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

### How to get to and visit church of San Pietro:

Via Giuseppe Mazzini 59, Brusasco (TO).

GPS Coordinates: Lat. 45.15768997 | Long. 8.05537292

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

On request on other days.

Informations: +39 3297505706 +39 3473611958

[www.comune.brusasco.to.gov.it](http://www.comune.brusasco.to.gov.it)

### Local attractions in and around Brusasco:

- Castle of Luogo, Brusasco;
- Palazzo Ellena, Brusasco;
- Abbey of Santa Fede, Cavagnolo;
- Church of San Secondo in the Cemetery, Cavagnolo;
- Villa Martini Bonaudo, Cavagnolo;
- Natural reserve of special interest on the confluence of the river Dora Baltea (Località Baraccone);
- Roman remains of the city of Industria, Monteu da Po;
- Castle of La Rocca, Verrua Savoia.

### Local events and shows:

- Patron Saint's Festival 14 to 18 June, Brusasco;
- Patron Saint's Festival 29 August to 1 September, Marcorenego (District of Brusasco).



Social Promotion  
Association

**Information points and contacts:**  
Albugnano (AT), Abbey of Vezzolano

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[www.vezzolano.it](http://www.vezzolano.it)

Facebook: turismo InCollina  
Instagram: reteromanicadicollina



**The Romanesque Hills Route** promotes knowledge and use of the romanesque 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.

Text and photo by the architect Sara Inzerra, 2018 edition

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# Church of San Pietro

Brusasco

8



Abbeys and churches between  
the river Po and Monferrato



### Description of the local area

On entering the little town of Brusasco, follow the provincial road SP 107 towards Verrua Savoia for a short distance and turn left at the first traffic light into the street named Via Delle Scuole. Take another left turn, among the small county roads, into Via San Pietro, which runs alongside the cemetery perimeter wall. Enter the main gateway of the cemetery and walk through the rows of burial recesses and tombs to reach the church apse, which appears quite suddenly, in all its elegance.



### Historical details

The first testimony to the construction appeared in the Register of property valuations for the Diocese of Vercelli in 1298. Mentioned as the chapel of capella sancti Petri de Quaradola sive de Brusasco, it was not until 1348 that it was appointed ecclesia sancti Petri de Bruxascho. At that time, the lords of Aramengo, Counts of Radicati were patrons and lawyers of San Pietro, together with other churches in the area, including the Pieve of San Giovanni of Lustria, on which San Pietro was dependent (unfortunately only the ruins of the former remain in the countryside of Monteu da Po). In 1474, Brusasco, together with another 53 settlements, was assigned to the new Diocese of Casale Monferrato. In the list of assets of the churches of Brusasco from 1565, it was mentioned as a parish church, well furnished with valuable decorations, and used for funeral ceremonies, as shown by the reports on the pastoral visits. Yet, not many years later the building was reported as missing essential parts, such as its floor and ceiling, and being in need of restoration. At the end of the 1500s, the Gonzaga family, marquises of Monferrato, moved the population to the local fortified area, and therefore also the parochial functions, to church of San Bernardo. In 1642, the report of monsignor Miroglio described the roof as showing a partial collapse. Then again, there is the date of 1681, when the celebration of the eponymous saint was held, with a new altar dedicated to San Michele, and maintenance work was carried out; however, only a few years later everything was once

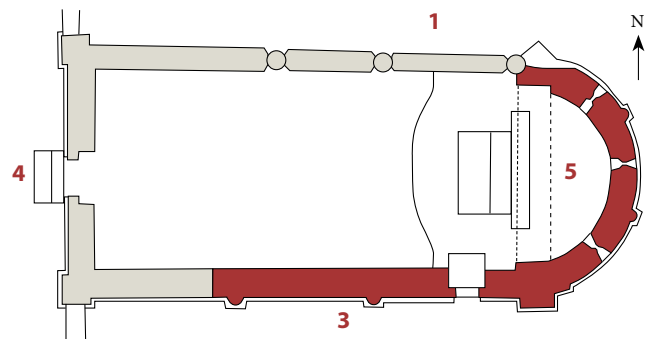


again in ruins. During the visits of monsignor Radicati in 1724, the structure, which was once again reported as complete with part of the north nave, had a new wooden ceiling and its interior walls had been plastered. In 1763 the building turns out once more to be in precarious condition and probably with some parts having been rebuilt; in 1826 it appears without its side chapels and in 1875 the plastering covers over the ancient frescoes. At the end of the 1800s, it was declared a national monument and Alfredo d'Andrade, head Superintendent of the Fine Arts, took measurements and made preparatory drawings to undertake some major works.

### Description

This building, despite the fact that parts of it have been destroyed and work over the centuries has transformed the original layout, nevertheless commands interest on account of its construction and decorative peculiarities. The floor plan is a rectangle, with a single hall and a semi-circular apse. There is a summary description from the 1700s which mentions the other two chapels, which have disappeared, to the sides of the main altar and the small bell tower, which is still standing.

**1. The north side** is the oldest part of the construction. Rounded arches can be seen on the walls, closed and resting on capitals sculpted in stone: important witnesses to what remains of the old division between the existing nave and the one which has long been destroyed. Traces can be seen of anchoring into the apse, at the level of the corner pilaster. It was the position of the church,



close to the River Po, which led to damage to its structures during various flooding of the river, "contemporary with the movement of the river, documented in that area between the XIth and XIIth centuries", according to the historian Caramellino.

**2. The apse** is in alternating bands of stone and brick, divided into three areas by two semi-columns with capitals and separated by two flat half-pilasters. In the central single opening, curved and splayed on both sides, two small columns can be seen, with a figurative capital representing a lion-like head. In the upper part, a light blind arcade, embellished with a row of columns with capitals supporting rounded arches, adds singular interest to the monument.

**3. South side.** It is certain that the church has been partially rebuilt, using recycled material and the admirable building technique of rows of bricks alternating with blocks of greyish-yellow sandstone, which probably come from the quarry in nearby Verrua Savoia, to create a lovely bichrome pattern, enriched by hanging arches and archivolt on the window and the doorway.

**4. The façade** is a plain gable, with interwoven hanging arches, which appear to exalt the opening of the double window, in line with the curved doorway. The decoration is achieved with the usual alternating dressed sandstone and bricks, also cut in diamond shapes on the archivolt. After the mid-1700s and the following century, it was partially rebuilt, which is evident from the different technique and the materials employed and those recycled.

**5. The interior** appears with exposed trusses and on the north side the arches can be seen inside the walling, with columns and carved capitals. The frescoed walls were quite numerous when compared to those that can be seen today. Part of the frescoes still remain in the semi-dome of the central apse, with documentary evidence dating them to the mid-1400s. Some unique examples of iconography can be seen on the south side: a Giovanni Battista pointing on one side to the Madonna and Child in her arms and another fresco representing the Madonna on the throne and Child, once again easily discernible.



### Interesting fact

Inside the cemetery area, on the south side and a few metres from the perimeter, there is a reconstruction of the church in miniature.