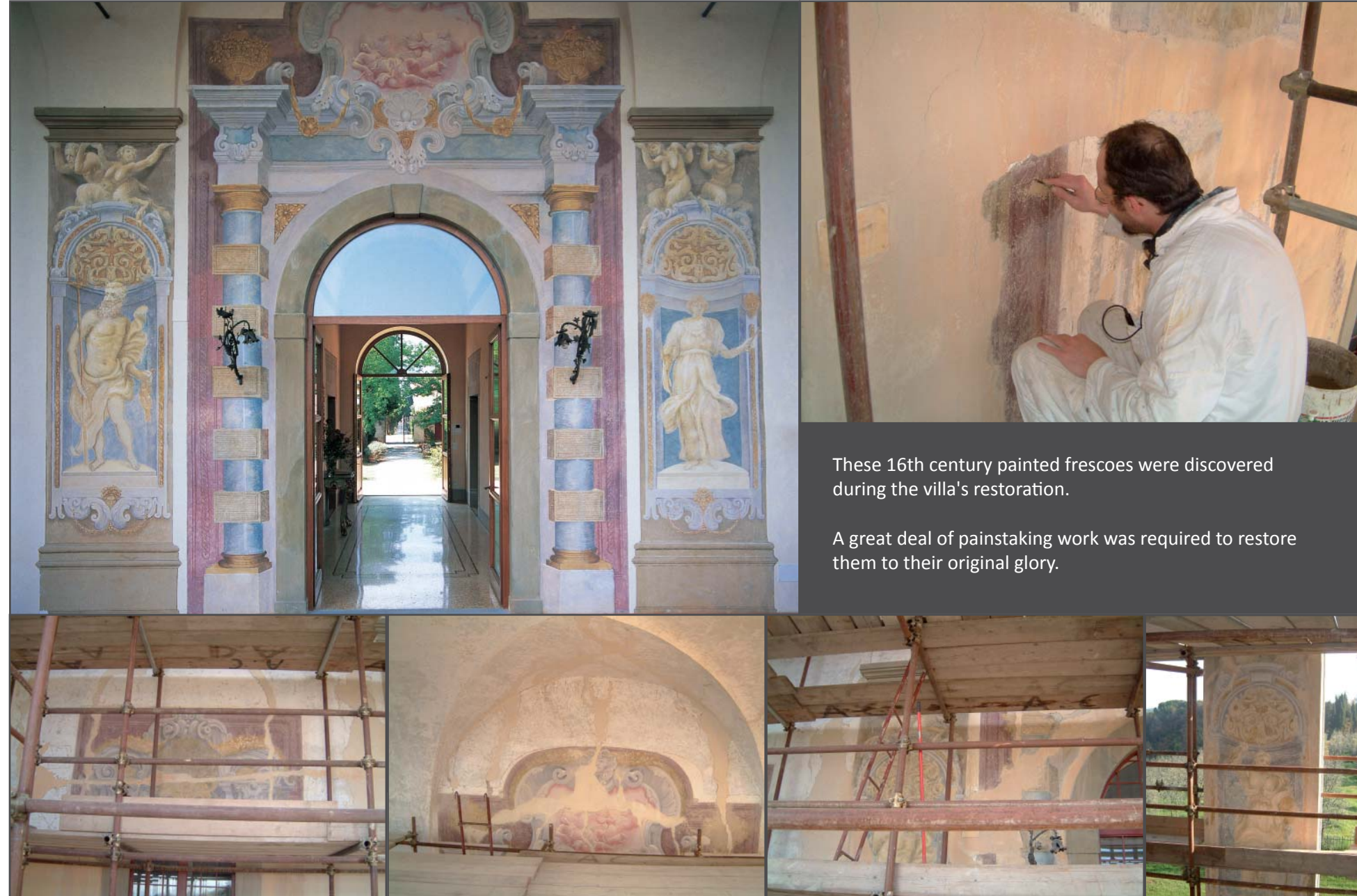
The new swimming pool.



The library.



The piano room.

