

Rome celebrates Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's 70-year reign

After three years of being closed to the public due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Villa Wolkonsky reopened for a very important Queen's Birthday Party, hosted by the newly appointed British Ambassador to Italy, Ed Llewellyn.

Following Tuesday's celebrations in Naples, 2,000 guests and friends of Her Majesty's Embassy in Italy, including many Britons and members of the international community, gathered at Villa Wolkonsky, surrounded by a Roman aqueduct and beautiful gardens in quintessential British style. The occasion was unique: celebrating the 70th anniversary of the reign of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, the only monarch to have reached this milestone in the history of the United Kingdom.

Ambassador Ed Llewellyn, in Italy since late February, hosted an exceptional QBP, declaring and renewing his desire to further strengthen the extraordinary ties that unite the United Kingdom and Italy. All under the banner of the values that our two countries share, and to which Queen Elizabeth II has borne unique witness during her 70-year reign.

The event provided an opportunity to focus on British and Italian culinary excellence and also featured the Queen's favourite vintage cars, icons of British style on four wheels. Also present were the vintage cars that the Queen favours, icons of British style on four wheels: a 1952 Jaguar XType, a 1934 Rolls Royce Phantom II Continental and a 1934 Lagonda. Also on display in the Villa Wolkonsky gardens in the sign of sustainability and technological innovation was the all-new 100% electric Jaguar I Pace. Four friendly corgis – Letizia, Cupcake, Icecream and Sacher – Her Majesty's favourite dogs, joined guests in the splendid gardens to make them feel at Buckingham Palace.

Greeting the guests was a jazz band composed of Italian and British musicians, a symbol of musical friendship between Italy and the United Kingdom, to the tunes of Her Majesty's favourite artists.

A British military band, the Regimental Band of the Royal Welsh in red-and-black uniform, and the ever-present bag-pipers accompanied the ceremonies and played the touching Highland Cathedral. Furthermore, a Sunset Ceremony – or Flag Lowering ceremony – and an unprecedented "Beat the Retreat" – the retreat that marks the end of the workday for British troops – paid tribute to Her Majesty, who is also head of the British Armed Forces, and to the values that the British Sovereign has always upheld and inspired at home and around the world.

After the Italian and British anthems sung by the UK Diplo Choir, the choir formed by Embassy staff, the evening ended with a splendid projection on the Roman aqueduct of Her Majesty's Coronation Day and first official visit to Italy in 1961. The projection was accompanied by a musical performance by the

Roma Tre Orchestra Ensemble, performing a repertoire of opera arias set in the UK. The soprano, Sofia Calenza, accompanied by Valerio Iannini, Federico Morbidelli, Maria Teresa De Sanio and Alessandro Guaitolini, took guests back in time to arias by Bellini and Donizetti. The performance concluded with fireworks in honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

But the Rome QBP was much more than that. In a world of rapid and often overwhelming social change, Ambassador Llewellyn chose to shine a spotlight on the very important work carried out by charitable organisations working in the field of solidarity. Five organizations chosen for their attention to women, children and migrants, and the environment were represented: Save the Children Italia, SOS Children's Villages Italia/International, Baobab Experience, Soroptimist International Italia, and Associazione Penelope.

The environment and sustainability were at the core of the event: its emissions will be "neutralised" through EMoby by purchasing green credits to offset CO2 emissions, and thanks to the virtuous behaviour by the Villa Wolkonsky staff who also obtained the ISO 20121 Certification for sustainable events.

The celebration honouring Her Majesty's Birthday remains an occasion to commemorate the bilateral relationship between Italy and the United Kingdom in the fields of education, innovation, technology, culture, business and defence, to forge new partnerships and build a better world for future generations.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Rome QBP is part of the GREAT campaign: a series of events and initiatives promoted by the British diplomatic representation in Italy throughout the summer dedicated to diversity, sustainability, research, inclusion, music, film and culture.