

Women at EHH

In the heart of Castel di Lama, Italy, Borgo Storico Seghetti Panichi stands as a testament to heritage and history, cherished and preserved by the Pignatelli family. EHH is privileged to have had an exchange with Stefania Pignatelli Gladstone, as part of the owning family and one of our leading board members. We had the chance to discover her multidimensional roles in cultural heritage.

"Borgo Storico Seghetti Panichi has been in our family since circa 1850. My mother Giulia is still the owner, and the last three generations looking after the Borgo are female," reveals Ms. Pignatelli, emphasising the rich matriarchal legacy woven into this historic estate.



When asked about her perspective as an heir to a historical house, Ms. Pignatelli reflects upon 25 years of overwhelming experiences encompassing a spectrum of values and traditions intrinsic to historical heritage. "You never get used to the immensity of the values and traditions that Historical Heritage brings forward to the present generations," she remarks, highlighting the diverse experiences from family-focused challenges to preservation, restoration, and business management.

For Ms. Pignatelli, safeguarding cultural heritage transcends gender. "I do not identify myself as a woman or as a man when thinking of safeguarding and preserving our cultural heritage but as a 'soldier' or 'warrior' with certain objectives and tasks to carry out," she asserts, underlining the universal commitment required. Ms Pignatelli Gladstone emphasised that "Cultural Heritage makes you resilient as it does not wait for you, both during normal maintenance and in extreme emergency moments. Decisions must be made swiftly but with a good degree of programming and analysing. You may risk becoming harder on people, more determined, less inclined to excuses for errors being made. But you also learn to be humble, as you renounce to many luxuries as you prioritise the well-being of the cultural heritage you look after."

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As Vice President of ADSI in the Marche Region and a Governor of EHH, Ms. Pignatelli's commitment extends beyond familial ties. "Cultural Heritage is an expression of the political, social, and economic network of a country. Most importantly, I am learning that without people, there would be no tangible or intangible Cultural Heritage.

As of honouring women in our entourage, Ms. Pignatelli Gladstone pays homage to her mother Giulia, a remarkable figure who has devoted 60 years to tending to the historic house and garden with love, determination, passion, and sacrifice. "She has lived probably five differently lives in these six decades. And she is still here fighting, expressing her opinions with force, and teaching my children how important it is to be truthful to oneself and how history, the arts and culture can give more meaning to our existence in this world," Pignatelli admiringly shares.

Borgo Storico Seghetti Panichi's doors have welcomed illustrious women, from HRH Maria Pia di Savoia to Italian actress Piera Degli Esposti, each leaving an indelible mark on the estate. But what makes this place magical and worthy of such attention is the Pignatelli's family commitment: "My mother Giulia who is 81 is still very much in charge! It is a mix of 3 generations together as we live here with her and our two children who are 9 and 7. We are working on many restoration projects together and the views of all three generations have always been considered. We all bring to the table something special, unusual and practical that this place can benefit from."

This article only reveals the tip of the iceberg in Pignatelli's dedication to cultural heritage, but EHH is happy to have her as one of our dedicated members. By notably being part of the Jury of our European Sustainable Heritage Award in 2024, she showcases dedication and care for the future of historic houses.