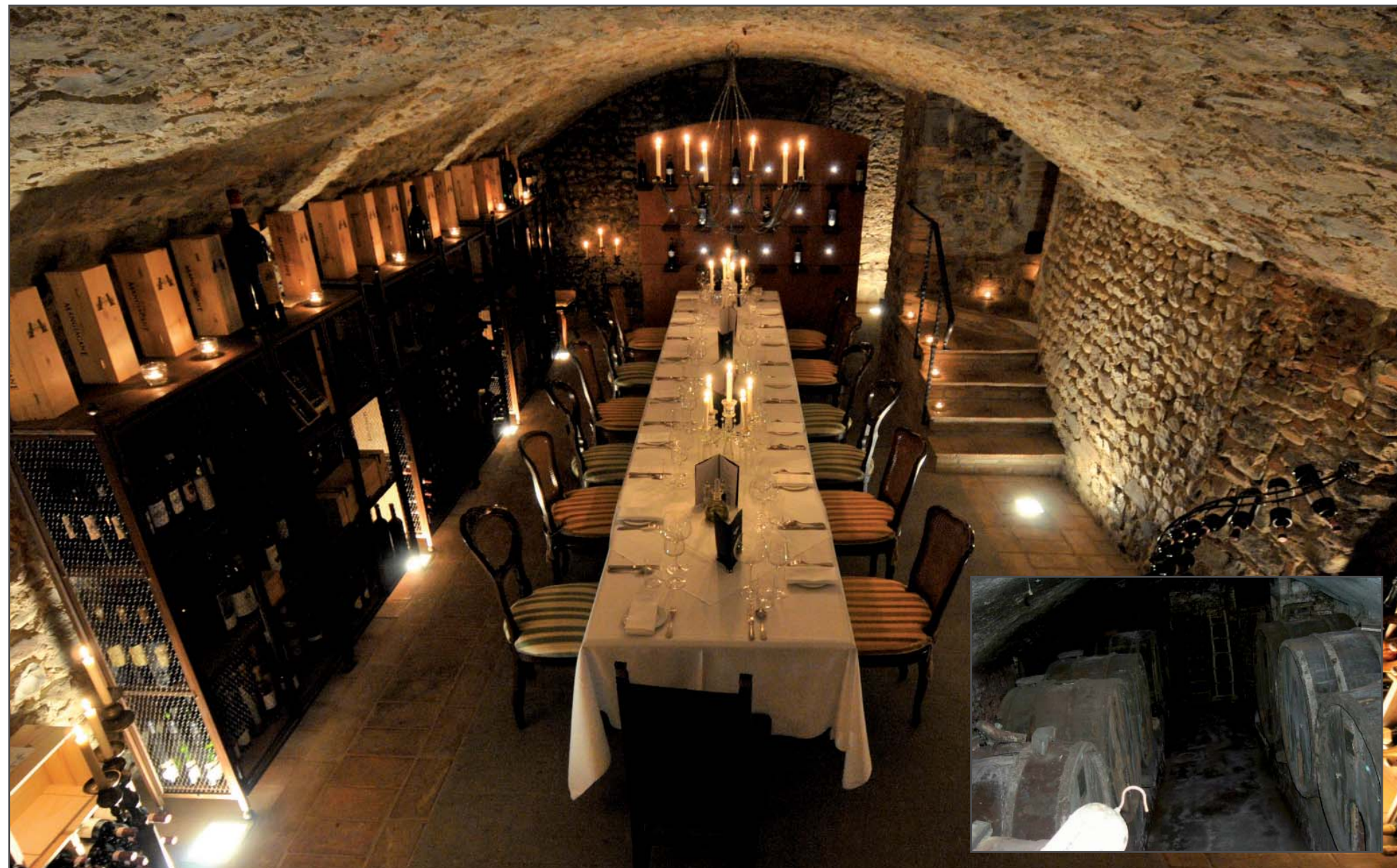




The lower terrace.



The kitchen.



The wine cellar.



The replanted vineyards.

