



FROG FOUNTAIN Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, Miami, Florida



Client/Owner
Vizcaya Museum and Gardens

Location
Miami, FL

Project Dates
2005-2006

Materials
Marble
Zinc

Services Provided
Assessment
Testing and Analysis
Cleaning
Stone Repairs
Replication of Missing Elements
Documentation

Between 1914 and 1916, agricultural industrialist James Deering, one of the founders of International Harvester Company, built his European-inspired winter home on Biscayne Bay in Miami. This property, Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, is now a National Historic Landmark. The formal gardens include an outstanding collection of statuary and objects dating back to antiquity. The Frog Fountain integrates playful lizards and frogs onto a Roman sarcophagus. The marble fountain is installed at one end of the primary garden axis at the house's south side.

The fountain had suffered from deterioration and abuse over its long history. One of the zinc lizards had been stolen and the sarcophagus had been damaged by inexpert modifications and repairs. The sarcophagus had extensive lime deposits which had accumulated on the marble surfaces over time, trapping soiling and masking the underlying stone. Supported only at the ends, the weight of water had caused cracking of the sarcophagus that risked its structural stability.

Conservation Solutions, Inc. (CSI) was contracted to conserve the Frog Fountain in 2005. CSI conservators re-created the missing lizard by molding the original and casting a new element using a matching zinc alloy. The losses and reinforcement to the sarcophagus were filled with new stone dutchman repairs. An inconspicuous stainless steel brace was created to resist continued cracking. The sarcophagus was then thoroughly cleaned of soiling and extensive lime deposits. In addition, the water quality was analyzed to determine the source of the deposits and a means of remediation was prepared and implemented by the owner.