

I TESORI DI VILLA ARCONATI-FAR

#10 - the Hall of the Zodiac

Waiting to open wide the doors of our little Versailles to welcome again the visitors who love it so much, we take this opportunity to let you know better the "treasures" that Villa Arconati-FAR guards and that still few know.

The **Zodiac Room** is one of the bedrooms on the main floor and was probably part of the wing of the **apartment south-east of the building**. The decoration of all the rooms that make up this wing was probably made between the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. This room is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating in the whole building for its refined decoration and for the meaning that this unfolds to our eyes.



The **walls** are painted with fake blue-colored upholstery, with white inserts, while the **vaulted ceiling** combines painting with pastel colors with delicate stucco and gilding.

Above the decorative frame that separates the walls from the vault we find some cute stucco cupids, which seem to play happily with birds. The peculiarity of these beautiful stuccos lies in the fact that the plump "legs" of the putti are three-dimensional, just like in the adjoining *Sala della Caccia*, whose decoration is ideally stylistically linked to this room.

What characterizes this bedroom is, however, the theme of the Seasons, a theme evidently very dear to the Arconati, who have reproduced it in several places inside the Villa and in the Garden. This should not surprise us, since at the time having a "good season" rather than a "bad season" could make the difference for those who, like the Arconati, lived on the wealth generated by the earth.

The four seasons are reproduced in as many medallions in fine stucco worked in bas-relief and all are immediately recognizable through the most classic attributes related to their iconography: **spring** holds a basket full of flowers, **summer** the ears of wheat, the **autumn** shows a cornucopia with apples and ripe grapes, **winter** is wrapped in a heavy cloak while it heats up on the fire of a burning brazier.



Stucco medallion depicting Spring with the zodiac signs (from right to left): Aries, Taurus, Gemini

The room, however, is not called "Sala delle Stagioni". Why is its name related to the Zodiac? To understand this, you need to sharpen your sight a little: in fact, at the top of each stucco medallion, there are the three zodiac signs corresponding to the season shown. We therefore have **Aries, Taurus and Gemini** in Spring; **Cancer, Leo and Virgo** in the Summer; **Libra, Scorpio and Sagittarius** in Autumn; **Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces** in Winter.

It is true that every room, every room, every corner of our Villa is a small world full of stories that still have much to tell us today.

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