# uniques

special ones

September 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Giardino, Conventino and Palazzo della Gherardesca Four Seasons Hotel Firenze

formgiving Aimone Bonucci & Francesco Ciardi www.fuoricentrostudio.com

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# uniques

### index

7	words of welcome	45
9	Sandro Binelli	46
10	Matteo Renzi	50
11	Monty Shadow	52
11	Stefano Ricci	55
13	the event	57
14	A uniques event - The project	58
16	″q″ as in uniques - The brand	- 59
17	The 2010 edition - Highlights of the	60
	event	62
18	2010 Best of Show	63
20	2010 List of prizes	65
		66
23	2011 edition	68
24	The Plan of the Event	70
26	Best of Show - uniques prizes	, 73
27	Programme for entrants	74
		76
29	uniques locations	
31	Florence - unique among cities	79
32	Palazzo Vecchio	86
33	Palazzo della Gherardesca	88
		89
35	judges & speakers	90
36	Adolfo Orsi	91
37	Tom Tjaarda	92
38	Style Judges	93
39	Class Judges	94
42	Speakers	
		96

### partners

Officine Panerai

### uniques cars

class 2: Pre-War Open Cars class 4: Post-War British Elegance class <u>5</u>: Post-War Open Cars class 10: Show Cars Bertone BMW Maserati Mercedes-Benz

MAC Group - team for uniques







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## Sandro Binelli

### President of MAC Group

I am delighted to have the opportunity of presenting for the second year in a row *uniques special ones*, an event that already became a rendez-vous for collectors of unique items and objects from the high range world.

The creation of an event able to be a Concours, an exhibition and international relations gathering all in one was a project we've carefully studied and designed for years to then realize it: meeting the approval of many experts of the sector and car enthusiasts at its start up was a pleasant gratification. This year uniques is specially built around the eternal concept of Excellence and it is able to impressively gather in just one place whoever excels in whatever field, becoming a point of reference for their own self individuality and their Manufacture and Craftmanship.

The Unique Cars International Concours, heart of the event, involves selected cars of categories and criteria where uniqueness is the distinctive element, while the format we have applied welcomes the involvement of both luxury and sports car manufacturers as well as coachbuilders. It is a special honor to announce that uniques special ones will host the European première of the latest 'Alfa Romeo TZ3 Stradale' by Zagato: it makes us particularly proud to receive, after only one year, the recognition to be a stage of such an importance to be employed for a première of this kind. Zagato will really be an outstanding presence this year: on top of the TZ<sub>3</sub>, the Milanese atelier will bring to Florence its "Contemporary" cars, built between 2000 and 2010 and never showed all together. Among them the achingly beautiful Aston Martin V12 Zagato, recently confirmed for production. We are very pleased to have again a significant number of cars in the Concours: the carefully selected audience and the city of Florence complete the picture.

Sure that we're heading in the right direction, in 2011 we decided to hold it once more in the beautiful scene of Florence. Last year warm welcome received from Authorities, from the Municipality and the local community made it an easy step to come once more to this beautiful city, which is itself the symbol of uniqueness and a place of excellence

But it is not simply a concours: *uniques special ones* also has on display exceptional handmade articles, fashion accessories and one-off designer creations of such a high standard as to make it an exhibition and a meeting point for anyone who recognizes himself in those distinctive values of the unique. My heartfelt thanks go to Stefano Ricci, exceptional designer who doesn't simply makes his showpieces available for exhibition: he believed in this project from the very beginning and keeps on associating its name and brand to *uniques special ones*. Please allow me to thank our partners Marcello Fratini, Monty Shadow, Franco Cologni, Tenuta Argentiera and Officine Panerai. My thanks also go to Florence's Mayor, Matteo Renzi as well as to Adolfo Orsi, Tom Tjaarda and to all judges who took part in the concours. A special thanks to Andrea Zagato for all the masterpieces he shared with us. And to the Centro Storico Fiat di Torino for the striking Mefistofele. And of course I want to remember the important support of two prestige companies as Mercedes-Benz and Richemont. Last but not least my thanks to the collectors who became spokespersons of the uniques project in the world.







