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The Insider: Reception highlights Palm Beach gathering for supporters of Florentine museum

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Everything from monuments to martinis was on the agenda for the Friends of the Uffizi's Palm Beach get-together.

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The event took place Feb 1-3 and was highlighted by a cocktail reception for major donors at the home of Madeleine Parker.

The Feb. 2 reception, which also honored Contessa Maria Vittoria Colonna Rimbotti, included cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, music, and an update on the latest restoration and preservation projects at the museum in Florence, Italy, being financed by the group.

The Palm Beach event kicked off on Feb. 1 with a lecture by Robert Edsel on "Saving Italy: The Race to Rescue a Nation's Treasures from the Nazis" based on his New York Times bestseller of the same name.

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The book recounts the determined American drive during World War II to save priceless art looted by the Germans from great museums in Florence and Naples.

On the eve of the Allied invasion, Gen. Dwight Eisenhower ordered two unlikely American heroes — artist Deane Keller and scholar Fred Hartt — to deploy from Naples and ferret out billions of dollars of missing art, including works by Michelangelo, Donatello, Titian, Caravaggio and Botticelli.

The book was the basis for the George Clooney movie of the same name.

The final event, a seaside cocktail party in conjunction with the Young Friends of the Palm Beach Symphony, took place Feb. 3 at the home of Scott Diament.

Proceeds benefit the Friends of the Uffizi — founded by Rimbotti and a group of concerned Florentines after the May 1993 terrorist bombing that damaged several art works and portions of the gallery — in its mission to support the gallery by raising awareness of the Uffizi and its cultural treasures; and by providing resources for acquisition, preservation, restoration and education.

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