

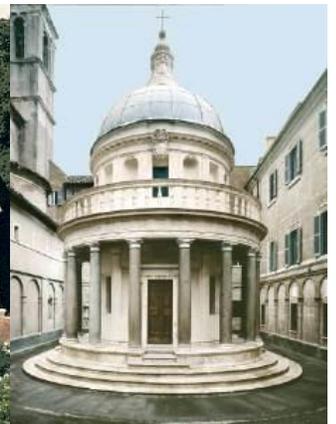
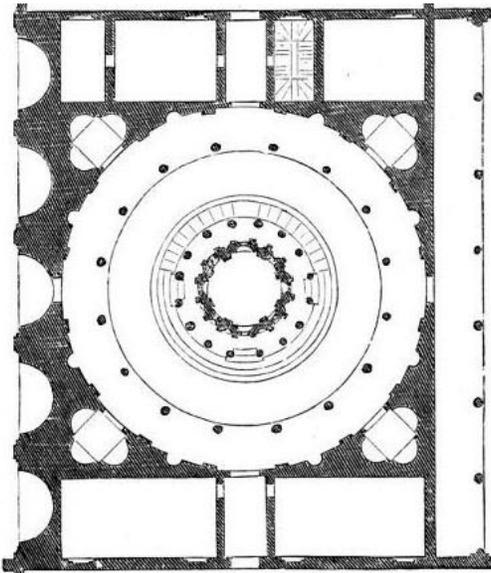
San Pietro in Montorio

St Peter's on the Golden Hill
2 Piazza San Pietro in Montorio (00153)
Bus No. 44, 75.710 .870 .115
8:30 AM - 12 PM (Every Day)

Tempietto (Bramante)

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM (Closed Sun & Mon)
2 PM – 4:30 PM (Closed Sun & Mon)
4 PM - 6 PM (Closed Monday)

The best way to visit is to walk up the stairs from the Vicolo del Cedro in Trastevere, turn left on the road, go past the junction and then up the ramp on the right. You pass a set of Stations of the Cross on the latter.



San Pietro in Montorio is a late 15th century **conventual** and **titular** church on the Gianicolo overlooking Trastevere. The appellation Montorio allegedly originated with the **yellow sand of the hill**, anciently named the **laniculum** after the god Janus. The developed etymology was that there **used to be a sand-pit that glowed golden at sunrise and could be seen at a distance, hence the hill began to be referred to as Mons Aureus in early mediaeval times.** An alternative suggestion is that somebody found a substantial treasure of gold here.

History - The legend

A medieval tradition claims that this was the **site of St Peter's martyrdom**, and this is the reason why a church dedicated to him was built here. However, there is nothing to support this claim in older sources, and it has been established with some certainty that the **Apostle was martyred in the Circus of Nero**, at the site of San Pietro in Vaticano. The mistake

The columns have square impostes on their capitals and support a **full entablature**. This has a **frieze** which is decorated by alternate **metopes** and **triglyphs**, the former bearing **Christian symbols**. Tassels hang below the triglyphs into the **architrave**. The ambulatory of the colonnade is flat-roofed, and the roofline is guarded by a continuous balustrade with pinched balusters which stand on the cornice. The **cella** has Doric pilasters on its external wall, mirroring the columns. The flat ceiling of the ambulatory is coffered, with rosettes.

The second storey, above the colonnade, amounts to the drum of the dome. It has sixteen **blind pilasters (no capitals)** edged with double molding. These support an **entablature without an architrave**, but with **modillions (little brackets)** on its cornice. Above the cornice is a very low attic plinth on which the hemispherical lead dome sits. This has a stone finial which is intricately decorated with heraldic shields and topped with a ball, the stonework here has eroded. On the entablature of the 2nd storey over the entrance is a very ornate shield of the kings of Spain.

Chapel

The Tempietto has two storeys internally, **the upper one being the actual chapel and the lower one being the crypt**. These have separate entrances, the one to the crypt being round the back.

Tempietto, main altar.

The chapel has eight Doric pilasters flanking the four windows, and these support an entablature with triglyphs on its frieze. Above the cornice is the dome drum, with four windows and four rectangular niches. The dome itself has eight wide ribs arranged to give a **Maltese cross effect**, with the background in blue with golden stars. It sits on a second cornice.

The four windows have **arched niches** above them which contain **statues of the Evangelists**. Two of these are topped by decayed fresco labels giving their names, which are in blue and dark red. The altar has a **statue of St Peter in an apsidal niche** with a **scalloped conch**, within a double **Doric archway (one archway set within the other)**. The plinth of the statue has a bas-relief of the Crucifixion of St Peter, featuring a naked soldier with a prominent bare behind.

Tempietto, floor.

The floor is **Cosmatesque**, a style which in the early 16th century was enjoying a revival in Rome. Note the aperture looking down into the crypt, which is part of the pattern. This seems to have been a devotional feature, as the corresponding hole in the crypt floor was taken to be the exact site of the crucifixion.

Crypt

The crypt is now accessed by stairs round the back, but apparently was only accessible by ladder when the Tempietto was originally built. Unfortunately it is not accessible to visitors, but you can look through the doorway.

It is **much more richly decorated than the main chapel**. The floor is laid geometrically in polychrome marble, and the wall is **revetted** in polychrome in an **ancient Roman style**. There is richly detailed stucco work saucer-domed ceiling, in monochrome with figurative medallions and panels as well as **much vine-scrolling**.

The altar has a pair of grey marble Doric columns supporting a horizontal cornice, and contains a small statue of St Peter. The altar frontal is edged with geometric **pietra dura work** around a dedicatory inscription. **The central hole in the floor**, the **putative** site of the crucifixion of St Peter, **doubles as a sump to get rid of rainwater draining into here**.

Interior - Nave

The nave has no aisles, but has **4 chapels off each side**. These are entered through archways separated by tall Composite pilasters which look as if they are **revetted** in red marble (actually paint). These support an entablature, which has posts above the pilaster capitals and from which springs the ceiling vault.

The spectacular **nave ceiling is structurally a cross-vault of two bays**. It has been very richly decorated in **monochrome stucco**. This contains a **cardinal's coat-of-arms, in a wreath surrounded by vine-scrolls and angels**, while the side panels have wreaths containing **winged putto's heads**. The transept has a saucer cupola with integrated **pendentives**, and is coffered in lozenges containing rosettes. The crossing arch and sanctuary triumphal arch are identically designed. Each begins with **tripletted** pilasters with posts in the entablature above, and unusually above the posts are not the **archivolt** springers but a second pair of very dumpy **tripletted** pilasters from which the archivolt actually spring.

Sanctuary

The sanctuary has a **single bay**, and is extended by a five-sided polygonal apse which used to be the choir of the friars. This now contains the church organ. This part of the church is 19th century, having had to be rebuilt after 1849. There is now no altar rail, and the high altar has no **aedicule** or **altarpiece**. It has polychrome marble revetting, and on the frontal is the monogram of Our Lady in gilded bronze, flanked by a pair of lilies in the same metal. **The tabernacle on the altar is a good example of late neo-Classicism**, being in the form of a miniature ancient triumphal arch.