

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Tod's traces monumental Colosseum restoration through comprehensive content

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The Colosseum in Rome

By SARAH JONES

With the first phase of the Roman Colosseum's restoration complete, project supporter Italian apparel and accessories label Tod's is including a global audience in the reveal.

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In 2011, Tod's Group pledged 25 million euros, at the time about \$34 million, to help officials fund repairs of the landmark. Along with an unveiling event on July 1, Tod's created a corresponding digital project that takes consumers inside the process.

"Roman antiquities are a source of pride for all Italians," said Chris Ramey, president of [Affluent Insights](#), Miami. "The video reflects Tod's pride in being Italian; it's integral to their DNA.

"Unlike the US, where naming rights to professional sports facilities are routinely sold, Tod's has invested in the Colosseum as a source of pride in Italy," he said. "Tod's small plaque on the Colosseum is a sign of appreciation from the world not an advertisement.

"Luxury and pride are emotions. The connection between the two are inseparable."

Mr. Ramey is not affiliated with Tod's, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Tod's was unable to comment directly before press deadline.

Big reveal

The restoration of the Colosseum was a project of the commissioner of the archaeological areas of Rome and Ostia Antica, Roberto Cecchi, who worked in collaboration with the Italian capital's archaeological heritage department.

Via a dedicated page of Tod's Web site, consumers can follow the first phase of the renovations, seeing before and after photos and reading about the process.



The Colosseum

For the first phase, the focus was on the northern and southern exterior, a surface area of about 143,000 square feet. In addition to restoring some of the stonework along the 31 arches, the gates and locking system were replaced.

On the Web page, before and after photos feature a sliding bar, which can be moved back and forth to more easily compare the two.

Each phase of the restoration includes a short film. First, workers conducted a survey of the surfaces in the structure, taking photographs and mapping out areas that needed attention.

The insights gleaned from this mapping and restoration have been put into a digital format, enabling the findings to be used on other projects.

Viewers can also see workers mist the facade with water and gently buff it with sorghum brushes to remove dirt while leaving the evidence of age intact. The restoration continues, with cracks filled and grouted using precise tools.

Tod's for Colosseum - The restoration works

For those who want to delve further into the process, Tod's filmed video interviews with experts who worked on the project.

Cinzia Conti, the site operations director, talks about the historical lessons learned after getting rid of the grime sitting on top of the landmark.

Architect Pia Petrangeli, who headed the sponsorship process, talks of how while the Ministry of Cultural Heritage does have funding for its assets, it would not usually be able to dedicate as much money as Tod's gave at once to a single monument.



Worker on-site at the Colosseum

Further down the page, consumers can explore previously hidden gems, such as outlines of plaques and bas-relief.

Future plans for the Colosseum include refurbishing the passages and vaults below ground and building a new visitors' center on the exterior to replace the current interior reception area.

National preservation

The Italian government is low on funds needed to repair historic architecture. This has led a number of brands to step up, sponsoring the restoration and preserving their heritage in the process.

Italian fashion houses Prada and Versace helped to bring the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan to an online audience with the curation of a digital project.

The InGalleria Web site, launched Dec. 7, lets consumers click through photos of the restoration process of the monument, as well as read up on its history and view a digital guestbook with visitors' content. The site works as a digital museum for the building while letting Prada and Versace delve into their Milanese heritages ([see story](#)).

Similarly, Italian fashion house Fendi completed the restoration of the Trevi Fountain in Rome ahead of schedule.

Fendi announced in 2013 that the restoration of the famous fountain would be under its patronage and estimated that the water would flow once more by the end of 2015. Fendi is not alone in its restoration project, as many luxury houses, including fellow Roman brands Bulgari and Tod's, have given back to their local communities as an example of CSR, and in some cases a thank you for endless inspiration ([see story](#)).

"Tod's unselfish giving underscores the value of brand Italy," Mr. Ramey said. "Italy's culture and history, and all restorations are gifts to the world."

"Preserving the Italian culture is akin to preserving your own brands' future," he said. "It's not a coincidence that the video ends with Proud to be Italians."

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