



Leeu Collection appoints Auberge Resorts Collection to Manage Collegio alla Querce in Florence

Press release, 17 August 2021: [Leeu Collection](#) has appointed [Auberge Resorts Collection](#), the award-winning portfolio of one-of-a-kind luxury hotels, resorts and residences, to manage Collegio alla Querce in Florence, Italy. The historic 16th century property, which has its own chapel and theatre, is due to open in 2023; it will become Auberge Resorts Collection's second property in Europe.



Collegio alla Querce: garden room & destination restaurant

Collegio alla Querce, Auberge Resorts Collection stands in 15,500m² of elegant gardens set on a rolling hill on the northside of Florence's historic city centre, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Located under three kilometres from the Duomo di Firenze, the luxury hotel will celebrate Italy's rich history in art and design, while also connecting visitors with Italian culture through its close proximity to world-famous galleries and museums, architectural masterpieces and renowned cuisine in Florence, as well as to the medieval villages and vineyards of the stunning countryside in nearby Tuscany.

An extensive transformation of Collegio alla Querce, Auberge Resorts Collection is already well underway. Award-winning Spanish father-son architect practice, [Esteva i Esteva](#), has been enlisted to preserve the structures' original character while introducing modern style and function. Local Florentine interior designers, [ArchFlorence](#), will bring the interiors of the hotel to life combining High Renaissance art with modern Italian design. Brilliant colours, locally sourced materials and contemporary pieces will complement antique furniture, with walls of thoughtfully curated, decade-spanning artwork.

Outside, the resort's grounds will feature beautifully manicured, expansive lawns and five levels of terraced gardens, one with Baroque influences that is a work of art in itself and the vision of Leeu Collection owner Analjit Singh and landscape designer [Franchesca Watson](#), working in tandem with local Florentine landscapers.



Collegio Alla Querce: Junior Suite with a view

Upon completion, Collegio alla Querce, Auberge Resorts Collection will have:

- 82 keys (61 rooms, 20 suites and a 210-square-metre signature suite)
- a restaurant, a bar and a cigar lounge
- multiple event spaces including a chapel, a theatre, multi-functional rooms and an events lawn
- expansive gardens with five different terraces
- a 35-metre outdoor pool
- a fitness centre
- a spa with four treatments rooms, each with its own sauna, steam room and plunge pool
- a dedicated wine tasting room (*enoteca*)
- an art gallery
- a curated boutique.

Dining options will comprise a destination restaurant, a glass-enclosed garden room set amongst olive trees for daytime dining, a sophisticated bar and cigar lounge, and an outdoor pool bar offering light bites and cocktails. Additionally, the destination restaurant will offer authentic Tuscan culinary experiences, tastings, private dinners and cooking classes.

For business and leisure gatherings, a dedicated meeting room will be complemented by the theatre and chapel, which will double up as a space for events, art installations and workshops.

Analjit Singh, founder, Leeu Collection, said, “We made a conscious decision several years ago to focus on creating exceptional experiences for our guests by joining forces with the best-in-class in the fields of wine-making, dining out and artistic endeavours, so it gives me great pleasure to have the award-winning team at Auberge Resorts Collection manage our property in Florence. The approach taken by Auberge Resorts Collection is very much in keeping with the Leeu Collection ethos of crafting superlative luxury escapes that work with and promote the finest partners in the locality. This collaboration therefore feels like a natural fit and we look forward to working with them to build a sensational destination.”

Dan Friedkin, chairman, Auberge Resorts Collection, added, “We are tremendously excited to expand our presence in Europe with the addition of Florence and Collegio alla Querce. Our unique ability to elevate and preserve historic properties will translate into a dynamic new destination for rich culture, outstanding cuisine, art, design and unrivalled experiences in the internationally

renowned city. We are grateful for Leeu Collection's founder, Analjit Singh, who had the vision to create the most spectacular resort in Florence, and for the trust he has placed in us to help bring it to life."

For more information, please visit www.leeucollection.com and www.aubergeresorts.com/collegioallaquerce .

Notes for editors

Collegio alla Querce (College at the Oaks) is named after an event that took place over 500 years' ago. In the spring of 1520, an invalid prayed before an image of the Virgin that had been painted on an oak tree outside the Porta a Pinti (a gate in the old city walls) in the district of Le Cure (where Collegio alla Querce is located). It is said that the Madonna then appeared to them in person and healed them, asking them to build a "temple for perpetual memory" in return; this temple still exists in the form of the district's parish church.

Collegio "alla Querce" opened nearby in October 1868 as a Barnabite boarding school. Two years later, a geodynamic observatory was installed in the school and, thanks mainly to the Barnabite Timoteo Bertelli who led a series of experiments and studies, it made a significant contribution to the development of theoretical and experimental seismology. This scientific research continued until the early 1930s.

The school's collection contains instruments (dating from the 19th and 20th centuries) that were used during the research, specifically the seismological instruments of Bertelli and including prototypes of machines used for telegraphy and radio communications. The naturalist collection comprises stuffed animal specimens, as well as those preserved in fluid, animal and human skeletons and minerals.

Leeu Collection bought the former school in 2017 and have spent the last few years converting it into a luxury hotel.

Leeu Collection (in Sanskrit singh means lion, which is leeu in Afrikaans) comprises three five-star boutique properties in South Africa (Leeu Estates, a 23-room country house retreat and boutique winery in the Franschhoek valley; Leeu House, a 12-room hotel in the heart of Franschhoek village; and Le Quartier Français, a romantic 25-room hotel also located in the village) and Linthwaite House, an historic 36-bedroom property in the UK's Lake District. Another Leeu property is due to open in Florence in 2023.

Leeu Collection works closely with leaders in the food and spa industries to ensure a first-class experience at all its properties. The world-renowned **La Colombe** team has restaurants at Leeu Estates and Le Quartier Français, while the award-winning **Darren Badenhorst** runs the F&B operations at Leeu Estates and Leeu House. In the UK, Michelin-starred chef **Simon Rogan** oversees the food offering at Linthwaite House. South African brand **Healing Earth**, which is dedicated to award-winning quality, unparalleled service excellence and memorable experiences, manages the Leeu Spa in Franschhoek.

Extending beyond the offering of luxury accommodation, Analjit Singh is a partner in **Mullineux & Leeu Family Wines**, which produces award-winning wines in the Swartland wine region some 80km north of Cape Town.

Leeu Collection also has a partnership with **Everard Read**, which showcases contemporary artworks by Southern African artists. Everard Reads' first Franschhoek gallery is a considered space adjacent to Le Quartier Français in the heart of Franschhoek, while the new gallery showcasing monumental art and featuring a sculpture garden is located on Leeu Estates, with indoor and outdoor artworks.

Auberge Resorts Collection is a portfolio of extraordinary hotels, resorts, residences and private clubs. While each property is unique, all share a crafted approach to luxury and bring the soul of the locale to life through captivating design, exceptional cuisine, innovative spas and gracious yet unobtrusive service. With 20 hotels and resorts across three continents and eight new hotels under development, Auberge invites guests to create unforgettable stories in some of the world's most desirable destinations.

For more information and hi-res images, please contact:

Sue Heady
Heady Communications
Tel: 01608 651 692 / 078 5595 0705
Email: sue@headycommunications.com