Postscript: a tribute to Michelangelo



SAN CASCIANO

Villa Mangiacane Per Hoepli è di Michelangelo

QUELLA VILLA è del grande Michelangelo. Spunta dai circuiti antiquari una ristampa di un prezioso volume della Hoepli su 'Architettura italiana antica e moderna', con relazioni di Alfredo Melani (1859-1928), a cavallo fra Ottocento e Novecento tra i massimi esperti italiani, definito "elettiissimo spirito" dal professor Fabio Ferrari della Regia Scuola di Ingegneria di Pisa. A pagina 698, Melani parla del territorio di San Casciano «fiorito di antiche ville». E una villa «nel popolo di Percussina è attribuita a Michelangelo — scrive — e l'attribuzione merita conferma», ed è una conferma autorevole.

DA SEMPRE, la Villa Mangiacane (quella di cui si narra, ex Mazzei) a Sant'Andrea è accostata a Michelangelo, soprattutto per l'ardita architettura dei tre archi sul versante nord con vista Firenze, in asse con la Cupola del Brunelleschi. In questa pagina c'è un bel timbro, autentico. Del resto, in Chianti si dibatte da decenni su un'altra opera, se attribuibile a Michelangelo o no: è la pala d'altare di Marciolla.

Andrea Ciappi

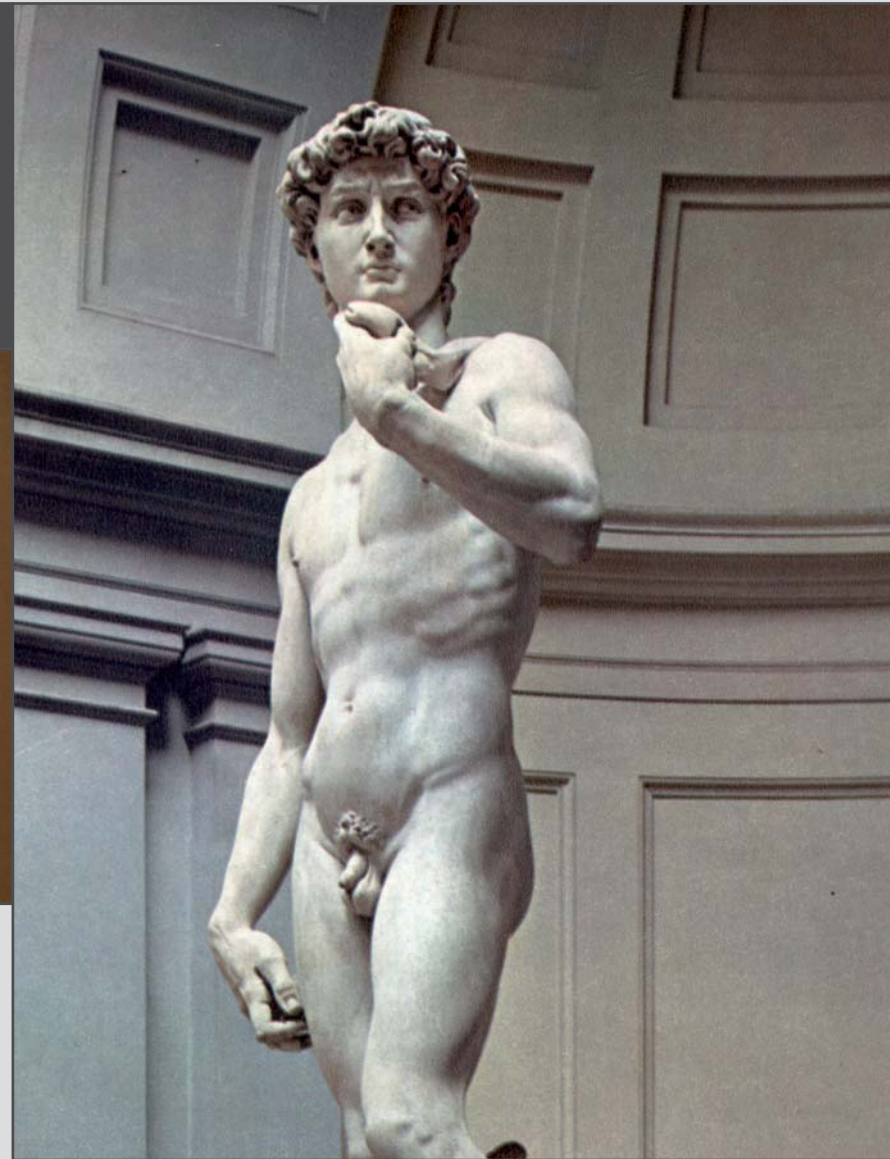
It is a fitting tribute to the original designer of Mangiacane Villa that the Mangiacane Art Foundation should support the restoration of one of Michelangelo's most famous works, the statue of David.

