

***The Villa Rotunda,
Andrea Palladio, and a
Bicycle Trip***

A serendipitous find near
Vicenza, Italy

An Exhibit for the
Philatelic Society of
Lancaster County

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Andrea Palladio 1508 - 1580





Bicycle trips can lead you to unexpected treasures.

On our 2001 cycling route from Lago de Garda to Venice, my friend, Karen, and I came upon The Villa Rotunda, just outside of Vicenza. This countryside palazzo, one of the most recognizable buildings of the Italian Renaissance, was designed by 16th century scholar and architect, Andrea Palladio. The building is a prime example of Palladio's use of Mathematical compatibilities to emphasize visual clarity, balance, and uniformity. A trip to the ubiquitous gift shop inside brought the opportunity to purchase the required philatelic souvenir to bring home to my husband, Bob. Nearby is the portrait of Palladio on this large souvenir along with four 1973 Italian stamps that feature some of scholar's work. (See image of the Rotunda below.)



The Villa Rotunda

Although not featured on the souvenir sheet, further research suggests that Palladio's greatest legacy was his *Four Books of Architecture*, published in Italian in Venice in 1570. Thomas Jefferson was so impressed with the work, that he called it the Bible of architecture. Jefferson drew inspiration from the Palladian plans based on Roman temples to design Monticello. For Palladio, exterior views with their porticos and domes were paramount. We can see Palladio's influence on display on US postage stamps depicting some of our nation's government and university buildings, where the exteriors were designed to capture the power, strength, and grandeur of our new nation, while honoring political and philosophical thinking.

(See examples to follow.)

