



Villa Tuscolana Park Hotel

HOTEL, RESTAURANT, WELNESS & SPA - MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, RETREATS & EVENTS



History and Architectures of the Venue (from Romans to the present days)



HISTORY

Villa Tuscolana is the most high and panoramic Villa among *Tuscolane Villas*; it is situated on the *Monte Tuscolo*, the hill on the top of Frascati, where probably was the Marco Tullio Cicerone's ancient mansion.



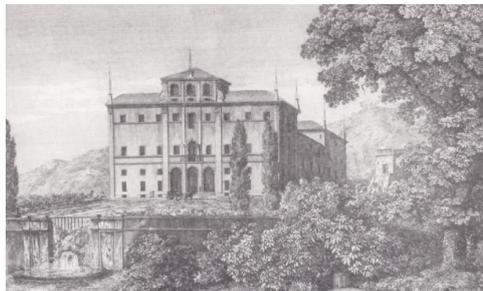
Since the Middle Ages the land on which stands Villa Tuscolana belonged to the Abbey of Grottaferrata, which on 4 February 1564 granted it in emphyteusis to Ascanio Rufini, maybe a relative of the most famous Alessandro Rufini, bishop of Melfi, a relative of Pope Paul III (born Alessandro Farnese) and part of the Farnesian circle. He owned at that time a Villa nearby, La Rufina (nowadays Villa Falconieri). In 1578, Monsignor Rufini came into possession of the plot on which he had erected (but for someone there was already) a modest rectangular construction with an annexed service building; La Rufinella in fact, endearment coined to distinguish it from the larger and adjacent Rufina.



At the death of Cardinal Rufini, because of the debts incurred to finance the two villas and left unpaid, the Villa passed into the hands of the Apostolic Chamber, which sold it soon, with the addition of three land rubles to the Cardinal Guido Ferreri, nephew of S. Carlo Borromeo and relative of Pope Pio IV. Cardinal Ferreri restored the old building or perhaps rebuilt it completely giving it the name of Villa Ferreria. The events of the Villa were linked to those of the Villa Falconieri of which it underwent all the changes of ownership. Before his death (May 21, 1585), the Cardinal Ferreri donated the Villa to Cardinal Francesco Sforza, from which it passed, in 1587, to his nephew Mario Santi di Santafiori, who sold it in the same year to the Cardinal Giovanni Vincenzo Gonzaga.



In 1603 the Villa belonged to Vincenzo de Nobili, who in 1604 sold it to Apostolic Chamber. Then Pope Clemente VIII (Ippolito Aldobrandini) sold it to his nephew, Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, who, since 1615, granted it for the lifetime to Cardinal Gian Battista Deti, his relative from his mother, who did not have his own residence and was of very poor health. Cardinal Deti died in 1630 and in 1639 the Villa was sold to Marquises Sacchetti, to whom it remained until 1740.



In 1740 it was bought by the Jesuit Fathers of the Roman College (the Order of the Company of Jesus founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola), who, wanting to use it as a summer residence for the Order, decided to modify the Villa so that the building would respond better for their needs. So they turned to a prestigious architect, the great Luigi Vanvitelli (at the time under the Apostolic Chamber), which turned it into a luxurious home but at the same time a place of welcome for the Jesuit community.

The '700 as known was the century in which the passion for archeology was expressed as never before; also in the huge wooded park of "La Rufinella" excavations were carried out that gave birth to numerous remains of an ancient Domus Patrizia of pre imperial Roman times called "Tusculum" and belonged to Marco Tullio Cicerone (the author of the *Tusculane disputationes* in which deals with philosophical conversations held with friends in the park area called the Academy). It seems that the great arpinate speaker, enemy of Catilina and Clodio, learned at Villa Tusculum that he had been banned together with 16 other republicans. Soon, in 43 b.c., he was killed by the centurion Erennio near Gaeta. As a result of such archeological findings "la Rufinella" definitively changed its name becoming known as "la Tuscolana".

But it changed owner again. With the suppression of the Jesuit order, which took place in 1773 at the behest of Pope Clement XIV (the order will be reconstituted in 1814 at the behest of Pius VII), the Villa returned to the Apostolic Chamber; but not for long, because it was given in 1790 in emphyteusis to such a Pavesi. Subsequently, in the Napoleonic era, Villa Tuscolana was sold to the sons of the French consul in Rome, Comellé.



In 1804 the Comellé had to (more or less forced) renounce and give it to Luciano Bonaparte, the Napoleon's brother, who bought it as a base for his excavations at Tuscolo, being a passionate archaeologist. The Bonaparte held a veritable campaign of archaeological excavations in the area owned by the Villa and in the city of Tusculum, sending many of the artifacts found at the museums of Paris.

Not getting along with his brother and forced into exile, in 1804 Luciano had settled in Rome and in 1814 he had obtained from the Pope Pius VII the Principality of Canino (a small village of the "Tuscia viterbese").

Then Luciano reconciled with Napoleon during "*the hundred days*" (1815).



Luciano Bonaparte in the Villa Rufinella

Painted from François-Xavier Fabre in 1808, Luciano, the Emperor's younger brother, is standing and wearing civilian clothes in the serene setting of the Villa Rufinella in Frascati.

His concentrated expression and the book by Torquato Tasso half-open in his right hand qualify him as a man of study and culture, in contrast with the heroic portraits of Napoleon on the battlefields or with signs of power (NAPOLEONIC MUSEUM OF ROME).

There is a nice anecdote about the stay of the Bonaparte in Frascati (in Frascati and Villa Tuscolana also Letizia and Paolina passed, respectively mother and sister of Napoleon and Luciano, as well as the emperor himself).