## Matteo Renzi

### Mayor of Florence

It's our pleasure to have the event "Uniques special ones" back in Florence. For the second year we're honoured to host people who love 'unique pieces' and rare items from every kind of field. And Florence, the cradle of uniqueness, of genius that cannot be repeated, unique itself in every piece of stone set in centuries, cannot but offer its entire beauty to your convention, for the guest to enjoy.

It is fascinatingly contrasting how the serial product for excellence, the car – something that in the idea of the most ones is the symbol itself of mechanical, dull and characterless work - can generate an event like this one that you organize, about uniqueness. It is the demonstration that we can find, we have to find uniqueness and excellence everywhere. The pursuit of excellence, as the one of Beauty, is a duty that we have inherited from our great past. It is not something that we have to look for or expect to find only now and then. Uniqueness as the expression of each excellence and speciality is something that we have the commitment to accomplish everyday, in every single action of our life. It is the best part of everybody, the uniqueness of everyone of us, that has to be free and become the symbol of our lifestyle. In Florence, this is what we're trying to do: on the path of our ancestors, we are working for giving the best to our citizens, for their best quality of life. This is what we call "wellness": the beauty of living in Florence.

I hope you'll enjoy it too, during your staying here, and will continue feeling here as at your own "unique" place.

# Monty Shadow



"The world will be saved by Culture, Art, Poetry, Lunatics and Craftsmen".

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all craftsmen and genuine artists that make the world different and foster as well the art of excellence, i.e. the art of craftsmanship. This has taken place in the unique and prestigious venue of Florence, city of incredible history, heritage, civilization and home to the most fascinating craftsmen of the present and the past.

uniques special ones is in Florence to address a social challenge, a unique art exhibition with pieces related to the automotive world, using craftsmen and arts as a tool for social change. Craftsmen, Culture, Music, Photography carry unanimous endorsement of craftsmen and all environments acting as guardians, trustees and ambassadors all over the globe.

*uniques special ones* showcases key social issues using the power of craftsmanship and uniqueness, to promote this great event in Florence in the world of craftsmanship.

Will the world respond to the unique Bespoke Art of craftsmanship influence in China and Asia? Which role will Russia and India have where there is an incredible world of craftsmen? In the European world established craftsmen already exist, as well as in other parts of the world. We will see what the future holds for us and maybe we'll find an answer to some of these questions.

We should talk more about craftsmen and *uniques special ones* more than ever, because craftsmen will save the world.

# Stefano Ricci

Never compromise quality in favour of quantity. This statement has been my philosophy through decades.

This is why, I am pleased to confirm my support to uniques special ones, that is following this vision.

I would like to wish my warmest welcome to the privileged guests of this second edition with a message of emotions.

In a world of great numbers and new technologies, you will join an extraordinary journey into the passion of handcrafted dreams as I have always done with my collections of true "100% Made in Italy".







# A uniques event

The Project

### *uniques special ones:* the Concours, exhibition and international relations format

At its second year, *uniques special ones* renews its original formula providing simultaneously for an international Concours, an exhibition conceived to showcase and add value to 'unique' or 'rare' cars and other artifacts that are limited editions or special due to the role they have played in history, and an international public relations format. In this 2011 edition uniques will celebrate Excellence, through exclusive craftsmanship, manufacture and very special products worldwide. The heart of uniques is The Unique Cars International Concours dedicated to those special collectors who own cars of which only one was built or remains today: one-off cars, the remaining cars of extremely limited series, prototypes, concept and show cars, famous cars (cars of famous personalities, cars that have become famous for their victories of the past, cars with special bodies, cars with the first or last chassis numbers) and limited edition cars (fewer than 20 examples built or that still remain) are the categories chosen for the selection process of eligible cars. The concept was developed so to be easily exported with its format on an international level.

Once more, specific areas have been reserved to coach builders to give them the opportunity to showcase their pieces: Zagato will be at *uniques special ones* with a significant number of cars such as the Alfa Romeo TZ<sub>3</sub> Stradale, at its première in Europe – a true event in the event. But also the legendary Alfetta 159, drove by Juan Manuel Fangio to win the 1951 Formula One championship or the Aston Martin V12 Zagato, recently confirmed for production.

