

GRAND HOTEL

RIMINI

THE GRAND HOTEL RIMINI (1908)

The Grand Hotel Rimini was designed by the celebrated South American architect Paolo Somazzi. *Work on the new hotel started in 1904, under the guidance of the “Società Milanese Alberghi, Ristoranti e Affini” (Milan Hotel and Restaurant Company), which also took over the Rimini Bathing Establishment from the Corporation in 1906. The company publicized the city and its facilities throughout Italy and the rest of Europe, establishing it as one of Europe’s leading holiday resorts.*

The “Società Milanese” changed the face of tourism in Rimini. It renovated the buildings of the Bathing Establishment, extended the terraces of the Kursaal, the elegant centre of society life, and renewed the facilities offered on the pier and the beach. Much work was done on the promenades, avenues, parks and gardens of the seafront, and Rimini was proclaimed “the beach of the moment”, “the Ostende of Italy” and “the Adriatic’s most beautiful beach”.

The construction of the Grand Hotel Rimini consolidated the city’s ambitious new image as the European holiday capital. It was **inaugurated on July 3rd 1908**, and the event was the highlight of the season. With its two hundred bedrooms, spacious terraces, exotic gardens, sumptuously decorated halls and lounges, and its elegant rose-tinted facade in refined Art Deco style, the hotel soon became the most important attraction of the whole Mediterranean, and was the preferred holiday residence of the most celebrated personalities of high society, including royalty, nobility and leading figures of the world of the arts from Italy and the rest of Europe.

In 1910 the Grand Hotel Rimini passed into the ownership of the “Società Anonima Bagni di Rimini” (Rimini Bathing Company), The new proprietors had a luxurious new dining room built, with more than 350 square yards of floor space, and over this a sea view terrace was arranged. the hotel was reorganized yet again in 1919, and was managed for a long period by Mr. Damesin, called the “King of Hoteliers” by a local newspaper, the “Corriere Rimini Balneare”. It was in these years that the Grand Hotel became famous for its lavish banquets, its sophisticated candle-light dinners and above all for its grandiose and exciting charity dances, organized by the leading associations and clubs of the city.

The world of fashion was also particularly attracted to the Grand Hotel, and on many occasions, after the serving of luxurious and extravagant refreshments, elegant models would present the latest collections of the most illustrious designers of Italy. Two of the most memorable such events were the fashion parade organized by the “Donna” magazine for women, on Saturday August 25th 1928, entitled “ In the Shade of Pagodas”, and that organized in 1933 by the famous Turin fashion house “La Merveilleuse “.

A serious fire broke out in the upper floors of the hotel on Wednesday July 14th 1920, and destroyed the two decorative domes which adorned the roof. Repairs were made, and the hotel was reopened to the public; the domes, however, were never replaced. In 1931, the hotel was sold for 1.200 lire to the Rimini Tourist Board, who carried out urgently needed restoration work and a number of alternations, and managed the establishment until the outbreak of war.

In 1933 a local magazine (“Rimini”, Septemer-October edition), proclaimed that “*the Grand Hotel,... after a radical transformation of services and facilities, ... represents the very best that the Adriatic holiday and tourist trade has*

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to offer". The hotel was badly damaged during the war, and in 1953 the City Council sold it for a nominal fee to Mr. Duranti, who commenced the work for reconstruction.

Mr Duranti sold the hotel to the Arpesella family in 1963 for the fabulous sum of a million dollars, and the work of reconstruction was continued, transforming the Grand Hotel into a top-quality establishment open for the whole year, instead of only during summer season. The Arpesella family managed the hotel till November 1996 and after, Dr. Andera Facchi, a business man from the Republic of San Marino, bought the hotel and continued the management with the same first class style and legendary reputation together with the Grand's "historical" manager Mr. Sigfrido Stocklow. In July 1999 the Grand obtained the Quality Certification ISO 9002, one of the first hotel to be certified in Italy. On 22nd October 2002 the Advance Hotel Society.

On December 17th 2007, the Grand Hotel Rimini finally entered the Select Hotels Group belonging to Antonio Batani and his family. Besides the newly acquired Grand Hotel Rimini, the Batani Family owns 9 other hotels located between Milano Marittima and Cervia, within the beautiful province of Ravenna known worldwide for its mosaics and historical heritage.