Below: The foundation's contribution is acknowledged on a plaque next to the statue in the Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence .

LA FONDAZIONE FRIENDS OF FLORENCE
E' LIETA DI AVER CONTRIBUITO AL RESTAURO DEL
DAVID DI MICHELANGELO
CON LA DONAZIONE PRINCIPALE DI
FAMIGLIA DI MICHAEL J. COLLINS
KATHE E JOHN S. DYSON
ED IL SOSTEGNO DI
GLYNN COHEN PER LA FONDAZIONE D'ARTE MANGIACANE
FONDAZIONE TRAVELING DELLA FAMIGLIA SAGER
KENT THIRY AND DENISE O'LEARY
500° ANNIVERSARIO - SETTEMBRE 2004

THE FRIENDS OF FLORENCE FOUNDATION
IS PLEASED TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE RESTORATION OF
MICHELANGELO'S "DAVID"
WITH MAJOR GRANTS FROM
THE MICHAEL J. COLLINS FAMILY
KATHE AND JOHN S. DYSON
ALSO SUPPORTED BY
GLYNN COHEN FOR THE MANGIACANE ART FOUNDATION
THE SAGER FAMILY TRAVELING FOUNDATION
KENT THIRY AND DENISE O'LEARY
500th ANNIVERSARY - SEPTEMBER 2004

Left: A 2014 article in *La Nazione* by Andrea Ciappi confirming that Michelangelo designed the villa, with reference to the famous Italian historian and expert Alfredo Melani whose book refers to the fact.



Credits

Source material:

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Art and Architecture: Tuscany by Anne Mueller von de Haegen and Ruth Strasser (Könemann, 2001)

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Pictures:

p.12 *Portrait of Michelangelo Buonarroto*, Jacopino del Conte, c. 1535, Casa Buonarroto, Florence.

p.13 *Portrait of Niccolò Machiavelli* (detail), Santi di Tito, Palazzo Vecchio (Palazzo della Signoria), Florence, Italy.

p.14 Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, frontispiece of the Latin translation, Basle 1580.

p.14 Niccolò Machiavelli, page of manuscript of *I Discorsi*, 1519, Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence.

p.16 *Tomb Monument of Niccolò Machiavelli*, Innocenzo Spinazzi, 1787, Santa Croce, Florence.

Basilica of Santa Croce: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica_of_Santa_Croce,_Florence

p.17 *Portrait of Niccolò Machiavelli*, Santi di Tito, Palazzo Vecchio (Palazzo della Signoria), Florence, Italy.

Portrait of Leonardo da Vinci (detail), Christoforo dell'Altissimo, 1566-1568, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

p.19 *Birth of Venus* (detail), Sandro Botticelli, ca. 1485, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Portrait of Pope Leo X with His Cardinals, Raphael, ca. 1518, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

p.20 *Lorenzo il Magnifico (posthumous)*, Giorgio Vasari, 1534, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, Michelangelo Buonarroti, c. 1525 (detail), marble, Sagrestia Nuova, S. Lorenzo, Florence.

p.21 *Giorgio Vasari*, Self-portrait, 1566-1568, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

p.31 The American Declaration of Independence: <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration.html>

p.36 The American war cemetery: <http://travelingmangiamamas.com/american-cemetery-florence/>

p.38-39 Images of hamlet from *Guida illustrata della Val di Pesa* by Torquato Guarducci (1904)

p.68 Michelangelo's *David*, c. 1504, Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence.