Eligible cars have been selected by a commis-

sion, which also entered each vehicle in a specific class: an international jury will be in charge of assigning the awards for each class, while some historic cars and all new cars will be voted exclusively by the public.





### The exhibition

uniques is about more than cars, it includes exceptional unique artifacts as an integral part of the concept. An integral part of the event's concept is its presentation of rare and unique objects: cars, naturally, but also important, unparalleled objects from the high-end world, from jewellery to objects of design and from fashion accessories to works of art. A carefully chosen selection of deluxe brands will put their savoir-faire on display, presenting objects and artistry characterized by the most refined craftsmanship. Companies will not only present their items, but also the processes that lead to the creation of unique models.

The aim for the coming years is to welcome private collectors to contribute proactively to the process of the exhibition. A valuable input has been made by our presenting sponsors. The concept of 'unique' and 'rare' has been carefully developed in detail on many levels, including an Italian distinctive memory, the winery tradition: Palazzo della Gherardesca's vinery will be at hand to better know and understand the unique excellence of wines from the Tenuta Argentiera. And the view of Florence itself provides for a memorable exhibition and experience: the city's artistic heritage, indeed, is second to none, a glorious testimony to centuries of patronage and creativity as in Palazzo Vecchio and Terrazza degli Uffizi.

### International relations format

Last but not least, uniques special ones is also an international relations format. We have conceived the creation of a community in which collectors taking part to the event will be welcome to join our exclusive and elegant club. Throughout the year, members of the 'uniques Club' will be involved in exclusive high-quality events and will have the chance to be included in satellite rendez-vous with the distinctive features of uniques. Various meetings on an international scale has been already successfully organized through all the current year and other ones are planned for the following months and 2012: the 'uniques Club' is planning on gathering its associates at some of the main foreign luxury capitals during major international events.

# "q" as in uniques

the brand

The uniques brand was conceived to convey the essence of its concept, to reflect the character and values of the event, to express the spirit of a savoir vivre that is exclusive, inimitable and unique in the experiences it brings to life.

The creative project is the result of a process of analysis and research which drew on the expertise of Carmi e Ubertis, Milan, and their staff of specialists in the art of communicating an aesthetics of contemporary luxury that is beyond style, fashion and personal taste. They formed a team of creative specialists in the written word, together with type designers who speak the visual language of letters, modulated through a masterful understanding of colour and shade, as well as the art of printing and binding.

The aim was to create a brand image which allows the works exhibited to speak the essence of their own unique nature, simultaneously conveying uniques' extraordinary power to showcase every creation in a manner that speaks the language of collectors, experts and connoisseurs of beauty.

The team's first strategic decision was to take the name "uniques" and ally it with "special ones" to divest it of any association with "alone", transforming it into an evocation of creations that are "exclusive", "peerless", "authentic" and "inestimable".

They then developed a typestyle that reflects the creative process behind the works exhibited, being based on an existing typeface with a contemporary design that is elegant without being baroque, and modern without being ephemeral. Manual creative touches accentuate the grace of each individual letter's contours, focusing on "q", "e" and "u" in a secret play on the initials of the words that encapsulate the essence of uniques: Quality, Exceptional and Unique.

Completing the architecture of the graphic design, a modular motif built around the logo allows it to be repeated infinitely in a texture capable of emblazoning areas, installations and communications media with the full character and heritage of the event, even when the logo itself is not present.

The colour palette was likewise chosen to be complementary without being obtrusive, providing an understated foil to the rich diversity of works exhibited, just like uniques itself.



# The 2010 edition

Highlights of the event

N. 110	Cars entered
n. 62	Cars taking part in the Concours
n. 58	International Collectors of Classic Cars coming from 12 different countries
n. 42	Automotive brands involved
€ 100 mln	Total value of gathered cars, pieces of art, design, jewellery and artifacts
n. 500	Guests on Saturday, September 25th
n. 250	Guests on Saturday, Gala dinner
n. 400	Guests on Sunday, September 26th
n. 200	Guests on Sunday, Gala dinner
n. 53	National and International Journalists
n. 10	National and International Television Broadcasters

### Judging Criteria for uniques special ones

uniques special ones set a first by adopting an innovative method of judging: each car was judged by not one, but two separate teams of judges. The first team was composed of restorers, historians and experts with knowledge of a specific marque, model, or period in history. They assessed the originality and condition of preserved cars, or the quality of the restoration of restored cars. The second team appraised cars purely on their aesthetic merits.

