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HESELBRAND ARCHITECTS UNVEIL RENOVATION OF HISTORIC FATTORIA BUILDING AT ARTISTS' RETREAT VILLA LENA IN TUSCANY



Image credit: Photography: Henrik Lundell, Art direction: Victor Melchior Olsson

Internationally recognised architects Hesselbrand unveil the renovation of artist retreat Villa Lena's treasured Fattoria building ready for the summer season. The new design enhances the social interaction between guests throughout the site, diversifying the estate's hosting capability and improving sustainability.

Hesselbrand's design concept emphasises the playful meeting of traditional and contemporary which is already a trademark of Villa Lena's rustic aesthetic. A carefully curated palette of organic materials and forms have been combined in a way which enhances and amplifies this unique juxtaposition between old and new in both the guest rooms and surrounding social spaces.

The building has been adapted to include a new large entrance with a prominent double staircase, allowing a walkway through the building while creating a new setting for events and ceremonies. New guest room have been synced with this design on either side of the pathway, each facing outwards, simultaneously creating privacy and improved access.

Guest rooms feature oak floors and wood panelling, created by local, highly skilled artisans using traditional Italian modernist and post-war joinery design and architecture. The en-suite bathrooms reflect the contemporary classical mix of the rooms, finished with local Carrara marble and custom-made ornamental stainless-steel vanity units. Sliding doors allow for an easy interaction between guests in the bathroom and in the bedroom, enhancing the feeling of intimacy that the new layout provides.

The new Fattoria bedrooms add a deluxe offering to the estate, perfectly complementing the other accommodation options available from the simpler San Michele bedrooms to the larger family-style Renacchi apartments across the sprawling estate.

Fattoria's ground floor makes use of the original qualities in the new design by opening up each room, creating flow through the multifunctional spaces. The new layout allows the building to accommodate a more diverse range of events such as weddings or talks, with the main hall providing seating for up to seventy guests. Other new features include an art library, light and rain pavilion and yoga studio as well as a wine cellar.

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The communal art library has the feel of a gallery and an artist's studio, displaying many of the works that have been obtained on a continuous rotation, as well as newly commissioned pieces from past residents. The light and rain pavilion, an open-air cabana, allows guests to engage with the stunning surroundings and provide a space for quiet contemplation and relaxation.



Continuing with Villa Lena's commitment to sustainability, the newly renovated Fattoria is powered significantly by the solar panels already used throughout the hotel. In addition, Villa Lena has continued to advance its water collection systems increasing the hotel's water sustainability, and as of 2019, Villa Lena's newly expanded 2,000m² vegetable garden will use completely sustainable water systems.

The renovated Fattoria building also features Villa Lena's first Honeymoon suite, Casetta del'Amore, a secluded and semi-standalone house at the back of Fattoria offering a luxurious hide-away for couples. Casetta del'Amore features a living room, ideal for a dinner for two or for entertaining friends, a large bath tub and a private garden with seating area for al-fresco drinks.

In addition to Casetta del'Amore, Fattoria offers two room types (superior and large superior) ranging from 25m² to 43m². All rooms capture the style, culture and ethos that Villa Lena represents. All rooms come with AC temperature control, dimmable lights and large superior rooms come with bath tubs.

Magnus Casselbrant and Jesper Henriksson of Hesselbrand said; "As an architectural practise working primarily with cultural and residential projects, it has been an amazing opportunity to work with Lena on the design for a truly contemporary and sustainable hotel design. Fattoria has served so many varied uses throughout the years, so we are excited to use our design to finally open up the site, create new spaces and allow everyone to experience this rich and characterful building."

Lena Evstafieva owner of Villa Lena says; "Fattoria is at the heart of the social scene here at Villa Lena, so to improve and grow it has always been an ambition of mine. Hesselbrand have really encompassed all the attributes that Villa Lena already has to offer into the new design and it has been a pleasure having them here working on the project."

Villa Lena is more than a hotel, it is a cultural and artistic project and its interiors reflect this through an ongoing record of time passed. Rates for 2019 in Fattoria start from €389. Rates at Villa Lena start from €149 on a half-board basis.

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For further information on Villa Lena, please visit the website www.villa-lena.it

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ABOUT HESELBRAND

Hesselbrand's work has been exhibited widely, including at the Venice Architecture Biennale, Victoria & Albert Museum and Milan Architecture Week. They have taught at the Architectural Association and are currently teaching at the London School of Architecture and Oslo School of Architecture and Design. Recent clients include Alyx, the British Council, Nike and Pegasus Life. The practice was founded by Martin Brandsdal, Magnus Casselbrant and Jesper Henriksson, with offices located in London and Oslo.

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ABOUT VILLA LENA

Villa Lena is more than a hotel; it is a cultural and artistic project. Founded by contemporary art collector Lena Evstafieva, her musician husband Jérôme Hadey and their friend Lionel Bensemoun, a successful entrepreneur and founder of the hip Parisian nightclub Le Baron, Villa Lena aims to bring together their experiences in entertainment, music, art, film and other creative fields in one place. Art and culture are at the heart of the project and the estate is a creatively inspiring and serene place both for individuals and families, with a diverse and international context for the guests and the artists of Villa Lena.

The restoration of Villa Lena commenced in 2013. Interior designer Clarisse Demory revived the living spaces by recycling and restoring some of the existing Tuscan furniture combined with vintage mid-century pieces. This eclectic "neo folk" style creates a fresh and uncluttered atmosphere throughout the hotel. Subsequent developments include the 2017 renovation of the San Michele building in collaboration with previous resident Fred Rigby; and the latest renovation of Fattoria in collaboration with Hesselbrand. Rooms are designed with an emphasis on easy chic and spaces are filled with vintage pieces, recycled furniture and art produced at the residency.

Offering multiple places to stay and to rest and enjoy your break, guests are invited to rent apartments or houses which are spread over the estate, including rooms in converted stables, self-contained apartments, and private houses. San Michele is located right in the centre of the property, next to the main pool and with the views of either the 19th century villa or Tuscan rolling hills. San Michele rooms have been renovated in the winter of 2016/17 and offer en-suite and shared bathrooms with AC and wifi. Santa Maria is a former hunters lodge recently renovated; Santa Maria now houses four modest one bedroom apartments. Renacchi is set within 10-minute walking distance from the heart of the property and is ideal for a family holiday. It houses 6 individual apartments, each fully equipped with their own kitchen and dining area. The pool and an outdoor wood fire grill area are perfect for evening BBQ's, which can be used by all guests, as well as a kid's park. Fattoria houses ancient stables remodelled into rooms with high ceilings, terraces and tall fireplaces and Villa Lena's first honeymoon suite: Casetta Del'Amore. Stento and Casetta Bella are two separate houses with a shared pool 15 minutes' walk from the centre.

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