



MATERA 2019 “EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE”

“This is an important day for Matera and for Italy. It is also a proud day for Europe that is showing it knows how to acknowledge and promote its different cultures and for the people of Matera, the Basilicata region and everybody who has helped make Matera one of the 2019 European Capitals of Culture. A proud day for Italy as one of its most prominent places will be the focus of attention across an entire continent. The city also symbolises the South of Italy as it strives to innovate and grow, repairing old wounds and promoting new projects”. That is what the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella, had to say last January at the opening ceremony for the city of Matera (in Southern Italy), European Capital of Culture 2019, during which the city was magically illuminated by 2000 “little lamps”. The event marked the beginning of 50 weeks during which

this city will host a packed schedule of arts and cultural events. The city has been getting ready since 2014 to host this important project promoted by the European Union, and it will soon reap the rewards of all its meticulous preparations: being awarded such an honour is not just an unmistakable opportunity for financial growth, it also provides the chance to promote its historical heritage that will become made more “accessible” to ordinary people, within everybody’s reach. Being European Capital of Culture will have positive repercussions on the entire region. It will enable local people to showcase their skills, boost the city’s image, enhance its tourist appeal, impact positively on its cultural infrastructures and, above all, stimulate economic growth. 2019 will be an extraordinary year, not just for the so-called “City of Stones” but also for the whole

of the Basilicata region, whose economy will be boosted by an estimated over 1 billion Euros. A year that will witness all kinds of different enterprises in various different realms, over three-hundred days of events specifically aimed at promoting the immense historical, artistic and innovation-driven heritage of a truly fascinating city.

“Matera, once a national embarrassment, will be the pride of Europe”, so it has been frequently been written recently to sum up the distinctive history of both a city and region in southern Italy, which, until a few decades ago, were renowned for being backwards and behind the times. This area really came to fame all over the world back in 1945 when the Italian novelist Carlo Levi wrote his masterful story entitled *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (Christ stopped in Eboli), showing the difficult situation of people living in



these areas back then.

Fortunately, we can now tell a totally different story about Southern Italy. The Mayor of Matera, Raffaello de Ruggieri, described the rapid process of development underway as follows: "Matera has become a symbol of a new attitude in the South of Italy, which no longer complains and is well aware of the energy being unleashed as it builds its future. We plan to invest 170 million Euros. We want to invest in people's culture, turning country neighbourhoods into digital neighbourhoods". Carefully targeted projects to promote a kind of growth that does not forget the city's past.

Mapei's contribution is a tailor-made event for its own clients and its involvement in various building projects in the city (see *Realtà Mapei International* no. 67). We will tell you all about it over the next few pages.

Research and cutting-edge materials for restoration work

AN INTERVIEW WITH GIANLUCA D'ALESSANDRO,
OWNER OF D'ALESSANDRO RESTAURI



Gianluca D'Alessandro with his wife Enza Pallotta.

The D'Alessandro Restauri company has been working in the restoration sector for a number of years and took part in several projects in Matera to consolidate and restore numerous buildings and places of worship. It was also involved in work carried out on the historical paving of the city (see Realtà Mapei International no. 67).

Is it essential to have in-depth knowledge of construction methods adopted in the past to implement the right restoration techniques?

Knowing about the construction systems and materials of a building you are working on is indispensable in order to have the right approach to a restoration project. In fact, all the operational decisions that are made to carry out the work and choose which materials to use derive from this initial analysis, and they all have to be compatible with the original materials that make up the structure. What is more, each monument, even if it is situated in the same geographical location, has its own particular and distinctive characteristics. After studying a restoration project and carefully observing the monument to be restored, by exploiting all the knowledge about construction methods and specific local characteristics, you reach a level of knowledge that allows you to pick out the best products to use, after carrying out laboratory test campaigns.

What kind of problems were you faced with in Matera when you had to intervene on buildings which were not only of considerable historical and artistic value, but also situated in such a unique location?

