



Robert E. Wirth
President & Managing Director, Hassler Roma

Roberto E. Wirth (b. Rome, 1950), President and Managing Director of the Hassler Roma, is the first son of Oscar Wirth and his wife Carmen. As the fifth-generation owner of the Hotel Hassler, he believes in carrying on the rich tradition of the Bucher-Wirth hotel dynasty. For almost two centuries, the Bucher-Wirth family continues to make their mark in the hospitality field both in Switzerland and Italy.

The dynasty began with Franz-Josef Bucher, now considered one of the pioneers of the hotel industry in Europe. In the 1870s, Bucher bought and developed the Trittalp area of Switzerland, previously remote and inaccessible. Within a couple of years, he built several hotels in addition to the Hammetschwand, still the highest chair lift in Europe, and the Burgenstock railway. Oscar Wirth joined the Hotel Hassler in 1921 and became the partner of another Swiss Hotelier, Franz Nistelweck, son-in-law of Albert Hassler. Oscar later became the sole owner of the prestigious hotel. The Hassler Roma's excellent location atop the Spanish Steps and next to the Trinità dei Monti church provided it with almost unlimited potential. In 1939, Oscar demolished the building almost entirely in order to rebuild it. Thereafter the hotel was requisitioned by the U.S. Air Force to serve as their Rome headquarters during World War II. The new Hassler was finally opened to the public in 1947.

Today, Roberto Wirth considers the Hassler his passion, home and family heritage. His commitment, dedication and personal touch are what have led the hotel to achieve its position as one of Europe's top hotels and the preferred destination for the elite society's sojourns in Rome.

Since Roberto Wirth was born deaf, he has been very active in various associations that strive to improve conditions for the deaf. He is the founder and president of the Roberto Wirth Fund Onlus, a non-profit organization that is dedicated to supporting deaf and deafblind children, and their families. The association focuses in particular on children from birth to six years and works with projects that promote an adequate cognitive, emotional, social, linguistic and communicative development, that allows children to fully express their personality. Moreover, the Roberto Wirth Fund in collaboration with the Italian Fulbright Commission, provide study scholarships to attend Gallaudet University, USA, to deaf students. He also sponsors several other philanthropic associations as well as those of culture and the arts.

He is also founder and chairman of the International Wine Academy of Roma, the first of its kind in Italy. Combining his skills in hospitality with his love for good wine, Mr. Wirth decided to establish the International Wine Academy as a meeting place for wine lovers, similar to a club, in collaboration with a group of friends. The Academy is situated right by the Spanish Steps and a few paces from the Hassler in a 16th century Roman *palazzo* called *Il Palazzetto*, also of property of Mr. Wirth. Il Palazzetto encompasses four intimate hotel rooms, a restaurant, terrace bar and wine bar. At the Wine Academy, true passion for wine is cultivated in all its aspects, thanks to a complete educational process: from the recognition of various wine-producing regions to the study of different methods of production and wine-tasting methods.

Besides managing the restaurants of the Hassler and Il Palazzetto, he also is consultant to several restaurants abroad, including the Italian restaurants "Travertino" of the Oberoi hotel New Delhi, and "Vetro" of the Oberoi Mumbai.

Roberto Wirth is currently Honorary President of the Piazza di Spagna Trinità dei Monti Association, after being appointed President from 2003 – 2006, safeguarding and representing the interests of retailers and business owners who operate in the area (security, sanitation etc).

In the past Mr. Wirth has received numerous personal awards, the most recent being: "Independent Hotelier of the World 2005" by *HOTELS* magazine, one of the most prestigious publications in the hospitality industry; the Prize for Economic Achievement by Rome's City Government in an event presided by the city's mayor (February 2006); the "Marco Aurelio" 2006 prize for Tourism from the Vice Mayor of Rome, Mariapia Garavaglia - this prestigious award recognizes those who have distinguished themselves in the Roman tourism sector, emphasizing the importance that tourism has for the economic and social life of Italy's capital.

Roberto Wirth has also received Honorary Doctorates in Humane Letters both from Lynn University (Boca Raton, Florida) in May 2006 and from Gallaudet University, in Washington, DC in May 2009.