



RENAISSANCE WELLHEAD The Biltmore Estate, Asheville, North Carolina



Client/Owner
The Biltmore Estate

Location
Asheville, NC

Project Dates
2006

Materials
Rosso di Verona Marble
Lead
Mortar

Services Provided
Assessment
Cleaning
Repair
Restoration
Documentation
Training

As part of our on-going work with Biltmore Estate, Conservation Solutions, Inc. (CSI) was contracted to conserve the Rosso di Verona marble wellhead located at the entrance to the mansion. The Venetian Renaissance work incorporates a lead liner within the carved stone structure. It is typical of the elegant decorative structures that once enclosed fountains in town centers and villas throughout the Veneto. This example is enlivened with lions heads and floral bas-relief carvings on the faces and bracketed herms at the eight corners.

The wellhead had developed deterioration typical of outdoor masonry artifacts since its installation at the estate. Water had entered failing mortar joints, opening them over time though freeze/thaw cycling. Early repairs had failed leaving losses and additional water entrapment points. The solder joints had also given way within the basin. Biological growth, lime scaling, and general soiling hid the beautiful carvings on the faces.

CSI conservators worked with the Biltmore Estate's conservation staff and specialty sub-contractors to clean and restore the wellhead. Failed mortar and fills were removed. All surfaces were cleaned using appropriate detergents and biocides. Biological growths were also removed by careful picking with wooden skewers. The lead liner was cleaned and re-soldered. Failed fills were repaired with custom color-matched mortar and all joints were re-pointed. A follow up treatment plan was developed for implementation by the Estate's staff