

Interior Design

In the fifth part of her series on interior design, Susan Llewellyn invites you to Verona



One Gentlewoman and her dog, Phoenix

“Two Gentlewomen of Verona, without the Dog”

I believe the two most important things that we as interior designers and antique dealers share in common is knowledge and above all passion for our chosen professions.

If knowledge is not equally shared with passion it is dry and the public do not have confidence in our advice. It is like painting by numbers and doesn't come from the heart. But once passion is there the public instinctively sense it and trust our advice and have confidence in our abilities. But one other factor is important for us to constantly update ourselves as if we are not continually searching and practicing very quickly we can become rusty.

The BIDA has recognised this and runs events for Continued Professional Development or C.P.D's. I am very privileged often to organise such events; for them to stimulate and empower interior designers.

Our clients are looking constantly for the unique, unusual and creative. Therefore we need to search in our imaginations as well to fulfil this demand. I am sure that the antique dealers amongst you can also find that an item may have lost its original use in a decorative or more up to date manner; this can be changed and brought into the present to find a new usefulness.

Professionals are now being challenged to look at alternative materials and use them in different ways other than their traditional purpose. Another important factor which I discussed in my last article; colour plays a vital and psychological role to create atmosphere in our surroundings. We need also to educate our eyes and stimulate our brains by visual means; for example through viewing art, the painter can give us his or her expertise to call upon as they are constantly looking at colour and experimenting in new ways of putting colours together. If you are feeling creatively “dull” or un-stimulated by lack of movement in your business, go to an exhibition of art and/or design; by visiting contemporary

as well as traditional galleries we are once more refreshed and inspired and can offer new and reminded thoughts and perspectives.

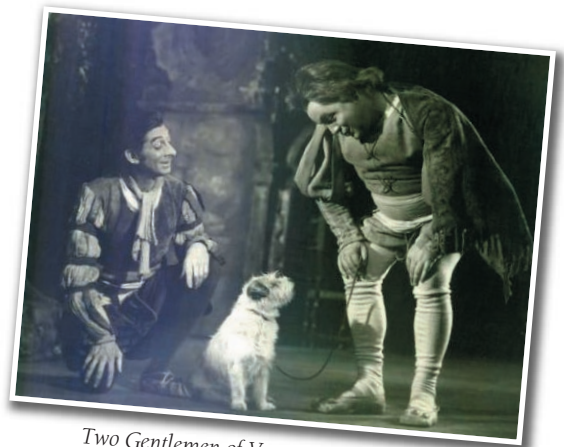
Having given a great deal of thought to what our joint future needs are as interior designers and antique dealers I have discussed at length future trends with Jennifer, we have put together a visit to Verona in September. This has sparked up a creative mood for us and we would like to share it with

readers of *Antiques Magazine*. Since Milan we have been able to offer our clients more up to date design ideas and we thought why not share this with you by taking a trip to Verona and inviting you, the reader!

The starting point for our new plans together, as I said, was Verona and why Verona I hear you ask?

Like Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona* Valentine, Proteus and Crab the dog, the beginning of the play they are getting ready to leave Verona to go to Milan to gain life experience. We decided to reverse that situation. The “Two Gentlewomen of Verona”, Jennifer and I, excluding the dog, after having gained experience in Milan we are now going to Verona for the Abitare Il Tempo to widen our knowledge together we hope with *Antiques Magazine* readers and like minded people.

We are using Verona as a metaphor for the link between the past and the future, let



Two Gentlemen of Verona and their dog, Crab

me explain why. An important factor is Verona has been named as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and it offers a wealth of opportunities to stimulate and excite the creative mind.

Its original splendour was dominated by forty-eight towers and immense wealth and it goes back beyond Roman times. Verona has a beautiful Roman amphitheatre; the arena which was completed in 30AD is the third largest after Rome's Coliseum.

In 1405 Verona submitted to Venice and became part of the Venetian empire, then from 1509-1517 it then was under the power of the Emperor of Maximilian I.

