

Some of these panels recall the atmospheres of the Domus Aurea, the imperial residence built by Nero after the famous fire of 64 a.C.. Rediscovered in the Renaissance, the Domus was visited by many artists, who then employed the ornamental patterns and decorations (called 'grotesques') present also in the Camerino.

On the front wall, the central section contains a golden mirror divided in six parts, adorned of precious small columns and telamones, probably XVIII copies of older ones; in the middle frame, in contrast, we can observe frogs, birds, lizards and snails. Below this section, we find two more modern mirrors and a painting of modest craftsmanship.

Above the window is to be noted a beautiful image of Apollo, while the two panels next to the window appear as imitations and are to be attributed to a different author of a later epoch. Finally, on the ceiling, a painting of XVIII Century flavour portrays Aurora with the Sun Cart, another theme dear to the Estensi and that we also find in one of the halls of the Estense Castle.



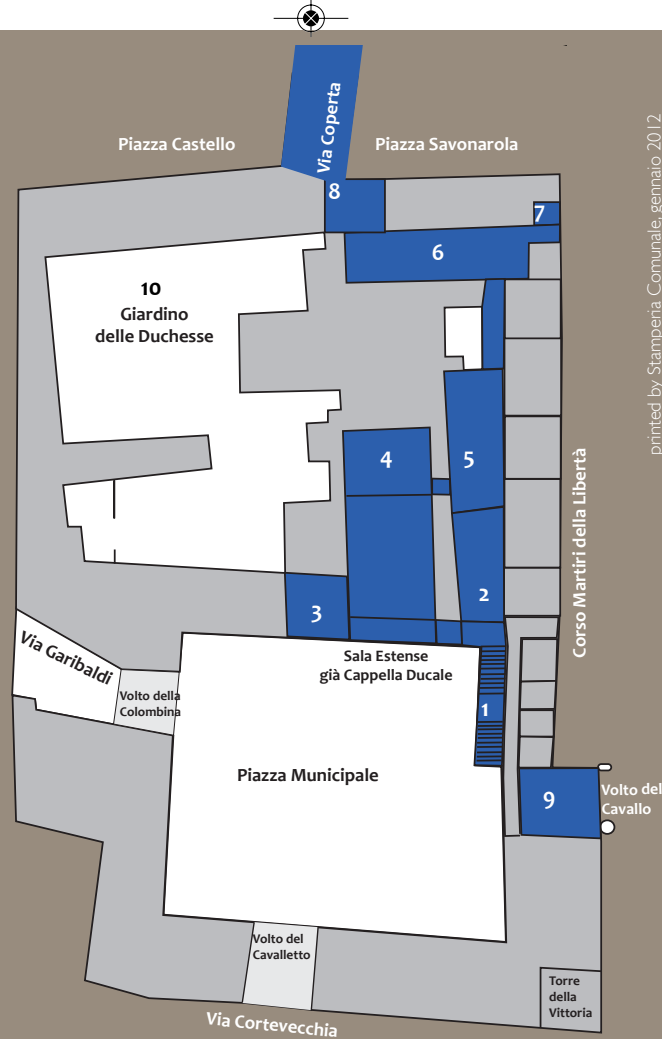
The "Golden Mirror"

Tour of the Estense Ducal Palace

by the Mayoral Spokesperson's Office
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|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The Guildhall Grand Staircase | 6. The Albo Pretorio Hall |
| 2. The Lapi Hall | 7. The Duchesses' Camerino |
| 3. The Golden Hall | 8. The Covered Path |
| 4. The Hall of Tapestries | 9. The Arengo Hall |
| 5. The Grand Hall of the Plebiscite | 10. The Duchesses' Garden |

The Ducal Palace of Estensi, now Guildhall

Piazza Municipale 2, Ferrara

Opening times

from Monday to Friday,
 all-day opening of the Town Hall
 from 9am to 1pm - from 3pm to 6pm

Information

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The Duchesses' Camerino

COMUNE DI FERRARA
 Città Patrimonio dell'Umanità

The Duchesses' Camerino

The Duchesses' Camerino was created for Eleonora and Lucrezia d'Este, daughters of the Duke Ercole II. This small but rich interior was decorated between 1555 and 1560 primarily by Cesare, Camillo and foremost Sebastiano Filippi (known as Bastianino).

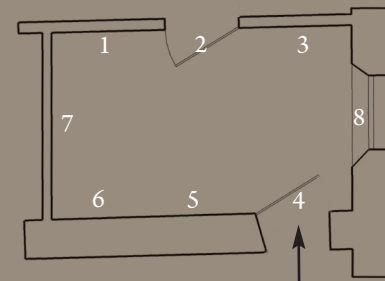
It is one of the most fascinating interiors of the whole palace and it well represents the taste and extraordinary sophistication of the Estensi: it is a true treasure, a precious chest, pride of the city. There are several hypotheses on the original scope of this small room. Some argued that the room was employed by the Duke's daughters who here got dressed, combed their hair, namely 'spruced themselves up'.

It was also therefore a private and secluded room, quite common in exclusive palaces, appropriate also for secret conversations and for studying. It could also be heated quickly in the cold winter evenings precisely because of its small dimensions. These characteristics, of an almost secret place, remained almost unaltered even when in 1598 the Estensi abandoned Ferrara ceding it to the Pontifical State. So much so that the room was chosen by the Giudice dei Savi (the Judge of the Elders) of Ferrara as his private office in the XVIII Century. Here he could study, in perfect silence, issues regarding the city administration. Indeed, if had it not been built in the XVI Century, we could say that this interior is built with modern techniques to ensure that it is perfectly sound-proof.

In the following century and until the beginning of the XX Century it was then used by the city hall secretary.

The walls of the Camerino are composed by decorative panels in painted and golden wood. They have a base characterised by geometric elements and small monochromatic figures in different poses. Upon the base are some pilasters adorned with coloured glass squares imitating precious marble. Between the pilasters are boards decorated with grotesques on golden backgrounds, with various ornamental patterns and refined allegorical and mythological figures.

We can recognise the Abundance, who holds a cornucopia on the left (symbol of fertility and wealth, explicit reference to the opulence of the Este House) and a branch of laurel with the right hand (symbol of glory and victory), while on the opposite wall is represented Minerva.



The Duchesses' Camerino

Beyond the wall of the 'golden mirror' (7), the others walls of the dressing room are characterised by panels finely decorated, recognisable also because of the allegorical and mythological figures here represented, among which:

1. The Abundance
2. and 5. The Caryatids
3. and 4. The Sacrificers
6. Minerva
8. Apollo (above the window)



The Camerino's ceiling with the Aurora and the Sun Cart

photos: Conservation and Restoration Center La Venaria Reale