

PER TUA  
INFORMAZIONE  
(FOR YOUR INFORMATION)

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# GET YOUR “GLADIATOR” ON!



**Well, it's time to get your old gladiator outfit out of storage.**

Fuhgeddaboutit! All joking aside, the Roman Colosseum is slated for big changes.

The Flavian Amphitheater, or as most know it, the Roman Colosseum, has been undergoing a lot of clean-up and renovation work in the last 7 years. The exterior has been carefully washed to remove modern day soot and acids which can accelerate the decomposition of the ancient stone. The archaeologists and their helpers are continuously working inside to restore the underground passages and vaults. Soon the visitor's center will be opened outside the amphitheater.

It was during the initial clean-up phase that conversations began about using the amphitheater for other cultural events.

The governing cultural commission soon decided that there was a need to create a modern stage in the arena so that visitors could get the experience of the ancient Roman arena. A stage, specifically a retractable wooden floor, has been proposed, approved and is now partially in place at the Colosseum.

The stage would offer visitors a gladiator's perspective while inviting the possibility of cultural events. I do not think they have WWE or cage fights in mind but who knows?

The winning bid for the project went to Milan Ingegneria. They outlined key features of the Colosseum stage project:

- **“Retractability:** The stage is designed to open and close, revealing the underground structures (hypogeum) of the Colosseum, including the trapdoors, lifts, and other engineering elements used in ancient spectacles.



- **Material:** The floor is constructed from sustainable Accoya wood panels, chosen for their durability and resistance.
- **Ventilation and light:** The design incorporates rotating wooden slats to allow natural light and air into the underground chambers, maintaining optimal conditions for the archaeological remains.
- **Rainwater collection:** A system for collecting and recycling rainwater for use in the monument's public bathrooms will be included.
- **Reversibility:** The design is entirely reversible, allowing the stage to be removed in the future if necessary. “

The project originally aimed at completion by 2023, but it has not yet been completed.

The stage will be at the same level as the original floor. Using the original foundation of the amphitheater floor, a dynamic system composed of a load-bearing section, made of stainless steel, and a walking surface made of rotatable and moveable sheets of carbon fiber and termanto foam covered with the previously mentioned Accoya wood will be constructed. It has a mechanism that allows it to be opened/ closed according to the needs of the planned event showing as much of the ancient hypogeum as wanted.

In 2021, Culture Minister Dario Franceschini stated that “we’ve taken another step forward toward rebuilding the arena, an ambitious project that will aid the conservation and safeguarding of the archaeological

structures while getting back to the original image of the Colosseum and restoring its character as a complex stage set.”

Parco archeologico del Colosseo Director Alfonsina Russo expressed, “reconstruction of the arena helps turn back the hands of time, finally providing the public with the same view of the monument’s stage floor that ancient spectators had, allowing for a more complete appreciation of the site and highlighting the importance of conservation through highly technological structural solutions aimed at long-term eco-sustainability.”

Additionally, an elaborate system of ventilation will be installed on the arena’s perimeter to control the humidity and airflow under the floor and further support preservation and restoration.

“When the arena’s completed, this place will be even more beautiful. It will be great for the tourists who will be able to see the Colosseum from the center of the arena,” said Dario Franceschini.

“It will be great to have the possibility to do cultural events of the highest level. Of course we won’t do football matches.”

The goal of all the projects is to preserve the coliseum for future generations. As the projects near completion, one can only wonder what cultural events will find their way into Flavian’s amphitheater. □