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ALTE VITRIE

L'ARTE DEL VETRO E DINTORNI



This edition of "Alte Vitrie" marks the beginning of our fifth year of online publication, and also coincides with the 35th anniversary of the foundation of ISVAV (Istituto per lo Studio del Vetro e dell'Arte Vetraria), which manages and coordinates all the activities in Altare linked to the museum and the world of glass production. Since its birth in 1987, the magazine has been a mouthpiece for Altare and its glassmaking tradition. After a period of discontinuation, publication was resumed in a digital format with edition zero coming out in December 2012.



Now, as it was then, the aim is to provide a tool which is easily accessible to scholars, collectors, master glassmakers and enthusiasts of the magic world of glass, from its archaeological aspects to more current research. In this edition, one can find a tribute to the master "wicker wine bottle" maker, immortalised in a statue donated to the Piegario Museum. There is also a presentation of the restoration of a splendid gladiator bottle dating back to Roman times, and the edition is rounded off by an article on the new exhibition in the glassware section of the Museum of Palazzo Madama in Turin (previously featured in issue 1 of 2014), in which items manufactured in Altare are included.

Editorial staff



A BOTTLE FEATURING A GLADIATOR SCENE FROM ACQUI TERME

The bottle was unearthed in 1933 during excavations for a clay pit in an area which was once a Roman cemetery, and was acquired by a local collector named Augusto Scovazzi. In the 1950s, he sold it to Antonio Strada, a collector from Pavia. The item, acquired at the state collections, but left in temporary deposit at Scaldasole Castle near Pavia, was put on public display only once, on the occasion of an exhibition dedicated to Roman glassware in Lombardy, held at Milan in 1964. The restoration work carried out at the time needed to be reviewed to

make it suitable for further display.

Thanks to the collaboration of the Italian AIHV Committee and the contribution of Vitrum, in 2015 the Archaeological Authority of Lombardy was able to proceed with a new restoration project which has allowed the item to be more easily read and interpreted. Consequently, the decision was taken to exhibit the bottle at the Vitrium stand at the Rho exhibition centre near Milan from October 6th - 9th 2015. It was displayed in a specially created cabinet complete with comprehensive information panels, and the event aroused great interest among visitors. With the item being deemed worthy of permanent display in a structure that could do it justice, presenting it to the general public as well as to scholars, it was decided that it should be added to the collections of the "Alda Levi" Antiquarium at the

headquarters of the Milanese Authority in via De Amicis. The Antiquarium houses exhibits originating from excavations in the amphitheatre area and the adjacent district, as well as other collectors' items that illustrate amphitheatre games and the daily life of the gladiators. The bottle from Acqui, with a moulded image on the bottom depicting a fight scene between a murmillio and a retiarius, whose names (SIRAI0 and ...SCE) appear on the side, finds a perfect setting here.

The bottle's exposition took place on November 26th, with a presentation curated by the Milanese Authority, the Italian AIHV Committee and Vitrum.

Rosalina Invernizzi
Archaeological Authority of
Lombardy





opposite page, above:
bottle with gladiator scene

opposite page, below:
bottle with gladiator scene, detail

side:
entrance to the Piegaro Museum
of Glass

below:
statue of the master wicker wine
bottle maker, Piegaro Museum
of Glass

THE STATUE OF THE MASTER WICKER WINE BOTTLE MAKER IN PIEGARO

The Piegaro Glass Museum has its headquarters in the building that once housed the old glass-works. It was inaugurated in 2009 and represents an accurate example of industrial archaeology, bearing witness to the glass-making activities of this Umbrian village right from its beginnings in the 13th century when it was dedicated to the manufacture of containers for wine and olive oil, especially wicker wine bottles, either blown by mouth or with semi-automatic machines and lined with lake weed. The museum recently added to its collection with a bronze statue showing a master wicker wine bottle maker in the act of blowing the glass to create the traditional bottle. The item, 105 centimetres tall, was made from bronze by sculptor Piero Bertelli from Montelupo