Firstly, the actual setting up of the site. In highly complex contexts from a morphological point of view, as is the case with Matera, it can prove to be complicated, for example, to select a suitable area for the site equipment and logistics, and then there is also the problem of transport-

ing materials. One of the biggest problems is the presence of voids and hollows below ground level, which sometimes nobody even knows about. Besides, the particular architectural details and features of each building, the presence of highly porous materials, and the problems caused by its hygrometric conditions make restoration work a rather delicate process which require in-depth knowledge of the building you are working on.

You are also collaborating with the University of Basilicata to test various products – including those from Mapei – on three churches in Matera. How important is research work into restoration methods?

Collaborating with universities is an essential component of a company's activity, in that it forms the link between working practices and theoretical research, allowing you to raise the level of the quality of your operations. Our collaboration with the University of Basilicata involves experimental research work into new products for surface consolidation/protection and, above all, an analysis of the processes for their application. In fact, choosing Matera as a pilot site for this experimental research work is precisely the type of challenge that confirms the theory of the complexity of actions required to carry out restoration work.

When working on a restoration project, how much of a help is it to be able to count on cutting-edge products such as those supplied by Mapei?

The reliability of materials is fundamental, in terms of both their compatibility with the existing materials and the durability of the effectiveness of the intervention over the years. And this consideration becomes even more important in particularly complex situations such as the Sassi area of Matera where you also have to evaluate their state of conservation and their hygrometric conditions, which have a considerable impact

on all renovation operations. The way the Mapei network is organised is very important, with the availability of specialised technicians in various sectors. The support provided by the Mapei Research laboratories is quite remarkable, in terms of both professionalism and the instruments they are equipped with, and they are available to work alongside our team to help them choose the most compatible and reliable cycles for each problem we are faced with. The reliability of a historical brand, one which is open to research and innovation, is a very important prerogative in order to conserve the historical and artistic heritage we are commissioned to work on.

What was the most complex and interesting project you have worked on?

The Cathedral of Santa Maria della Bruna, without a doubt, and not only for the complexity of a monument dating back almost 800 years, which certainly put to the test all those involved in the work due to the presence of different substrates and different coating and decorative layers, but also for the need to carry out restoration work by following a "logical thread", that is, to make each and every historical feature recognisable without "encroaching" on any of the others. The intervention on Palazzo Zicari (see the article in the previous pages) was also an interesting challenge, including of a structural nature, as well as the work we carried out on several churches in the Sassi area, because of their historical context. I have always said that a complex job that has been carried out well is a team effort by a group of designers, contractors, craftsmen, technicians, electricians, restorers, carpenters, builders and suppliers that have all worked with passion, dedication and professionalism. The work carried out by Local Heritage Authorities is also very important; they monitor all restoration work. Using Mapei materials is a winning choice because these products are renowned and their validity is acknowledged by all Local Heritage Authorities.

An event specially arranged for Mapei customers



On 1st June, a group of Mapei customers from southern Italy took part in an exclusive event in the striking setting of Casa Cava in Matera, (see article on the following page).

After enjoying an aperitif, the guests moved on to the theatre where, after a speech by Marco Squinzi, the Group's Research & Development Director, the racing car driver, Rachele Somaschini, talked about her battle against cystic fibrosis. The guests then watched a video about the city of Matera and numerous building projects carried out with the help of Mapei products. The guests were then treated to a show entitled "Tonight we will be talking about love", during which the Italian actor Michele Placido and the singer Daniela Sor-natale entertained the audience with poems and monologues taken from works by Dante Alighieri, Pablo Neruda and Eugenio Montale and songs by the Italian singer Mina.

The following day guests visited the city in the company of tourist guides and Mapei experts, who described various operations carried out using the company products on a number of building projects, as you can read in the following pages.



A few pictures showing the event and tours organised for Mapei guests on 1st and 2nd June in Matera. The event provided the chance to strengthen ties with clients from the south of Italy in the European Capital of Culture.