Amongst the very important people who visited the Grand Hotel in the old days, the following are worth mentioning: Queen of Saxony, the Duke of Abruzzi, the Princess Luisa Laetitia of Aosta Napoleone, the Duke of Udine, the Princes of Colonna of Stigliano, the First Minister of Italy Mr. Salandra, the Turkish Ambassador Harry Pasha that became Gran Visir, King Faruk, Elena Bianchi Cappelli, Lydia Borrelli, Geraldine Farrar, Enrico Caruso, Guglielmo Marconi, Pietro Mascagni..

Today, the Grand Hotel di Rimini is still the preferred destination for many celebrities.

Entertainment: Federico Fellini, who used to come to the Grand anytime he was in Rimini, treating it like home, Sergio Zavoli, Pedro Almodovar, John Landis, Michael Redford, Bruce Willis, Demi Moore, Ornella Muti, Maria Grazia Cucinotta, Carol Alt, Monica Vitti, Alberto Sordi, Paolo Villaggio, Roberto Benigni, Stefania Sandrelli, Valeria Marini, Claudia Kohl, Pamela Prati, John Turturro, Pippo Baudo, Katia Ricciarelli, Sting, Claudio Baglioni, Adriano Celentano, Vasco Rossi, Antonello Venditti, Franco Battiato, Joe Cocker, Martha Graham, Sarah Vaughan; Gloria Gaynor, Claudia Cardinale and Sharon Stone.

Politics: Michail and Raissa Gorbacev, Helmut Kohl, George Bush, Henry Kissinger, Francesco Cossiga, Sandro Pertini, Giulio Andreotti, Francesco Rutelli, Silvio Berlusconi, the Dalai Lama.

Aristocracy: the Prince of Saudi Arabia Al Saud; the Japanese Prince Hirohito's son, Mr. Gheddafi's Son, Diana, Princess of Wales and Rania, Queen of Jordan;

Sports: Max Biaggi, Alberto Tomba, Yury Chechi, Harada, Marco Pantani, Ciro Ferrara, Antonio Conte;

Culture: Umberto Eco, Dario Fo, Franca Rame, Enzo Biagi, Oliviero Toscani, Luciano De Crescenzo, Willy Pasini, Alberto Bevilacqua, Bruno Vespa, Carmen La Sorella, Lilly Gruber, Vittorio Sgarbi, Furio Colombo, Herman Daly;

Science: Christian Barnard, Prof. Umberto Veronesi, Frederick Leboyer, Deepack Chopra, Rita Levi Montalcini

Since 1908 Royalty, Politicians and internationally famous artists have created that legendary magical atmosphere that still pervades the Grand Hotel today. It's fame was created by the excited voices of the

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2

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glamorous and often eccentric guests and the gaiety of music from the dancing parties of the years between the two wars, and the legend lives on today. It has not been diminished by the careful restorations carried out in the 1950's and the Grand Hotel continues to offer its magical and luxurious splendour, the very epitome of luxury and of exclusive tourism, offering premium service and irresistible prestige.

The Grand Hotel Rimini has inspired fantasies and dreams since its inauguration and many "Riminesi" (either by birth or by adoption) have a strong affection for it.

The memories and dreams of Federico Fellini were realized in *Amarcord*, the film which was released in 1973, consecrating the myth of the Grand Hotel for the rest of the world.

"...the Rimini Grand Hotel was the fabled world of riches, luxury, oriental magnificence. When descriptions from novels, weren't stimulating enough to inspire evocative scenes in my imagination, I would draw forth the Grand Hotel, like certain shabby little theatres that use the same background scenery for all situations. We would turn it around like rats to try and get a look inside, but it was impossible. So we would peep into the great courtyard behind (always in shadow with its palms reaching up to the 5th floor) full of cars with fascinating, indecipherable number plates."

"...The Grand Hotel was surrounded by and wrapped in a thousand mysteries, in an atmosphere of shivers..." according to Piero Meldini, accomplished writer of Romagnole affairs. *"...it was a place of malice and gossip, a "free port"; where a different morality prevailed, perfectly tolerated. Fascism as well contributed to this myth, as Mussolini, who had his family at Riccione, had Petacci at the Grand Hotel and rushed to be with her at night. But around the immense building, a sort of mountain in a panorama of villas and little houses, another thousand myths were also arising, voices without basis yet still probable"*.

For further information, please contact:

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