In 1797 it was occupied by Napoleon but on the Easter Monday the populace rose and drove out the French. It was then Napoleon made an end of the Venetian republic because Napoleon signed the Treaty of Campo Formio in 1797 and it was thus handed to the Austrians. Later in 1805 it



Verona Coliseum



Portrait of Andrea Palladio



Chiswick House which was built by Lord Burlington based on inspiration of Andrea Palladio's Villa Capra also known as Villa Rotunda



Abitare Il Tempo logo for 2007 an Antique chair in a modern render



Traditional design with modern technology for today's use by Molteni Cucine

became part of Napoleon's Kingdom of Italy; reverting back to Austria at Napoleon's defeat in 1814. In 1866 followed the six weeks war, Verona along with the rest of Venetian Empire became part of Italy and thus the Austrians left.

Back to what we have planned, we wanted this trip to stimulate the fusion between the past and the future. Louise Ford picked this up at the Grosvenor Fair, a new look aimed to combine the contemporary with the traditional (issue 1116 week ending 20th July page 17). I then thought what has been the two greatest influences and inspirations in my life; both in my antiques and interior design careers. What came to mind when I thought about it was the Renaissance and Classical Designs of Greece and Rome. My very first evening class when I started exploring antiques was a lecture on Early English Renaissance furniture leading onto the work of Andrea Palladio and inspiring his later disciples in the 18th century, thus leading to the Gothic Revival.

Here Verona offers and embraces all these styles. So what we have planned is a

visit not only to the new and contemporary exhibition Abitare Il Tempo where will be introduced to international companies enabling us to source Interior Design requirements under one roof but also we will be seeing areas of the fundamental concept of the show are dedicated to experimental research together with production workshops. "We are seeing today a new interpretation of design, less minimalist and more geared to the rediscovery of the unexpected qualities of "decoration" lost over time. This allows the emergence of the virtues of a style of décor without preconceived stylistic limitations, which are linked to old materials and the techniques of working with them and develops along contemporary lines and production methods. Is this what Abitare il Tempo is about? Yes certainly, because this show in Verona has the distinction of having been the first to focus on that cultural mingling between the classical and the modern, design and decoration which is today accepted worldwide."



Left: A recent image of Villa Capra also known as Villa Rotunda designed by Andrea Palladio, and above: also designed by Andrea Palladio, Villa Godi, the other Villa to be visited on our trip to Verona

After having been updated on the contemporary trends we have then arranged one of the most important parts, a visit to the Palladian villas in Vicenza. We shall be visiting two villas, Villa Capra which inspired Lord Burlington in the 18th century to build a copy of this villa called Chiswick House in Chiswick, London.

He was so inspired by the book published by Palladio in 1570 "I Quattro Libri Dell'Architettura" this book not only influenced him and other influential English architects but also inspired architects throughout the world. There will also be a visit to Villa Godi a true



Portrait of Lord Richard Boyle
3rd Earl of Burlington

example of Palladianism, the interior is decorated with themes of Classical Mythological stories which have influenced Interior Design and 18th century furniture. Mythological stories have inspired artists and designers throughout the centuries. And if that is not enough we move on in the late afternoon to the Castle, Castelvecchio.

What we find wonderfully exciting is that it takes us from its conception in the

1350's by the della Scala family who used it as a defence both against outside invasions or popular rebellion. The surrounding area allowed a rapid escape through the city after crossing the fortified bridge which was accessible only by the family and the road to the north for security. In 1925 the

Castle became a Museum holding a valuable art collection, but what makes the Castle so extraordinarily special is that in the beginning, 1955, is that Carlo Scarpa was called in to rethink restore and oversee the renovation and reinstallation between 1955-1957. Carlo Scarpa is recognised as one of the most important architects of the 20th

and see his theatrical placement of the sculptures in the Canova Plaster Cast Gallery bringing them to life. A highlight of the reconstruction is the sculpture gallery; it is a theatrical experience as well as an architectural balance to the installed elements. It creates in our view, an unprecedented, emotional as well as a spatial experience. Part of the della Scala Family tomb, the equestrian statue of



Scarpa designs for Venini

Congrande, was placed by him in the ancient passageway where the della Scala family would escape in the event of attack. This is a lesson to both the interior designer and antique dealer on how important placement is in bringing to life an object from the past.