IN THE SPOTLIGHT
ULTRACOAT HIGH TRAFFIC

It is a two-component, 100% polyurethane water-based varnish with high resistance to wear and abrasion and with low emission of volatile organic compounds (VOC) for wooden floors. It is used as a highly protective, wear and abrasion-resistant finish for solid and pre-sanded wooden floors and wooden floors requiring repair. Suitable for use in civil and commercial environments, including those subject to extremely high pedestrian traffic (public offices, shopping centres, airports, exhibition halls, etc.).



CASA CAVA

WOODEN FLOORING RETURNS TO ITS ORIGINAL SPLENDOUR AND FUNCTIONALITY IN THIS UNIQUE THEATRE DUG INTO THE ROCKS

It is difficult to imagine that, in a not too distant past, Matera, the 2019 European Capital of Culture, was considered to be a symbol of backwardness and underdevelopment in the southern part of Italy. And yet the evocative Sassi, or cave dwellings with their timeless charm dug into the tuff rock-face of certain areas of the town, had been abandoned for more than thirty years and were in a precarious state. It was only in 1986 that legislation was passed by the Italian Government to decree the recovery of the Sassi, marking the starting point of the rebirth of this antique city which, in 1993, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Amongst the numerous initiatives promoted over the years was the recovery of Casa Cava, an underground architectural complex dating back to post-medieval times: an ancient pit-like

cave, part of which was also used as a dwelling place.

The complex, which had been abandoned many years previously and used as a tip, was handed back to the city in 2011 after being completely restored. The restoration work commenced in 2007 under the guidance of the Sassi Office of Matera, and when it was handed back it had been completely transformed into an unusual and spectacular space of more than 900 m², featuring a theatre and a cultural centre, with an auditorium inside the complex with seating for 140 spectators. It was a very delicate architectural intervention, harmonious and at the same time modern, so as not to alter the charm of the ancient tuff shell (which still bore the visible marks of the extracted stone), while adapting it to fulfil its new functional requirements.



A successful restoration that received official recognition: in fact, Casa Cava received an award at the 13th edition of the prestigious International Award Architecture in Stone.

RENOVATING WOODEN FLOORING

Mapei products were supplied for the restoration and renovation of 200 m² of wooden flooring made up of 14 mm thick solid beech wood planks, all set in a raised steel support structure over the substrate.

One of the main requirements was that the wooden floor needed to have C_s-s1 fire reaction rating and this was met by employing Mapei products and following a specific procedure.

The first step was to sand the wooden panels with sanding disks. The surfaces were then treated with a coat of ULTRACOAT PREMIUM BASE two-component, water-based basecoat with high insulating properties, very low emission of volatile organic compounds and zero NMP (N-Methyl-pyrrolidone) content, which is part of the ULTRACOAT line for finishing wooden floors.

After sanding the surface of the wooden flooring with 180 grit, the cycle was completed by applying two coats of ULTRACOAT HIGH TRAFFIC two-component, water-based varnish (10 gloss).

Wooden floors in the theatre were renovated by using ULTRACOAT PREMIUM BASE basecoat and ULTRACOAT HIGH TRAFFIC varnish. This system ensured that the renovated floor could meet the C_s-s1 fire reaction rating.

TECHNICAL DATA

Casa Cava Sasso

Barisano, Matera (Italy)

Year of renovation: 2017

Year of the Mapei

intervention: 2017

Intervention by Mapei:

supplying products for renovating wooden floors

Client: Matera City Council

Design and works

direction: Emanuele

Lamacchia

Main contractor: Costruzioni Industriali Srl

Installation company:

Montillo Parquet Srl

Mapei distributor: Montillo Parquet Srl

Mapei coordinators:

Michelangelo Occhiogrosso, Francesco Dragone, Giovanni Villani, Mapei SpA (Italy)

MAPEI PRODUCTS

Renovating wooden floors:

Ultracoat Premium Base, Ultracoat High Traffic

For further information on products see www.mapei.com



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Matera: from history to new projects

