



1:80000 scale. Map created on InkAtlas.com. Copyright OpenStreetMap contributors (openstreetmap.org), OpenTopoMap (CC-BY-SA), 2021.

The numbering of the church refers to the **General Map of the Romanesque Hills Route**.

### How to get to and visit

#### the church of San Pietro:

within the walls of the cemetery of Albugnano (AT).

GPS Coordinates: Lat. 45.079983 | Long 7.968835

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

On request on the other days.

Informations: +39 3389327700 / +39 3482280993

www.comune.albugnano.at.it

### Local attractions in and around Albugnano:

- Abbey of Vezzolano, Albugnano;
- Church of San Giacomo, Albugnano;
- Motta lookout point, Albugnano;
- Church of Sant'Andrea di Casaglio, Cerreto;
- Church of Santa Maria della Pieve, Pino d'Asti;
- Church of Sant'Eusebio, Castelnuovo Don Bosco;
- Castle and Museum of Plaster, Moncucco Torinese;
- Church of Madonna della Neve, Cocconato.

### Local events and shows:

- Patron Saint's Festival of Sant'Antonio, second Sunday of June, Albugnano (AT);
- Calici di Stelle, 10 august, Albugnano (AT);
- Patron Saint's Festival of Santa Maria di Vezzolano, first Sunday of September, Albugnano (AT).



Social Promotion  
Association

### Information point and contacts:

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Instagram: reteromanicadicollina



### The Romanesque Hills Route

promotes knowledge and use of the romanese heritage of the local areas between the river Po and Monferrato.

With the collaboration of:



With the support of:

Municipalities and Parishes of Albugnano, Andezeno, Aramengo, Berzano di San Pietro, Brusasco, Buttigliera d'Asti, Casalborgone, Castagneto Po, Castell'Alfero, Castelnuovo don Bosco, Cavagnolo, Cerreto d'Asti, Cocconato, Cortazzone, Lauriano, Marentino, Mombello di Torino, Montafia, Montechiaro d'Asti, Montiglio Monferrato, Portacomaro, San Sebastiano da Po, Tigliole, Tonengo.

Texts and photos by Associazione InCollina © 2020

Translation: Wall Street English, Chieri (TO)



# Church of San Pietro

Albugnano

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Abbeys and churches between  
the river Po and Monferrato

### Description of the local area

The church stands to the north of the urban centre of Albugnano, in the direction of Berzano San Pietro, at a crossroads with four roads, one of which leads to the green hollow, covered by woods and vineyards, of the nearby Rectory of Santa Maria di Vezzolano, to which the church of San Pietro is historically linked. Coming down the hill from Albugnano the side with the apse is immediately evident, almost intact with small arched windows, decorated with half pilasters and semi-columns and a notable stone frieze with hanging arches. Nowadays it is enclosed within the cemetery, as are many other Romanesque churches.

### Historical details

The church is shown by a document of the Bishop of Vercelli to date back at least to 1235 and subject to the parish priest of the nearby rectory of Santa Maria di Vezzolano. However, the characteristics of the apse and the walls with large stone blocks, would take it back to the end of the XIth century. It was a parish church until the XVIth century. It has not survived intact to this day, apart from the apse, as



can be seen from the discrepancies in its building techniques (lower walls in large stone blocks, upper ones in bricks). The façade was, in fact, rebuilt in 1870, shortening the church by about one span at the same time. The original church was almost certainly all in sandstone, while today the upper part of the side walls is in small format bricks; the whole of the upper brickwork was in fact redone around 1690. The windows in the form of slits are contemporary with the walls; the arches above them in stone and parts of the cornice are original material. In a drawing from 1854 by Clemente Rovere, the church is in ruins, with the roof missing and the foliage of a tree emerging from within. On the pastoral inspections of the Bishops of Casale in 1577 and in 1619, it appears in poor condition; so much so that the municipality of Albugnano protested to the Bishop, insisting that the new trustee abbot of Vezzolano should either give up the church or repair it so that it could be used for worship. In the end the threats worked and the go-ahead was given to start renovation.



### Description

The building has a rectangular floor plan with a semi-circular apse, roofed with tiles and double pitched over the nave and half-domed apse.

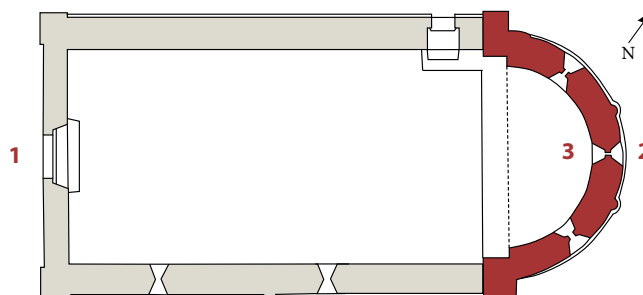
**1. The double-pitched** façade and walls with alternating stone and clay tiles, has been rebuilt with recycled material, reproducing the characteristics of Astigian Romanesque.

The doorway has a pointed arch, with a ring of bricks laid in a saw tooth pattern and bands of bricks alternating with sandstone blocks, following the typical play on colour of Astigian Romanesque. Below the tympanum there is a frieze of interlaced hanging arches. A similar frieze adorns the side walls.

**2. The apse** is especially interesting, being the part that has been less retouched; it is semi-circular in shape and divided into three sections by two semi-columns with carved capitals.

In the middle of each section there is a single pane sloping recess window; the north window still has a fragment of a basket woven stone grating, an element that once constituted the protection for the openings, since no glass was available of a suitable size.

**3. The interior** is a single rectangular hall with double pitched roof supported by wooden trusses. The apse has a diameter less than the width of the hall, is made of sandstone blocks and is



joined to the hall by a triumphal rounded arch with alternating stone blocks and bricks. In the apse tympanum, formed of bricks, there is a small cross-shaped window.

### Interesting fact

The naming of the church after San Pietro the apostle may be dubious. It is more likely that it is dedicated to San Pietro di Terrasanta (1102-1174), a pupil of San Bernardo. There are no iconographic indications to support one hypothesis more than the other. With regard to the naming of the church: *"the term 'in the little window' was explained by Bosio perhaps as the little windows seen therein, or rather, being between two mountains, behind them there is an opening like a window on to the beautiful valley of Aramengo and Marmorito. The term 'little window' is used here in a quite clear and unequivocal manner in its sense of 'narrow hill, dip in the crest of a mountain chain', which recurs in other Piedmontese place names"* (translated quote by Aldo A. Settia).

The town of Albugnano is known as the 'balcony of Monferrato', both on account of its height above sea level and its wide panoramic view from its famous Belvedere, the highest point in the whole area.

From a height of 549 metres asl, the hills of Lower Monferrato can be seen and, in the distance, the Basilica of Superga in Turin and a large section of the western Alpine chain.