For each class, three prizes were awarded: one for restoration/originality, one for style, and the Overall Class winner, combining the two evaluations. In some classes a single car received all three prizes, while in others two or three different cars shared the awards. The public thus understood more clearly how different criteria can be applied in judging classic cars. The Best of Show was chosen from the Overall Class winners, also taking into consideration the uniqueness of the car.

### UNIQUES

**2010 best of show** Ferrari 330 GTC Speciale - Brandon Wang



# Uniques 2010 list of prizes

prize	пг.	marque	model	name and lastname	country
			BEST OF SHOW		
Best of Show	73	FERRARI	330 GTC Speciale	Brandon Wang	HONG KONG
		1st Class	- PRE WAR ELEGANCE		
3rd	5	SS S.S.I	Two Door Saloon	Andrea Walliman	SWITZERLAN
2nd	9	BENTLEY	4 1/4 Litre Drophead Coupé	Gerry Leumann	SWITZERLAN
Style	3	LANCIA	Astura Torpedo Grand Sport	Guido Lamperti	ITALY
Originality and Restoration	3	LANCIA	Astura Torpedo Grand Sport	Guido Lamperti	ITALY
Overall Class Winner	3	LANCIA	Astura Torpedo Grand Sport	Guido Lamperti	ITALY
		2nd Class	- PRE-WAR SPORTS CAR		
зrd	13	OM	665 S Superba	Albert Wetz	LUXEMBOUR
2nd	14	MG	C-Type Midget	Graham Watts	UK
Style	14	MG	C-Type Midget	Graham Watts	UK
, Originality and Restoration	12	ASTON MARTIN	1.5 litre Sports	Giampaolo Bonechi	ITALY
Overall Class Winner	12	ASTON MARTIN	1.5 litre Sports	Giampaolo Bonechi	ITALY
		3rd Class - PO	ST WAR BRITISH ELEGAN	CE	
зrd	24	ROLLS-ROYCE	Silver Cloud III Cabriolet	Marcello Fratini	ITALY
2nd	26	ROLLS-ROYCE	Silver Cloud III Flying Spur	Marcello Fratini	ITALY
Style	24	ROLLS-ROYCE	Silver Cloud III Cabriolet	Marcello Fratini	ITALY
, Originality and Restoration	20	ROLLS-ROYCE	Silver Wraith Cabriolet	Frank Ricciardelli	USA
Overall Class Winner	20	ROLLS-ROYCE	Silver Wraith Cabriolet	Frank Ricciardelli	USA
	4t	h Class - EARLY PC	OST-WAR ITALIAN COACHB	UILDERS	
3rd	31	BRISTOL	400 Cabriolet	Adrian Berry	UK
2nd	30	BENTLEY	MK VI Drophead Coupé	Arnold Kawlath	FRANCE
Style	35	MERCEDES-BENZ	300 Coupé Speciale	Fred Kriz	P. MONACO
Originality and Restoration	30	BENTLEY	MK VI Drophead Coupé	Arnold Kawlath	FRANCE
Overall Class Winner	35	MERCEDES-BENZ	300 Coupé Speciale	Fred Kriz	P. MONACO
		5th C	Class - BARCHETTAS		
3rd	43	FERRARI	500 Mondial	Pierre Mellinger	FRANCE
2nd	44	PORSCHE	550 Spyder	Win Van Gierdergom	BELGIUM
Style	42	FERRARI	500 Mondial	Mauro Lotti	ITALY
Originality and Restoration	43	FERRARI	500 Mondial	Pierre Mellinger	FRANCE
Overall Class Winner	42	FERRARI	500 Mondial	Mauro Lotti	ITALY
		6th Class - 19	50'S FERRARI BERLINETTA	١S	
Зıq	47	FERRARI	340 America Coupé	John B. Croul	USA
2nd	49	FERRARI	212/225 S Export Coupé	Marcello Fratini	ITALY
Style	47	FERRARI	340 America Coupé	John B. Croul	USA
Originality and Restoration	49	FERRARI	212/225 S Export Coupé	Marcello Fratini	ITALY
Overall Class Winner	51	FERRARI	250 MM	Mauro Lotti	ITALY