A SELECTION OF RECENT RENOVATION, CONSOLIDATION AND REFURBISHMENT WORKS IN THE CITY

1. TRAMONTANO CASTLE

Tramontano Castle is located on Lapillo Hill, overlooking the old town centre of Matera, and has been the subject of ongoing restoration work since 2008. To create a new waterproofing layer MAPEFLEX BLACKFILL bitumen sealant has been used under the stone covering, MAPESLOPE mortar has been used to even out the screed, all the expansion joints have been waterproofed with MAPEBAND tape, MAPELASTIC TURBO mortar and MAPETEX SEL fabric, and the stone covering has been installed with KERAFLEX MAXI S1 adhesive.

2. CHURCH OF SAN PIETRO CAVEOSO

The church can be found at the base of a cliff known as the Rupe dell'Idris, overlooking Sasso Caveoso and, together with Sasso Barisano, make up the area known as the "Sassi di Matera". Over the centuries the church has been modified several times and, in the 17th century, it was completely refurbished. In 1987 the Basilicata Region Heritage Authority launched a new series of works to consolidate and restore the structure. Products from the MAPEWRAP SYSTEM line were used for the work on the tuff-covered pillars, the ideal solution for the repair and static strengthening of structures in poor condition.

3. MUSEUM-WORKSHOP OF RURAL CULTURE

The Museum-workshop of Rural Culture in Matera was recently extended to twice its former size. MAPE-ANTIQUA STRUTTURALE NHL mortar was used to consolidate large portions of the masonry and PLANITOP HDM RESTAURO pre-blended, fibre-reinforced, high-ductility hydraulic lime (NHL) and Eco-Pozzolan based mortar, combined with MAPEGRID G 220 mesh, was used for structural strengthening work. CONSOLIDANTE ETS was



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used to consolidate internal surfaces in all the interiors.

4. STREET PAVING - VIA D'ADDOZIO

The aim the renovation work on the paving in the old town centre (see *Realtà Mapei International* no. 67) was to conserve its historic and artistic value by re-using the original materials to get a better colour match and a more regular layout. The 7 cm thick flagstones were installed with cement mixed with PLANICRETE synthetic-rubber latex, while MAPESTONE PFS2 pre-blended mortar was used to grout the joints.

5. COMMUNAL CINEMA AND THEATRE

The communal cinema and theatre inside Palazzo dell'Annunziata, which dates back to the eighteenth century, was renovated. The floor inside the theatre on the first floor was coated with the ULTRATOP LOFT system. The substrate was first prepared with PRIMER SN, fully broadcast with QUARTZ 0.5 quartz sand and MAPENET 150 mesh was embedded into the primer.

A first coat of ULTRATOP LOFT F, coarse-textured cementitious paste tinted with

ULTRATOP EASYCOLOR colouring solution, was then applied. After its drying, the surfaces were sanded, dust was removed and PRIMER LT was applied followed by a coat of ULTRATOP LOFT W. ULTRATOP BASE COAT was used to regularize the coat absorption, followed by MAPEFLOOR FINISH 58 W to finish off the surfaces.

6. HIGHER ACADEMY OF RESTORATION (FORMER SANTA LUCIA CONVENT)

The new base in Matera for the Higher Academy of the Institute of Conservation and Restoration was inaugurated in 2017 inside the former Santa Lucia Nova Convent.

The internal façade was restored with MAPE-ANTIQUÉ ALLETTAMENTO salt-resistant masonry mortar.

Resin flooring was installed inside the institute using the epoxy coating system MAPEFLOOR SYSTEM 35 F, which comprised the application of a mix made from natural aggregates and MAPEFLOOR I 350 SL epoxy binder pigmented on site with MAPECOLOR PASTE (Ral 1015) colouring paste.



