

THE FLORENTINE

CULTURE

Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal restoration revealed

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Earthly lovers of the Basilica of San Miniato al Monte and supporters of American non-profit organization Friends of Florence gathered in the hilltop place of worship this morning to behold a miraculous restoration.

The Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal, a milestone in the development of Florentine Renaissance art, was reopened today after being restored under the supervision of Dr. Maria Maugeri and the Fine Arts Department of Florence, Pistoia and Prato. The restoration, performed by a team of expert restorers, was made possible thanks to a donation from the Friends of Florence.



“San Miniato al Monte as a site is much cherished by the Friends of Florence. Three years ago, we contributed to the restoration of the ciborium to mark the abbey’s first millenary in 2018. Today, with the presentation of the Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal, we are further bolstering our commitment to the basilica’s vast heritage,”

remarked Friends of Florence president, [Simonetta Brandolini d'Adda](#). "I would like to thank the Soprintendenza, which supervised the work on this occasion, Abbot Bernardo Gianni for his amenability in agreeing to the restoration, and all the restorers and skilled craftsmen who have worked on this fascinating project. Above all, I would like to thank Professor Jon Cherubini for his generous bequest, which has allowed us to restore this magnificent chapel. We are immensely sad never to have been able to meet this great benefactor, who was so enamoured of Florence and of this church, but we are thrilled to have executed his will in restoring this magnificent jewel casket of sheer beauty."



"The community of San Miniato al Monte is deeply grateful to the Friends of Florence and to the donors, who have made this superb restoration venture possible, restoring to

its original beauty one of the loftiest monuments in the whole of Renaissance art and architecture and indeed in the 1,000-year history of San Miniato al Monte, thus helping to turn beauty and its conservation into a wonderful instrument of consolation and hope in the face of the mystery of death and of evil,” commented [Abbot Bernardo Gianni](#).

About the Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal



The Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal is one of the most important Renaissance chapels in Florence. Situated in the Basilica of San Miniato al Monte, it was built in the mid-15th century in accordance with the last will and testament of Cardinal James of Lusitania, a member of the Portuguese royal house who died in Florence in 1459. Its execution was entrusted to a group of artists, including Luca della Robbia, Antonio Manetti (a pupil of Brunelleschi), Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo, Antonio and Bernardo Rossellino and Alesso Baldovinetti. The work resulted in the creation of a masterpiece where glazed terracotta, marble and precious stones, gilding, painting and inlay come together to produce a jewel of inestimable value.



Teamwork has once again been the name of the game in the much-needed maintenance and restoration project made possible thanks to a generous contribution

from the Friends of Florence Foundation. The chapel is a composite work, its sophisticated decoration consisting of wall paintings, elements in pietra serena stone, marble, glazed terracotta, panel paintings and items in bronze, hence requiring the involvement of a variety of skilled craftsmen, so as to guarantee a state-of-the-art restoration and respect for the chapel as a whole.

[HTTPS://WWW.THEFLORENTINE.NET/2021/07/28/RESTORATION-CHAPEL-CARDINAL-PORTUGAL-REVEALED/](https://www.theflorentine.net/2021/07/28/restoration-chapel-cardinal-portugal-revealed/)