# Uniques 2010 list of prizes

prize	пг.	marque	model	name and lastname	country
		7th Clas	s - OPEN SPORTS CAR		
3rd 2nd Style Originality and Restoration <b>Overall Class Winner</b>	58 56 55 60 <b>55</b>	JAGUAR ASTON MARTIN MERCEDES-BENZ LANCIA MERCEDES-BENZ	XK 140 OTS DB 2/4 DHC 300 SLS Roadster Prototype Fulvia Sport 1.3 Trasformabile <b>300 SLS Roadster Prototype</b>	John Houtkamp Stefano Ricci Alberto Cefis Guido Lamperti Alberto Cefis	NETHERLANDS ITALY ITALY ITALY ITALY ITALY
		8th Clas	s - POST WAR COUPES		
3rd 2nd Style Originality and Restoration <b>Overall Class Winner</b>	66 64 64 6 <u>3</u> <b>63</b>	MASERATI MERCEDES-BENZ MERCEDES-BENZ FIAT <b>FIAT</b>	A6G/54 Berlinetta 300 SL 300 SL 8V Supersonic <b>8V Supersonic</b>	Mauro Lotti Pier Angelo Masselli Pier Angelo Masselli Jan De Reu <b>Jan De Reu</b>	ITALY ITALY ITALY BELGIUM BELGIUM
		9th Class - 196	o'S GRANTURISMO COUPI	ES	
3rd 2nd Style Originality and Restoration <b>Overall Class Winner</b>	72 74 74 72 <b>73</b>	FERRARI LAMBORGHINI LAMBORGHINI FERRARI <b>FERRARI</b>	275 GTB/4 Miura P 400 SV Miura P 400 SV 275 GTB/4 <b>330 GTC Speciale</b>	Hans Weth Mauro Lotti Mauro Lotti Hans Weth <b>Brandon Wang</b>	GERMANY ITALY ITALY GERMANY HONG KONG
			CATEGORIES		
One-off model The only remaining car Prototypes Concept and show cars Famous Cars Cars from an extremely limited production run	1 70 61 69 62 39	DUESENBERG FERRARI ABARTH ALFA ROMEO ASTON MARTIN ERMINI	Model X Boat Roadster 250 GTE 204 A 2600 coupé Speciale DB2 Vantage Coupé 1500 Sport	Peter Heydon Alberto Cappelli Mark Gessler Roland D' leteren Claudia Tagliaferri Giuliano Bensi	USA ITALY USA BELGIUM ITALY ITALY
PEOPLE'S CHOICE					
Saturday 25th of September Sunday 26th of September	3	LANCIA ROLLS-ROYCE	Astura Torpedo Grand Sport Silver Cloud Estate Car	Guido Lamperti Marcello Fratini	ITALY ITALY
			FIVA'S CHOICE		
FIVA's Choice	4	ALFA ROMEO	6C 2300 GT	Luciano Caporali	ITALY
		S	PECIAL PRIZES		
Special Prize Special Prize Special Prize Special Prize	87 90 91 108	BENTLEY ALFA ROMEO FIAT DIATTO	Flying Star Touring TZ3 Zagato 500 Tender 2 Ottovù	Touring Superleggera Martin Kapp - Zagato Castagna Milano Giovanni Piero Rotundo	ITALY GERMANY ITALY ITALY





# The Plan of the Event

# uniques

special ones

Infopoint
Accreditation
Cars Presentation Area
Display Area
Judges Area

**SEPTEMBER 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011** Giardino, Conventino and Palazzo della Gherardesca Four Seasons Hotel Firenze





# STEFANO RICCI

### Best of show

uniques prizes

### Best of Show

Voted by the judges from amongst the winners of each class.

Announced during the Best of Show Ceremony at the Conventino, Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> of September. Trophy provided by Stefano Ricci.

