



CHATEAU DE VERSAILLES



MAJOR PARTNER  
OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

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## PRESS RELEASE

Versailles, 19 December 2005

Completion of the restoration of the first half of the Hall of Mirrors  
at the Château de Versailles by VINCI,  
Major Partner of the French Ministry of Culture

After eighteen months of restoration works, VINCI and the Château de Versailles can now reveal the restored half of the Hall of Mirrors to public gaze.

This first phase of the restoration project, completed on schedule, won the unanimous approval of the International Scientific Council at its meeting on 18 October 2005.

After three months of preparatory work, the restoration works proper concerned the architectural décor by Jules Hardouin-Mansart, with its mix of marble panelling, mirrors and sculptural features in bronze, which have been restored by teams made up of restorers from within the VINCI Group as well as outside specialists.

On the vaulted ceiling, meanwhile, the painted and sculpted décor has been restored by a group of sixty restorers, led by the restorer Cinzia Pasquali, who were selected by a committee of experts on 17th century painting and architecture.

Their work has revealed the delicacy of the palette of colours used by Charles Le Brun, First Painter to Louis XIV, at the same time contributing to the long-term preservation of this original 17th century décor.

VINCI has been spearheading the first-ever comprehensive restoration of the Hall of Mirrors, within the framework of a skills-based sponsorship operation, since July 2004. VINCI is providing the funding for the works – 12 million euros – and making available to the project the expertise of its various companies specialising in the restoration of historic buildings.

Appointed a Major Partner of the French Ministry of Culture, VINCI is undertaking this project, together with the Etablissement Public du Château de Versailles, within the framework of a Temporary Occupation Order, granted by the Ministry of Culture in order to allow it to act as contracting authority for the project.

This unprecedented arrangement has enabled the Group to build up a real working partnership with the Château authorities and the different experts associated with the project.



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VINCI is responsible for managing the project and for the administrative and financial management of the operation. Decisions of a technical, artistic or methodological nature are made by the chief architect at Monuments Historiques, the Monitoring Committee and the International Scientific Council, composed of leading experts on the painting and architecture of the 17th century.

This first phase of the restoration has been carried out without ever having to deny access to the four million visitors who pass through the Hall each year. The worksite is entirely concealed from view and protected from noise and dust by a scenographic installation: visitors walking through this animated corridor can experience the erstwhile atmosphere of the Hall thanks to a life-size reproduction of a ball held here in the days of the Ancien Régime.

The installation also serves an educational purpose, with presentations, with commentaries available in several languages, on the successive stages of the restoration process.

After three months spent taking down, moving and re-assembling the scaffolding and the scenographic installation, the restoration of the other half of the Hall should get under way in February 2006.

The entirely restored Hall of Mirrors is scheduled to open in May 2007.

Press contacts

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