

Grand Hotel QUISISANA

The building and waterproofing of two swimming pools adds a perfect finishing touch to the splendid setting of one of the world's most exclusive hotels, the Grand Hotel Quisisana on the isle of Capri.

by Giuseppe Puttini

Beloved of writers, painters, intellectuals, exiles, the rich and eccentric, Capri has attracted a flood of picturesque visitors and residents since the end of the 19th century, making it famous throughout the world. Inhabited since the Palaeolithic era and then ruled by the Greeks and Romans in turn, the lovely island is also renowned for its enviable position in the southern part of the Bay of Naples and, of course, its seductive natural beauty. In fact, the small island boasts a vast range of plant species - 850 in all with 130 varieties. The Grand

Hotel Quisisana lies in the very heart of this splendid natural setting and was named by its founder, George Sidney Clark, in honour of the island's mild, Mediterranean climate (temperatures range from +10° C to +24° C). Clark was a Scottish doctor who arrived on Capri in the mid-1800s and decided to settle there, opening a clinic in one of the most sheltered and sunny corners of the island,



as he was convinced that the environment would be most beneficial to the health.

The hotel was built on Via Camerelle, now one of Capri's most elegant shopping streets. It is difficult to believe that during Roman times, there was a succession of kilometre-long tanks along this street, almost certainly used to terrace a road. The inside of these tanks acted simply as water receptacles: "...the supporting arches on the San Michele road form chambers towards the mountain which are given the same name of *Camerelle*" (from Virgil Book VIII).

During the Middle Ages, these tanks were gradually opened and faced the modern street. They were used at that time as storehouses. The first houses built around them include the Hotel Quisisana and the Villa Pompeiana which date back to the mid-19th century.

At about that time, Capri began to attract growing numbers of tourists and little by little Clark's sanatorium became more of a *pensione* than a clinic, until even Clark himself had exchanged his white coat for a frock-coat.





The hotel was later extended and a large west wing was added. During the excavation work, the bones of a huge elephant from the Quaternary era were found, proving that animals from the mainland had found their way to Capri when it was still connected to the Sorrento peninsula.

The extension work coincided with one of the Quisisana's golden moments as the nobility of the day flocked to holiday in this lovely jewel of a building set on the colourful, perfumed Mediterranean isle.

One of the Hotel's most illustrious guests at the time was Friedrich Krupp, the German steel magnate, who built the famous Via Krupp so that he could have a direct link between the Quisisana and the yachts tied up in the Marina Piccola.

In the mid-1970s, the Hotel was sold to Max Grundig, the German electrical appliance magnate, who also made some improvements. He sold it in 1981 and the Hotel became the property of a Capri family, the Morganos, for the first time.

A tradition of quality

The Morgano family too improved the services and facilities available to their illustrious guests which now numbered royalty, actors, writers, industrialists, and singers. It would take forever to list the famous people who have stayed and continue to stay at the Quisisana. Suffice to say that in 1986, the Hotel became one of The Leading Hotels of the World, an exclusive organisation with extremely high and rigid standards of quality. In fact, in order to comply with these very high quality standards and to offer their guests a little something extra, the Morganos decided to build a new indoor swimming pool and renovate the existing outdoor one.

The work on the two pools was carried out at different times, but great care went into the construction techniques, improvement, and waterproofing of both.

Waterproof and tough

One of the most important characteristics that any pool or water tank must have is the capacity to contain water without leaking, i.e. it must be waterproof. If it is not, it could cause severe damage and an unwelcome hike in management costs, so naturally due consideration was given to this aspect for the two Quisisana pools.

In both cases, the work included laying waterproofing between the substrate and the foundations. The indoor pool (photos 1 and 2) was built between 1991 and 1992. After the concrete foundation had cured sufficiently, NIVOPLAN mixed with 50% PLANICRETE and water was used to level out the walls and concrete bed. NIVOPLAN is a mixture of cement, selected aggregates and special synthetic resins which, once set, form a compact water and frost resistant render. Mixing it with PLANICRETE, a synthetic rubber latex for cement mixes, improves its plasticity, water retention, and general

workability.