### Class awards

Voted by the judges and announced during the parade on Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> of September in the Giardino della Gherardesca.

For each class there will be a prize for: Best of Class for originality and restoration, Best of Class for styling, Overall Best of Class. Overall Best of Class winner, second and third in Class will also receive a rosette.

### Special awards

Voted by the selection committee and announced during the parade on Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Giardino della Gherardesca.

### Special awards for the various Categories

Voted by the selection committee. Dedicated to the eligibility categories of the cars and announced during the parade on Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> of September in the Giardino della Gherardesca.

Special awards for cars manufactured in the last twenty years Announced by the selection committee and

awarded during the parade on Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September in the Giardino della Gherardesca.

### FIVA award

Voted by the FIVA representatives present at the concours and awarded during the parade on Saturday the  $3^{\rm rd}$  of September in the Giardino della Gherardesca.

### Press award

Voted by the press present at the concours and awarded during the parade on Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> of September in the Giardino della Gherardesca.

### People's choice award

On Saturday and Sunday everyone present will vote for one of the cars in the Giardino della Gherardesca that was manufactured before the 'gos.

# uniques

# programme for entrants

### Friday **2**<sup>nd</sup> September

	Registration for event
oo am - 6.00 pm	
	Shuttle to car park for those who booked parking
	Cars positioned in the Giardino della Gherardesca
	Free time for entrants, coffee break all day, lunch in the Giardino della Gherardesca
	Hotel Check in
6.30 рт	Shuttle from the Four Seasons Hotel to the Gala dinner
7.00 pm	Welcome Drink at the Stefano Ricci Boutique. Dress code: suit and tie.
8.30 pm	Gala dinner at Terrazza degli Uffizi. <i>Dress code:</i> suit and tie
after dinner	Shuttle to the Four Seasons Hotel and overnight stay

### Saturday **3**<sup>rd</sup> September

.oo am - 6.oo pm	Coffee break and musical moments throughout the day
10.00 am	The judges begin work
12.00 Noon	Lunch in the Giardino della Gherardesca
from 4.00 pm	All the cars parade. Beginning of presentation by Savina Confaloni and Marco Makaus and special prizes awarded, including the people's choice
from 7.30 pm	Shuttle from the Four Seasons Hotel to the Gala dinner
from 8.30 pm	Cocktail and Gala dinner at Palazzo Vecchio. Dress code: black tie
after dinner	Shuttle to the Four Seasons Hotel

### Sunday **4**<sup>th</sup> September

Coffee break and musical moments throughout the day
The judges begin work
Art performance by Christina Oiticica in the Giardino della Gherardesca
Lunch in the Giardino della Gherardesca
Parade of 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> in each class, special prizes and people's choice awarded. Presentation by Savina Confaloni and Marco Makaus. Class winners (1⁵tplace) nominated for Best of Show grouped together.
Announcement of Best of Show in front of Conventino Cocktails and gala dinner at the Four Seasons Hotel with aperitif and music. Dress code: cocktail dress - lounge suit

### Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September

8.00 am - 12.00 Noon

ntrants and guests check out and cars leave the eve









estling between the Fiesole hills to the north and San Miniato to the south, the torrential Arno river flowing through its midst, Florence is unique for a multitude of reasons. First and foremost, there's the importance it acquired as an economic and political powerhouse in the 14th and 15th centuries, combined with its artistic pre-eminence, both of which are still visible and indeed tangible today. The city's gift for conserving the "signs of the past" as "products" of a glorious history is largely the reason for its success and renown worldwide. Having become the Wall Street of the late Middle Ages thirteen centuries after its foundation, probably by the Romans, little Fiorenza had the genius to transform power and money into works of art and architecture that were destined to endure across the ages as testimony to a sensibility and culture of patronage that are unique among their kind. Thanks to the Medicis - first Cosimo the Elder and Lorenzo the Magnifico's line, and then that of the Principate - Florence witnessed a marriage of humanist and artistic ideals that combined with the stylistic revolution of Giotto and Masaccio to give birth to what we still call the Renaissance - a marvel of city marketing. The totems that draw millions of visitors from across the world are the "children" of that period, from Michelangelo's David in the Academy Gallery to the myriad masterpieces in the Uffizi and multitude of church-museums, historic palaces, minor museums and gardens spread across the city. Every corner of Florence breathes art, history and culture, making it not so much a city as an open-air museum, and as such you can admire it both in its smallest details and as a whole. As a result, every aspect is unique, as is every vantage point from which you can admire its panoramas and skyline. Here, too, you are spoilt for choice, from Piazzale Michelangelo to Pian de' Giullari, Fort Belvedere, Bellosguardo and even Fiesole, with its alternative but no less inspiring views. Florence is also a city with many histories and many faces. Part of it even bears witness to the grandiose Parisian visions of the architects commissioned to create a modern metropolis when the Kingdom of Italy briefly moved its capital to Florence from Turin. But the true magic of Florence is its power to make your spirit soar as you explore the old medieval city, the fine Tuscan sunshine filtering down through narrow streets where the line between art and craft is blurred and constantly redrawn. In Florence, both are part of a broader mosaic and vision of culture. A vision that encompasses Dante, Giotto, Verrocchio, Leonardo, Leon Battista Alberti, Brunelleschi, Botticelli, Michelangelo and Galileo, while equally including the eighteenth century scholars who guided gentleman travelers on their Grand Tours, their sights set firmly on Florence as a unique wonder of the world. From Vieusseux to the Futurists, who found their muse in the city, Florence has continued to

their muse in the city, Florence has continued to inspire and to nourish culture across the world. For that, too, it is unique. Indeed, it has nourished every sense, including through the art of food and wine, where once again Florence has no equal.

### Palazzo Vecchio

THEFT PRINT

### uniques location

he Florence Commune commissioned the architect Arnolfo di Cambio, who already had the achievements of Santa Croce and the Duomo to his name, to undertake the building of the Palazzo Vecchio in 1299. The project was allocated the area between the church of San Piero Scheraggio and the Palazzo degli Uberti, on the ruins of the Palazzo dei Fanti and the Palazzo dell'Esecutore di Giustizia, previously the site of the Ancient Roman theatre. Originally built for the "Priors" representing the city's Major Guilds, the building came to be known as the Palazzo della Signoria from the 16th century. Together with Brunelleschi's dome it has always been the most recognizable symbol of the city's power.

Enlarged and altered many times over the centuries, the Palazzo Vecchio we see today is defined by the interior building and decoration works commissioned by Cosimo I de' Medici in around the mid-16th century, which transformed it into the ducal palace he desired. When the court of the Medicis moved to the Palazzo Pitti, it continued to house the Wardrobe and a number of government offices until 1871, when it became the seat of the City Council.

In the eyes of the world, however, the Palazzo

Vecchio is above all a treasure house of artistic and architectural masterpieces, from the courtyard designed by Michelozzo and embellished with stuccos and frescoes to the Sala di Clemente VII and Salone dei Cinquecento on the floor above. Here, a masterful cycle of paintings by Giorgio Vasari celebrates the glory of Cosimo de' Medici and the city of Florence, while an equally glorious host of statues lead to Michelangelo's famous Genius of Victory.

The second floor of the museum section of the Palazzo Vecchio takes you in into the private quarters of the Medici Court, all sumptuously decorated and furnished, including their exquisite chapel, the Capella di Eleonora, with its Agnolo Bronzino paintings. More masterpieces await in the Hall of Justice (Sala dell'Udienza) and Room of the Lilies (Sala dei Gigli), where you can find the original of Donatello's Judith and Holofernes. Splendors of another kind adorn the Hall of Geographical Maps, where you'll find an extraordinary giant globe and over fifty-three remarkable painted maps that offer an unparalleled vision of the world through 16th century eyes. Then there's the Mezzanine floor with its priceless collection of medieval and renaissance paintings and sculptures, bequeathed to Florence City Council by Charles Loeser. Last but not least, there's the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio, which includes the "albergaccio" chamber where Cosimo the Elder was imprisoned in 1433, and Girolamo Savonarola in 1498. Completed in around 1308, it is crowned with the Marzocco, a heraldic lion bearing the lily crest of Florence, a unique symbol of a city that is truly unique in the world.