

## VareseNews

### “I was born at the Palace hotel; it was my home”

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“I’m a witness of a time that has come to an end,” said **Emma Lonati** (see photo), the **daughter of the first manager of the Palace hotel in Varese**. In a few days, with the beginning of **2013, the one hundredth year of the hotel**, which was designed by one of the most important protagonists of art nouveau architecture, **Giuseppe Sommaruga**, will begin. And it is Emma who can recount the roaring years of the hotel, having personally witnessed, as a little girl, what the hotel was between the two World Wars. In the video, Emma speaks about the parties at the Palace, which she used to watch as a little girl, from behind the curtains, and about the art nouveau hotel as a holiday destination for professional people from Milan, and for Roman nobles, like the Torlonias. **She is still sorry that walls were repainted green, during the Second World War, to make it look like a military hospital.** “It was originally painted a lovely pink and white, and my father got a truck to bring fine pink gravel to match with the building; and the plants in the front were pink hydrangeas. It was wonderful.” Emma also tells about how she met her husband, during the occupation and transformation of the Palace into a military hospital. “The man that eventually became my husband, came to the Palace as a military doctor; he’d sent to what had become a hospital. We got married on Sacro Monte, and the hospital was moved to the Campo dei Fiori Hotel.” Today, Emma Lonati lives on Lake Como, but she loves her occasional visits to what, for years, was her home. “We lived here for years and I was even born here. I think I’m the only one who can say this.”

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