IDROSILEX PRONTO, a ready to use cement mortar moisture barrier, was used to waterproof the pools, although an even more suitable product, MAPELASTIC, has since been developed.

Despite the fact that IDROSILEX PRONTO was not the most suitable product for this particular task, it is still doing the job and guaranteeing a very impressive standard of waterproofing in the pools. The laying of a ceramic mosaic to finish the pool was carried out using one of Mapei's most tried and tested combinations: KERABOND mixed with ISOLASTIC. This system, developed in the Mapei R&D laboratories, consists of a cement, selected sands, synthetic resins, and special additives plus an elastic latex for cementitious adhesives.

The mosaic joints were created using KERACOLOR FINE + FUGOLASTIC, a system consisting of a prepacked cement mortar for joints of between 0 and 4 mm, combined with a special synthetic latex-based admixture to ensure excellent mechanical resistance and a good waterproofing.

Finally, to seal the expansion joints, a single-component solvent-free acetic-



crosslinking silicone sealant MAPESIL AC was applied over a silicon seal primer PRIMER FD. MAPESIL AC reticulates with atmospheric humidity at room temperature to form an elastic product capable of withstanding bad weather, industrial environments, and temperature swings for years. The

outdoor pool, which had been built some years previously, was in need of some structural and aesthetic modification. Its bottom was raised thanks to the addition





PHOTO 3



PHOTO 4



PHOTO 5

of a screed to suit the needs of the Hotel's mostly American clientele, while the old mosaic was removed from its curved sides and the whole structure was improved to meet the regulations in force. NIVOPLAN mixed with water and PLANICRETE (50%) was then applied to the sides (photo 3). This leveling was also necessary to level out the bed and fill in the depressions inevitably made during the installation of the screed. The waterproofing was



PHOTO 6

carried out using MAPELASTIC reinforced with fibreglass mesh (photo 4). The latter is a two-component flexible cement mortar which guarantees waterproof protection for concrete and resulted in a flexible yet waterproof layer. Formulated in the Mapei Research and Development Laboratories, MAPELASTIC offers excellent adhesion to all concrete surfaces and brickwork thanks to a high content of quality synthetic resins. The ceramic tiles were installed using GRANIRAPID (photos 5 and 6), a fast-setting two-component adhesive system with rapid hydration for use on ceramics, and natural and artificial stone which also offers extraordinarily good adhesion. This system is therefore particularly useful for surfaces which have to be completed in a



PHOTO 8



PHOTO 7

hurry for immediate use. In this case, the Project Managers took the time to carry out load tests and GRANIRAPID met the necessary requirements in full. The grouting here was also carried out using KERACOLOR + FUGOLASTIC (photo 7). The correct use of the products involved combined with carefully judged choices and valuable technical advice in situ, have ensured that the swimming pools at the Hotel Quisisana

have had a real makeover that will surprise and delight its guests.

The technical Data Sheets of the products mentioned in this article are contained in Mapei binder no. 1, Ceramics Line.



TECHNICAL DATA

Grand Hotel Quisisana - Capri (NA)

Hotel built: mid-19th century

Indoor pool built: 1991-1992

Tiling company used for indoor pool: Edilpas di Pasqualini Rolando (NA)

Outdoor pool renovated: 1998

Company used: Edilso.r Porta Srl - Capri (NA)

Project director: Gaetano Porta

Covering material: ceramic mosaic

INDOOR POOL

Mapei products used for the substrate:

NIVOPLAN + PLANICRETE

for waterproofing:

IDROSILEX PRONTO

for installation of mosaic:

KERABOND + ISOLASTIC

for mosaic grouting:

KERACOLOR + FUGOLASTIC

for filling joints:

MAPESIL AC + PRIMER FD

OUTDOOR POOL

Mapei products used for the substrate:

NIVOPLAN + PLANICRETE

for waterproofing:

MAPELASTIC

for installation of mosaic:

GRANIRAPID

for mosaic grouting:

KERACOLOR + FUGOLASTIC

Mapei co-ordinator:

Giuseppe Pattini - Sacis, Naples

