



Eni and FAI open the redeveloped Conti Vecchi salt fields

Conti Vecchi Saline, near Cagliari, will be open to the public for ten months of the year following its restoration by the FAI – the National Trust for Italy and its industrial upgrade by Ing. Conti Vecchi – Syndial

Cagliari, 26 maggio 2017 – The State Secretary for Cultural Assets and Activities and Tourism, Dorina Bianchi, the President of the Region of Sardinia, Francesco Pigliaru, the Chief Executive of Eni, Claudio Descalzi, FAI's President, Andrea Carandini and the Chief Executive of Syndial, Vincenzo Maria Larocca, attended today the opening ceremony of Conti Vecchi Saline in Assemini (Cagliari province, Sardinia). The area, which will be open to the public, has been redeveloped and upgraded thanks to a 10-year partnership between Eni and the FAI - the National Trust for Italy which began last year. FAI and Eni are key players in this rare exercise of cultural promotion, which combines industrial activity with historical and naturalistic value at an operational site.

For the FAI, this is the first experience of managing and restoring an entrepreneurial, historical and innovative project within a site that is still productive. It offers a new type of experience, with the features and potential to encourage tourism different to that which is typically associated with the north-east coast of the island.

For Eni, the owner of the property through Ing. Luigi Conti Vecchi - Syndial, the partnership with the FAI is an example of 'best practice' for the unique purpose of the project, which aims to promote the cultural and environmental enhancement of a site which has been active for nearly ninety years.

The Conti Vecchi Saline, which began operating in 1931, cover an area of 2700 hectares across the municipalities of Assemini, Capoterra and Cagliari and are integrated with the industrial plant Ing. Luigi Conti Vecchi in Assemini, which was recently upgraded.

The salt fields and the industrial plants represent a perfectly integrated unicum, operating in a beautiful natural oasis. The project has allowed part of the site to be open the public from 28 May 2017 for ten months of the year offering tours, visitor centres, all necessary services and the communication of cultural content relating to the site's history.

The story of the Saline Conti Vecchi site of industrial archeology, recovered thanks to FAI, Syndial and Eni's innovative project, is told in many ways. Reconstitutions of projects of the time, historical documents and videos narrate the discovery of the salt fields and of the 'white gold' – salt – including the history of its production, its landscape and the key protagonists behind its extraction. FAI collaborated with experts and local scholars as well as with historical and current workers of the salt fields to design the project. Memories and private documents of those who lived in the nearby village were collected in order to narrate the human aspect of the salt fields, and the communities home to its men, women and children.

This conservation and regeneration project covers all spaces entrusted by Eni to FAI: they have been brought back to their original functions with machinery equipment, historical objects and furniture restored in the location. This will allow visitors to tangibly understand how life was in the salt fields in the first half of the XXth century and the bubbling activity of the offices, workshops and laboratories. Visiting the buildings will allow the public to get to know the place through extensive guided tours while immersed in nature. There will be a constant focus on production which is still a highlight in the salt fields' panorama, dominated by white mountains of salt visible in the distance and on the horizons of land and sea.

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