



The numbering of the church refers to the **General map of the romanesque network of the hills (RRC)**

How to get to and visit St. George's Church:

C/o the cemetery, Bagnasco di Montafia (AT).

GPS Coordinates: Lat. 44.99600551 | Long. 8.02856798

Open the first Sunday of each month in the period from April to October, supervised by RRC volunteers.

Open daily from 8.00 to 18.00

Information: +39 3342860014 +39 3478761626

www.comune.montafia.asti.it

Local attractions in and around Montafia:

- St. Martin's Church, Montafia (RRC);
- San Secondo Church, Cortazzone (RRC);
- Basilica of St. John Bosco, Castelnuovo Don Bosco;
- Viale Castle.

Local events and shows:

- Patron Saint's Festival of St. Dionysius, October, Montafia (AT);
- Regional Festival of Truffles, first Sunday in December, Cortazzone (AT);
- Patron Saint's Festival of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 8 September, Capriglio (AT);
- Flea market for antique and second-hand objects, 25 April and 15 August, Castelnuovo Don Bosco (AT).



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Romanesque network of the hills
promotes knowledge and use of the romanesque heritage of the local areas between the River Po and the Monferrato Hills.

With the collaboration of:



With the support of:

Municipalities and Parishes of Albugnano, Andezeno, Brusasco, Castelnuovo Don Bosco, Cavagnolo, Cerreto, Cortazzone, Marentino, Mombello di Torino, Montafia, Montiglio Monferrato, Tonengo.



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Translation: Wall Street English, Chieri (TO)

St. George's Church

Bagnasco di Montafia

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Abbeys and churches between the River Po and Monferrato

Description of the local area

St. George's Church is situated in the area of the cemetery in the local district of Bagnasco di Montafia, standing on a crag. The local administrative capital lies on the other side of the valley.



Historical details

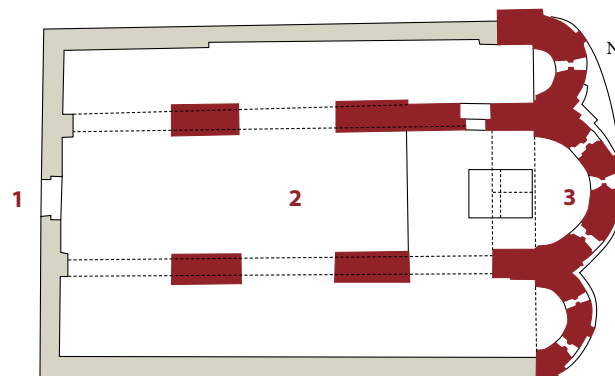
The church was first recorded as a *pieve*, or parish church, in two papal bulls dating back to 1153 and 1154. Shortly after that, in 1156, Pope Adrian IV placed the church of Asti under the protection of the Holy See, together with all its possessions, including the "plebem de Bagnasco". The Registrum of 1345 for the diocese of Asti shows that other local churches were also dependent on the pieve of Bagnasco, including St. Martin's in Montafia. On account of this function, St. George's church was not short of funds, circumstances which were reduced when the church of the local capital (Montafia) freed itself from that of Bagnasco, while, at the end of the XVth century, local power was consolidated in the hands of the Lords of Montafia, who were closely tied to the city of Asti. St. George's church soon fell into neglect and pastoral visits, which resumed on a regular basis after the Council of Trent (1545-1563), reported that the flooring was missing. Even though it was annexed to the cemetery and was still the burial place for some parishes even in the XVIIIth century, its state of substantial neglect was evidenced at the end of the following century (1885) in the report of an inspection by the Bishop of Asti, Mons. Giuseppe Ronco. Over the centuries, very little maintenance work was carried out, involving the area of the apse and central nave, roofed by cross vaults made with bricks laid flat and bound with gypsum mortar. It was not until the 1800s that any interest in restoring the church was shown and, in the early 1900s major work was carried out to make the building safe and remove the vaulted ceilings, which had been added two centuries before. Further major work was carried out in the last century, to consolidate the structure and reinforce the hillside, in order to prevent landslips.



Description

The building is laid out as a basilica, with three naves and three semi-circular apses; each of them measures 14.7 m in length and 9.5 m in width, while the radius of the central apse is 1.8m. The roofing is in curved tiles, with a gabled roof over the central nave and a single sloping roof over the two side naves.

1. The **façade** features projecting tiers and, above the entrance doorway, a circular window and, higher up, a window in the form of a Greek cross. The apses are separated by rectangular pilasters crowned by arches and shelves, while higher up there is a band of bricks, laid out in "sawtooth" design. The central apse has three single rounded openings, the apse to the south has two and the apse to the north has only one.
2. The **central nave** is separated from the one on the south side by two rectangular pilasters, supporting three rounded arches; a single pilaster and a wall, supporting two arches, separate the central nave from the one to the north. The nave walls are in stone, while those in the apse area are in stones and bricks. The altar, of recent construction, is in blocks of stone.
3. Originally the walls of the **apse** were completely frescoed, but now only a few of the frescoes can be seen: high up in the central



apse, St. George on horseback while fighting the dragon to free the princess. Its date may be ascribed to circa the XIXth century and it is thought to cover a pre-existing fresco. In the centre there are various frescoes dating back to the XVth century: Christ Resurrected, rising from a sarcophagus; the Saints Agatha and Clare, the former with her hands tied behind her back, bare-breasted and covered with blood, while the latter is pictured holding a book in her hands, a work that is attributed to a Lombard-Ticinese master. The apse in the nave to the left of the entrance has a fresco of St. Michael the Archangel, holding scales and the lance he used to defeat the dragon on the ground. On the apse in the nave to the right of the entrance there is a picture of St. John the Baptist, which is recognisable even though only the top part of the original fresco remains. The Saint is shown from the front and pointing with the index finger of his left hand to the fragment of a red roundel with a white standard in the middle, symbolic of the sacrificial lamb. There are also fragments where St. Sebastian (on the left side) and St. Rocco (on the right side) are recognisable, the work of the same painter.



Interesting facts

At the end of the Mediaeval period, but at a time that is difficult to establish, the populated area of Bagnasco was located at a certain distance from the church, on the side of the hill. Nowadays, the complex of houses still forms an elliptical layout, with a single entrance by means of a pointed gateway. In practice, it forms a large courtyard, which is easily defensible and placed in a healthy position. There is a considerable difference between that position and the bottom of the valley, which is definitely quite damp, as the place name itself (Bagnasco) suggests, being associated with the Italian word for wet.