7. MULINO ALVINO PASTA WORKS

The home of the Mulino Alvino pasta works is a 19th century building. Renovation works included waterproofing the roofs. After removing the roof coverings, the cuts in the previous bitumen membrane were sealed with MAPEFLEX BLACKFILL bitumen sealant. After building a screed with MAPESLOPE, the substrate was waterproofed with two layers of MAPELASTIC and MAPENET 150 mesh embedded between them. The main facades were treated with SILEXCOLOR PRIMER, mixed with red-coloured oxides.

8. SPORTING CLUB MATERA

Sporting Club Matera offers three tennis courts, two indoor and one outdoor, which were recently transformed by resurfacing them with resin (they were previously in synthetic grass) using systems from the MAPECOAT TNS range. For this particular project the products used included MAPECOAT TNS PROFESSIONAL acrylic resin-based flooring system, which includes MAPECOAT TNS WHITE BASE COAT semi-flexible acrylic resin basecoat and a finishing coat of MAPECOAT TNS FINISH 3. The playing areas of the courts were marked out with MAPECOAT TNS LINE.





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9. PALAZZO CAROPRESO

In 2018 the tuff facades of Palazzo Caropreso, dating back to the nineteenth century, were completely restored. The surfaces of the building, which were damaged by mould and mildew, were treated with SILANCOLOR CLEANER PLUS hygienising detergent and MAPE-ANTIQUE ALLETTAMENTO salt-resistant masonry was used to fill the larger gaps in the surfaces. The surfaces were then finished off with coloured SILEXCOLOR BASE COAT silicate undercoat and silicate-based SILEXCOLOR PAINT.

10. BELL-TOWER OF SANTA MARIA DELLA BRUNA CATHEDRAL

The bell-tower of this cathedral has undergone restoration and consolidation work. Bands made from MAPEWRAP C UNI AX 600/40 carbon fibre fabric were applied on the structure; the pinnacle was strengthened with MAPE-ANTIQUE STRUTTURALE NHL reinforced with MAPENET EM 30 alkali-resistant glass fibre mesh; the ashlars for the exposed walls were pointed with MAPE-ANTIQUE ALLETTAMENTO combined with MAPEI STEEL DRY 316 and the surface of



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the façade was protected with ANTIPLUVIOL S water-repellent impregnating finish. The cathedral itself had previously been involved in restoration works which made use of Mapei products for consolidating the wooden beams and truss, strengthening the dome over the presbitero, repairing masonry and installing marble floors (see *Realtà Mapei Internazionale* no. 67).

11. ST. ELIGIO CHURCH

Restoration work was completed in March this year on the exterior of the church dedicated to St. Eligio. Work included restoration of the main facade of the church, which involved the use of MAPE-ANTIQUE ALLETTAMENTO, a salt-resistant masonry mortar made from natural hydraulic lime and Eco-Pozzolan. The façade was then protected with ANTIPLUVIOL W, a colourless, silane and siloxane-based water-repellent impregnator in watery emulsion.

12. MUSEUM OF DEMOGRAPHICS AND ETHNOGRAPHIC ANTHROPOLOGY

The system of itineraries through the Museum of Demographics and Ethnographic Anthropology



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is an articulated project regarding the Sasso Caveoso. The floors of the itineraries were coated with the MAPEFLOOR I500 W epoxy formulate in water dispersion. After applying a first coat of MAPEFLOOR I500 W (fully broadcast with QUARTZ O.5), a second coat was applied, using the same product, this time tinted with MAPECOLOR PASTE (RAL 1015). MAPECOAT I600 W was then applied to form a final protective coat of the surface.

13. ZICARI HOTEL

An antique palazzo, which had been built in the Sasso Caveoso and abandoned for years, has been transformed into a hotel by carrying out restoration, renovation and consolidation work. Mapei products were supplied for structural strengthening work, finishing operations and the installation of terracotta floorings. While carrying out the strengthening work, a layer of render was applied made from MAPE-ANTIQUE STRUTTURALE NHL mortar reinforced with MAPENET EM30 alkali-resistant glass fibre mesh; MAPE-ANTIQUE ALLETTAMENTO mortar was also used for masonry renovation.



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