

VIZCAYA BACCHUS FOUNTAIN Vizcaya Museum & Gardens, Miami, Florida



Client/Owner
Vizcaya Museum & Gardens

Location
Miami, Florida

Project Dates
2007

Materials
Marble

Services Provided
Assessment
Documentation
Treatment

Visitors to the museum are greeted on first entering by the Bacchus Fountain, an assemblage of Baroque and Antique sculptural elements. The fountain consists of a marble basin fed by sprayers from two putti presided over by a life-sized figure of Bacchus, the god of intoxication and joie de vivre. The elements were assembled by the house's designer from stone elements and fragments from several periods. The basin, a figured yellow marble, comes from Rome. The Bacchus itself contains 18th century restorations on a Roman fragment. The installation is supported on Renaissance lion's paw feet within a verd antique marble pool. The designer's genius is evident in how successfully he knitted these disparate parts into a cohesive and elegant assembly.

Nearly 100 years of use had taken its toll on the fountain. The putti and figure were soiled and previous repairs had begun to fail. Regular floor maintenance had damaged the verd antique pool lip. The color and detailing of the yellow marble basin was entirely hidden by a whitish haze from hard water deposits from the water that flowed across its surface.

Conservation Solutions, Inc. (CSI) was contracted to restore the fountain in 2007. After careful detergent cleaning to remove soiling, the failing fills were replaced with appropriately formulated lime mortars. The losses in the verd antique pool were rebuilt with color matched scagliola mortars and toned to match the figured stone. The lime deposits were carefully removed by multiple repeated applications of gelled solvents and hand scrubbing. Protective color-enhancing coatings were then applied to protect the stone and a treatment report submitted.