Carlo Scarpa's background mixing with the artists and intellectuals, he was also involved with the Academia Bella Artes in Venice. He also was artistic consultant to Paolo Venini the great Venetian glass manufacturer. He over saw some of the most original glass works in the history of glass design. His life long interest in the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright brought him very much ahead of his time. You will see the results and transformation of an ancient space into something that is an ongoing conceptual piece of art which is a useful reference for interior designers and antique dealers alike.

The fusion between our two industries and cross fertilization should inspire and help us grow closer for future mutual benefit.

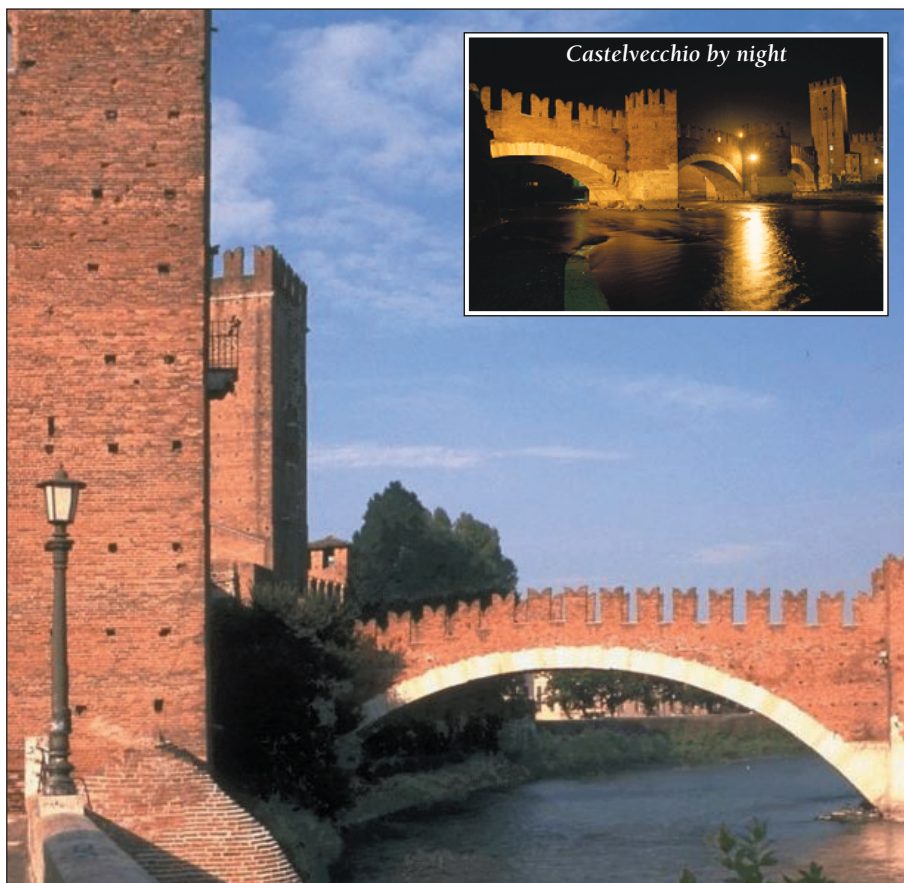
This leads me onto my next article which was inspired by a quote from Dean Keyworth Chairman of the BIDA in his interview in issue 1116 week ending 20th July 2007. He said: "I think interior designers can help to introduce a new generation of buyers to antiques" I plan to explore this in my next article.

For details and more information about our trip to Verona (19th-22nd September 2007) please contact us at the address below. □



I particularly want my articles to service your needs, so any feedback would be hugely helpful and welcomed so that we can work together in producing what you want to know about interior design and the antiques world. Your suggestions will be greatly appreciated and acknowledged.

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Castelvecchio