



CHATEAU DE VERSAILLES



GRAND MÈCÈNE

DU MINISTÈRE DE LA CULTURE ET DE LA COMMUNICATION

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Press release

The hall of mirrors at the chateau of Versailles regains its former splendour

After three years of restoration work made possible by sponsorship from VINCI, the restored Hall of Mirrors reopens to the public.

On Monday 25 June 2007 Jean-Jacques Aillagon, president of the Etablissement Public de Versailles, and VINCI Chairman Yves-Thibault de Silguy formally reopen the Hall of Mirrors, now completely restored.

Appointed corporate patron by the Ministry of Culture, VINCI has led the restoration project since 2003, mounting the largest cultural sponsorship operation ever undertaken in France – worth 12 million Euros – and contributing towards the preservation of a French masterpiece listed by Unesco as a World Heritage site.

For this first complete restoration of the Hall of Mirrors, achieved within the innovative framework of a skills-based sponsorship arrangement, VINCI made available both its own expertise in project management and the know-how of group companies specialised in heritage conservation: restoration of marbles and bronzes, site equipment and safety, ventilation, masonry, electrical fittings and lighting systems. The remaining works packages were assigned to independent companies brought together by Cinzia Pasquali, for restoration of the painted, sculptural and gilded decoration, and by Vincent Guerre for the mirrors.

In a groundbreaking legal formula, VINCI led the project in partnership with the State authority responsible for the Château, within the framework of a temporary licence to occupy the site issued by the Ministry of Culture, effectively making the VINCI group the commissioning client of the works. This was the first time in France that a mission of such importance had been entrusted to a private sector company. Final responsibility for execution of the project naturally fell to the chief architect at France's Historic Monuments office in charge of the Château de Versailles, Frédéric Didier, who was assisted by a Monitoring Committee and by the International Scientific Council, made up of internationally acknowledged experts on 17th century painting and architecture. The restoration of the interior inaugurated today has met with the unanimous approval of the Scientific Council.



The restoration of the Hall of Mirrors shows that, when the missions and prerogatives of all parties involved are clearly set out and defined, corporate patronage may take the form of a genuine partnership in the service of society as a whole, opening up new areas in which the public and private sectors can work together.

The Hall of Mirrors has remained open to the public throughout the restoration work, thanks to the temporary display structures designed and installed by VINCI. From today, however, the Hall returns to its original splendour. In addition to the splendid architectural décor by Jules Hardouin-Mansart, visitors will admire the full glory, some 1,000 sq. metres in extent, of the painted and sculptural decorations by the royal painter Charles Le Brun: a great and hitherto neglected masterpiece of the history of art.

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