Fiorentino, and melded using the lost-wax casting technique in the Ferdinando Marinelli Artistic Foundry in Florence. The statue was commissioned and donated to the Piegaro Museum by Giovanni Bartolozzi, owner of the Etruscan Glassworks of Montelupo Fiorentino, which also has a branch in the modern Altare glass factory. It evokes the work of the master wicker wine bottle maker, a glass blower equipped with special technical ability and a consolidated command of glass, subjected in this case to rapid cooling. The statue, which is an exact replica of the original preserved in the Wicker Wine Bottle Museum in La Torre, a hamlet of Montelupo, recalls this traditional profession and expresses legitimate acknowledgement and recognition to the wicker wine bottle maker, a fundamental figure for the glass-works of Umbria and Tuscany, a creator of a vessel which is both essential and elegant in its simplicity. The item also constitutes an image packed with family affections which the client and the artist had in common.

Silvia Ciappi





THE GLASSWARE HALL

Anew display in Palazzo Madama Torino

In March 2016, ten years after Palazzo Madama was opened to the public, the Glassware and Ivory Hall (one of the museum's most precious, with more than 400 decorative art exhibits) was completely renewed in terms of the layout of the objects on display, the interior display cabinets, the lighting and the information panels. Thanks to the contribution of the Turin Rotary Club, who sponsored the project, it was possible to transform this space into a modern "Cabinet of Wonder", entirely dedicated to glassware and glazing. A section of the hall features extremely rare painted glass and etched gold glass ranging from Roman times to the 17th century originating from the art collections of Emanuele Taparelli d'Azeglio, a Piedmontese diplomat and collector, which he donated to the Civic Museum in 1890. The historical windows overlooking Piazza Castello exhibit a gallery of blown glass



items, from archaeological glassware from the Middle East which belonged to Riccardo Gualino, to pieces produced in Murano, with specimens ranging from the 15th to the 18th century. However, there are many new additions which significantly enhance the itinerary, such as the glassware attributed to Altare and the glass figurines from Nevers, quartz artefacts which look like glass but which are not, glass sheets for magic lanterns featuring fairytale scenes and a number of glazed slabs in a large cabinet dedicated to glass manufacturing and decoration techniques. The partial darkening of the hall and the restoration of a large Murano sixteen-arm chandelier (made in 1928 and inspired by the famous 18th-century chandelier made by Giuseppe Briati for Ca' Rezzonico and decorated with tubular elements arranged in a chain, as well as flowers, leaves and bells in colourless



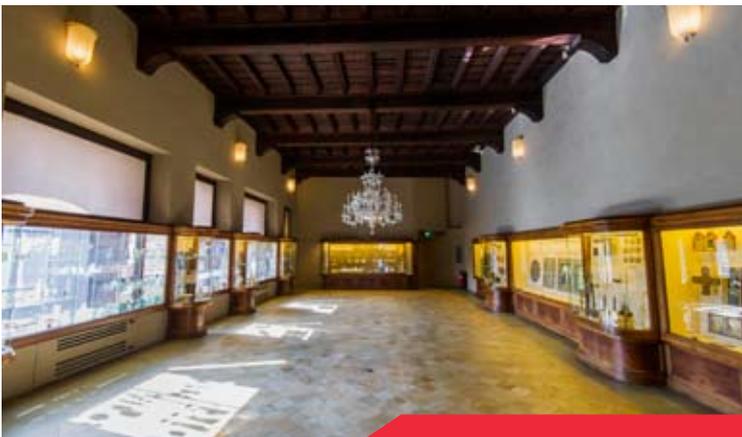
crystal) deliberately hung at a height of only 2 metres in order to be viewed close up, contribute to the creation of a unique and evocative atmosphere.

Simonetta Castronovo
**Conservator of
 Decorative Arts**
 Palazzo Madama – Civic
 Museum of Ancient Art

above, left:
 Cup with coat of arms of
 Anna d'Alençon, marquise of
 Monferrato, 1500-1530, attributed
 to Altare

above, right:
 Palazzo Madama, windows
 overlooking Piazza Castello

side:
 Palazzo Madama, the Glassware
 and Ivory Hall



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Cover:
 The statue of the master wicker
 wine bottle maker, Piegaro
 Museum of Glass