It is said that Napoleon, after tasting the Cannellino wine, properly typical of this area, has appreciated it so much to try to graft the vine in the French region then called Chalons sur Marne. The region was run by a Benedictine friar, Dom Perignon (who is incorrectly attributed to the discovery of the famous Champagne), to whom it seems that Napoleon entrusted the cuttings of the Cannellino wine. Not that local winemakers want to imagine that in the little bubbles of the Champagne there may be those of the Cannellino wine; however it is legitimate to imagine that the name of the region, nowadays Champagne, can derive from the "Campagnes Romain".

In 1817 a group of brigands of the famous band of the brigand Gasperone, commanded by Tommaso Transerici, tried to kidnap Prince Luciano during one of his parties in the gardens of Villa Tuscolana, but the readiness of a butler who dressed as a prince and was mistaken for Luciano Bonaparte, he saved him.

Following this episode, in 1820 Luciano sold to Maria Anna di Savoia, Duchess of Chablais. Thereafter Queen Maria Cristina di Borbone, wife of Carlo Felice di Savoia (the eleventh son of King Vittorio Amedeo III - Viceroy of Sardinia and then King of Italy for the abdication of brother Vittorio Emanuele I in 1821), inherited the Villa for testamentary legacy of the duchess Maria Anna and lived there for long periods until 1824.

Maria Cristina and Carlo Felice had no children and spent part of their lives at Villa Tuscolana, as in the Castle of Aglié in Piedmont.



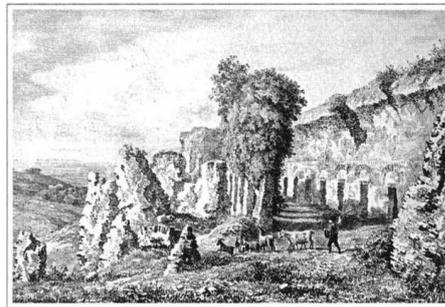
Maria Cristina di Borbone



Carlo Felice di Savoia



In addition, Maria Cristina, also a passionate archaeologist, financed a campaign of excavations in the territory of the Villa, entrusting them to the president of the Pontifical Academy of Archeology, Luigi Biondi, who began the excavations on Tuscolo. Subsequently, the excavations continued until 1839 in the territory of the Villa and Tuscolo, under the direction of the architect Luigi Canina: the archaeological finds were then transferred to the Castle of Aglié.



In 1834 the poet Giuseppe Gioacchino Belli was a guest of the Monarchs in the Villa; he was much impressed by Frascati to whom he dedicated the sonnet entitled to Villa Tuscolana, "La Rufinella" precisely.



After 1849 the Villa became property (in an inheritance axis) of King Vittorio Emanuele II who in 1872 sold it to Donna Elisabetta Aldobrandini Lancellotti, who realized the project to connect Villa Tuscolana with both Villa Aldobrandini and Villa Lancellotti. The Villa remained the property of the Lancellotti until 1966, when it was sold to the Salesians of Don Bosco.

During the Second World War the Villa was damaged by bombing. Since 1966, radical renovations were carried out by the architect Mergé; accurate works have given new life to the Mansion and its centuries-old beauty.



ARCHITECTURE

Little is known about the original appearance of the Villa; certainly when it was built by Rufini and then restructured by Ferreri it had to be rather modest; this was still in 1620, under the Aldobrandini.



From an engraving of the Greuter appears a very simple main building, with a rectangular plan, with three floors and a frontal ashlar portal which was accessed by means of a small staircase. Behind this main building, the plan shows another one, aligned to the first on a longitudinal axis, parallelepiped-shaped, whose function, perhaps used as service rooms, is ignored. The interior of the main building had the service areas on the mezzanine floor, the living room, five bedrooms and a dressing room on the main floor, while the servants' quarters were on the upper floor. This structure had an Italian garden on the left and in front of it; the Villa was famous for its extensive olive groves.

The estate remained more or less the same until 1741, when, at the behest of the Jesuits, Luigi Vanvitelli waited for the definitive construction of the Villa.

The building commissioned by Jesuits was to respond to the dual requirement of Villa and residence of a community.

The Vanvitelli had to take into account the pre-existing buildings, which partly incorporated into the new construction.

The original building is today the back part of the Villa to which the brilliant Vanvitelli added a further building (on four levels) grafting it perpendicular to the original.



In practice he created a set characterized by a Greek cross plan (T), with the arm towards the longest mountain (the vertical arm of T), characterized by long corridors that seemed to have no end and that gave access, on the right and on the left, to the largest possible number of rooms, all almost the same size; he also planned for the upper floors of the meeting rooms and, to have more space available, he also got a mezzanine.



The horizontal arm of the T was built from scratch by Vanvitelli: an imposing and very beautiful facade, divided by stone pillars that make the architecture of the central part more precious; very beautiful also the portico, built in three arches that end with a cross-vaulted roof. At the top of the facade, in the central part, stands a loggia, the "Belvedere" with round arches.



All the main corridors converge in the entrance of the building, which is accessed by a wide elliptical ramp that surrounds the Italian garden; also the ancient chapel of the Villa is elliptical, with a floor embellished with ellipses that converge. The chapel has a beautiful dome adorned with stuccos and a fresco depicting the S.S. Trinity (all original works by Vanvitelli, which have lasted over time).



Summarily, the current garden traces the ancient design, but nothing is known of its original arrangement, of which there is only the terracing facing the facade, with a small shell-shaped fountain inserted into an exedra and the nymphaeum on the right of the facade. For the rest, the Villa was to be surrounded by the forest.

