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Pelli: "In terms of its context, I wonder if that plaza would be any good there. You have this gigantic scale, but you really don't have a feeling of what the buildings are going to do for it. A project like this can't be judged until after it's built; if people use it, it's good, if they don't, forget it."

Ramati: "I don't know anything about Little Italy in New Orleans, but in Little Italy in New York they would love this. Although I'm not crazy about the way it's implemented, I like the concept, it is very imaginative and worth citing."

Appleyard: "It's different from all the other projects we've seen in urban design in that it's specific, and I like it because of that. It's also innovative; I haven't seen anything quite like it before."

Progressive Architecture
January 1976

"the piazza's fountain, and what a pleasant surprise! Its beauty is really eye-popping! There are huge columns and archways that looked to me like the grandeur of ancient Rome, but which an Interfest official described as "symbolic of the topography of all of Italy and Sicily with the River Po flowing in the center." So be it. But it's a sight you shouldn't miss."

Tommy Griffin
"Griffinanities"
Figaro
August 2, 1978

"The principles it forwards and its appreciation of our local heritage and environment should be studied as a responsive approach to design theory. The contemporary interpretations of the classical orders will offend some, while others will consider certain aspects trite and contrived, but the unusual excitement and experience the Piazza creates will offer an outstanding architectural work to our city."

Doug Ashe
A.I.A. New Orleans
Newsletter
November/December
1977

"Visited your St. Joseph's Fountain at Piazza d'Italia recently—it's fantastic! Besides being a monument to our American Italian heritage it will serve as a constant reminder of what great things can happen when Americans with a "Root in the Boot" get together for a common cause. I especially like the neon and steel touches because they remind us that although we have Italian "Roots" we are Americans first. Seeing the fountain reminded me of a photo of myself taken at the 1939 World's Fair in front of the Marconi Building by my father. He was so proud to show me something that reflected his heritage. I know that to parents and grandparents all over the U.S.A. the Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans will provide similar pride and inspiration for years to come. The Piazza d'Italia, that's what I like about the South."

Maria Gloria
Letters to the Editor
The Italian American
Digest
New Orleans
Summer 1979

"Piazza is becoming CBD's No. 1 People Place."

The Festa d'Italia, held last weekend, showed the Piazza at its best—as a gathering place for thousands of smiling, well-behaved people seeking enjoyment outdoors. Empty of crowds, the Piazza is colorful, Coney-Island-like and even consternating as an architectural tour de force. But only when crammed with people does the Piazza explode excitingly into life. Then, the complex awakens in visitors many national qualities of which the Italians are proud—warmth, exuberance, spontaneity and a sense of joy in experiencing life.

Both children and adults waded gleefully in the fountain, while groups of people sat on its raised topological sections, surrounded by water on all sides. The continuous sound of rushing water, combined with its insistent spray, made the environment distinctly un-serious, and it caused the grouped people experiencing it to become instant friends.

Roger Green, writer
The Times Picayune-
States Item
New Orleans
October 26, 1979

"I love it, because it makes me happy to go there; the neon and stainless steel and brightly-painted columns, the slate and marble, the water and the floodlights lift my spirits.

This is New Orleans . . . The warm wet air makes its own ruins here, softens all lines and harmonizes everything. So what better place could there be to recreate a ruin?

And then there's the wildly eclectic quality of the Piazza. It is art that is about art; it "quotes" from any and all styles . . . All that deliberate vulgarity, all that display purely for the sake of display, is just right for New Orleans' perpetually tongue-in-cheek presentation of itself. There is an affinity between the Piazza and Bourbon Street: as if the hawkers who cry "Boys, all boys, the most beautiful boys in town" might appear suddenly in the Piazza crying, "Columns, Pillars, Fountains, Ruins, original colors, the most beautiful ruins in town . . ."

Everything about the Piazza d'Italia speaks of the rich confusion of New Orleans."

Gary Esolen, columnist
"Standpoint"
Gambit
March 1, 1981

"As I sat marvelling at this culmination of 2,000 years of Italian art and culture, I couldn't help wondering how Michelangelo and Bernini were ever able to successfully complete St. Peter's without the benefit of all that classy aluminum siding and neon lighting. And that metal tower alongside, what luck! I thought the parachute jump and ferris wheel concessions had been awarded to Armstrong Park.

I can usually manage to perceive some humor in Italian jokes if they aren't too brutish, but this place is surely the unkindest cut of all.

Let our tax money be totally squandered on this indignity, perhaps one of our local entrepreneurs could be persuaded to convert it into New Orleans' first outdoor discotheque. I have a name for it already: "Disco Al Fresco Art Deco."

Thomas J. Blasi
Letter to the Editor
The Times Picayune-
States Item
New Orleans
November 1978

"Not all members of New Orleans' Italian-American community are enthusiastic about the Piazza, however. Said one, while observing the water and neon columns: 'We just wish he would have done something more Sicilian, and not quite so Roman.'"

Mimi Crossley
Houston Post Art Writer
January 28, 1979

"The Piazza d'Italia is a melange of architectural sterility and smartaleckism further vulgarized at night by neon lights. It is incredible that \$1.65 million of taxpayers' money should have been spent on such a project. If the City of New Orleans intended to honor its large population of Italian descent, it has failed to do so. . . . The humblest Italian descendant in this community, unaware as he may be of the artistic glories of his ancestors, possesses an instinctive love of beauty to which the Piazza d'Italia is an affront."

Augusto Miceli
The Times Picayune-
States Item
New Orleans
March 24, 1979

"As one who loves Italy, Italian art, architecture and civilization, I was appalled by the fact that the Piazza d'Italia no more evokes Italy and its glories than a pig pen evokes the Doges' Palace. I resent the Piazza d'Italia, of which, it seems some utter guff has been uttered in defense of its innate ugliness and sterility.

I ask you if that isn't the ultimate in nonsense? Go to Poydras Street and see the Piazza d'Italia for yourself. And if you go at night when the neon lights are on, you'll see vulgarity added to inanity, I have been told by responsible observers. I myself have not seen it at night."

Pie Dufour, columnist
The Times Picayune-
States Item
New Orleans
December 28, 1978

"Something of lasting consequence . . . a memorial to all Italian-Americans . . . and something very important to the (New Orleans) Central Business District."

Mayor Moon Landrieu
The Times Picayune-
States Item
New Orleans
May 1978