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Florentine Legends: "The Reversed Balcony"

By Simone Alfaweb

Florence is a city full of history where it's easy to be charmed by surrounds and you do not notice some little corners, minor ones that make you rediscover the city and the character of Florentine people.

One of these is little corners in Florence, perhaps surrounded by a legend, is in Borgo Ognissanti at number 12, where is located the reversed balcony. Admiring it is a real pleasure especially if you think about the legend that surrounds it, not because it was object of peculiar tales but because it reflects very well the city and its inhabitants character, reflection where I see myself too.

The reversed balcony that is located on the first floor, was built by assembling counter wise the classical elements of a regular balcony: the supporting corbels, its volutes and the balustrades where capitals are in place of the base.

The building dates back to the 16th century, and it seems to have been built in such a curious way as a request of the stable's builder, due to some spites with the Duke Alessandro de' Medici.

Looks like, that at the moment of the project proposal, this was rejected by the Duke, cause the balcony was too prominent (for some law of the age). After the first reject the builder presented the project a second time modifying a few things but leaving the balcony almost unchanged, of course the Duke Alessandro denied it again. At a third instance, trying to be salacious, the Duke wrote on his response: "yes on the contrary". The builder, applying the answer to the letter, ordered to his architect to build the balcony upside-down. Perhaps the Duke Alessandro would have liked to punish the irreverent constructor, but as a Florentine ... I think he appreciated and approved his presence of mind.

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Creating Your Own Garden in Small Spaces

By Amanda Baker

Anyone can have a garden, even those apartment dwellers living in the smallest apartments. If you have a balcony, all you need is a little imagination and patience, and a bit of a green thumb and you too can have a pocket garden worth bragging about.

The balcony is actually the most underused space in an apartment and it's precious space for wannabe gardener. No matter how small your balcony may be, it's adequate space to support a number of potted plants. But there should be some order in the way the planters are arranged, or the overall space could end up looking cluttered. One could also hang a few pots from the balcony roof and walls, but don't go overboard and make the balcony look like a tropical jungle.

Bigger balconies can also serve as a seating area – a perfect place to relax after a day at work. just remember to use light furniture as moving it around can be a backbreaking task in bad weather. Even if your apartment doesn't boast an extended balcony, there's nothing to worry about. When it comes to gardens, size doesn't really seem to matter and even the smallest square can support a mini-kitchen garden.

You can grow everything from tomatoes, cucumbers, and eggplant to oranges, all in pots. Admittedly, this is a bit more challenging than having just a few ferns and flowers. If you're not willing to work that hard for fresh fruit and vegetables, consider growing your own herb garden. It's the best option. Herbs can be grown in planters, needing just water and sunlight.

If you still feel that the balcony is too small, there's one more option. Create the illusion of open space. A crystal-clear sliding glass door between the room and balcony along with continuous flooring between the spaces can achieve the look of wider-open spaces without costing you a fortune.

Growing an apartment-friendly garden on your balcony isn't hard by any means. All it takes is a little bit of time. You'll be proud of yourself for the work that you've created and the beauty that's right outside your apartment – no matter how far up you are. From the second floor to the fifteenth and beyond – a beautiful garden could just be only a few steps from your door.

Amanda Baker writes for All Things Pondered:

<http://AllThingsPondered.com>

Valentine Day Recipes

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