

Preserving the Past: New Efforts to Support the Verona Amphitheater

Samantha Janazzo (February 08, 2017)



A team of highly qualified engineers and architects from Germany are collaborating to prolong the life of one of Ancient Rome's greatest gifts, The Verona Arena. This project is sponsored by the European apparel brand, Calzedonia.

A group of German firms have taken on a three-year project to better preserve Verona's Ancient Roman arena in an effort to slow natural structural deterioration. [Calzedonia](#) [2], a famous clothing brand founded in Verona, financed a competition seeking the best functional design to protect the arena from atmospheric damage.

[The Verona Arena](#) [3] is comprised of white and pink limestone, standing since the first century AD. The landmark's original use was for the [Ancient Roman Ludi](#) [4] (olympic-style games). During the Renaissance, the amphitheater developed a reputation for its outstanding acoustics and become home to a high volume of operatic performances. Today, it continues to function as a large-scale opera house, and is one of the largest ancient amphitheaters that remains, after surviving earthquakes and severe weather conditions.



Despite its antiquity, the structure is well preserved; however, the years of rainfall, tourists, and spectators have left their mark. Calzedonia opened the competition last year to create a cover that blends well with the ancient structure, while simultaneously providing protection when the theater is in use.

The German companies [Schlaich Bergermann & Partner](#) [5] and [Gerkan Marg & Partners](#) [6] were selected out of 90 applicants from around the world to complete the project. They were chosen for their design plan to build a retractable covering that will be used only when protection from the elements is necessary. When it is not needed, it folds into itself and is left unseen behind the arena. This design not only keeps rain off the monument, the number one priority, but also allows the arena to be used all year despite weather conditions, covering the aforementioned criteria.

Recently, a Pompeian monument collapsed outside Naples. Calzedonia is attempting, at all costs, to avoid this same fate for The Verona Arena. Therefore, protecting the architectural structure from irreversible weather related damage is key. This project will cost 13.5 million euros. Although some people believe that the amphitheater should be left alone and that this covering could put the amphitheater at risk of collapsing, their fears are outweighed by the importance of preserving ancient culture for the benefit of the arts.

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[2] <https://www.calzedonia.com>

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verona_Arena

[4] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludi>

[5] <http://www.sbp.de/en/>

[6] <http://www.gmp-architekten.com/start.html>