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The House of the Vettii of Pompeii

The House of the Vettii of [Pompeii](#) was rediscovered in 1894, after a violent and sudden eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD completely buried not only the House of the Vettii but all of Pompeii. It was, according to the latest discoveries in Pompeii, on October 24, 79 AD. Vesuvius, which was considered by ancient Pompeians to be a mountain and not a volcano, until then, had never given any indication of wanting to erupt.

The eruption of 79 A.D. was completely sudden for the Pompeians who did not even have time to escape and get to safety. It continued continuously for two days and Pompeii was completely submerged by ash and lapilli for more than 3 meters.

Only in 1748 during the excavation of a well, it was discovered that under that thick layer of volcanic material was an entire city with all its inhabitants, who had remained buried for centuries.

The house of the Vettii to whom it belonged

House of the Vettii stands in regio VI. It is named after its two owners, Aulus Vettius Restituto and Aulus Vettius Conviva, two slaves who later became wealthy through the wine trade.

The House of the Vettii is one of the most luxurious and richly painted dwellings in all of Pompeii. It features a manorial and a servile part.

Manor area of the House of the Vettii in Pompeii

The master's area is rich in paintings and scenes in the Pompeian IV style.

The entrance of the House of the Vettii in the manor area features the famous painting of Priapus, found on the right doorframe of the front door of the dwelling.

In the painting, Priapus is depicted intent on weighing his enormous phallus on one plate of a scale, and a bag full of money is used as a counterweight on the other plate.

This indicates the enormous value that [phallus](#) represented to ancient Pompeians. In fact, for the latter, the phallus was considered a symbol of wealth, prosperity and good omen.



Immediately after the entrance, where there is a painting of Priapus, one enters the atrium of the house. Here along the walls are depicted scenes of hunting, cupids and sacrificial scenes.

In the same atrium it is possible to admire on masonry bases, two iron safes, decorated with bronze. The safes were made on sight by the two owners, probably because they wanted to flaunt their wealth and status.

Past the atrium is the peristyle, which overlooks the huge garden of the house filled with bronze and marble statuettes used as fountains.

The peristyle, too, is finely decorated and painted with black panels depicting still life.



Then along the peristyle are a series of rooms, including two reception halls, richly painted.

In the hall to the left on yellow-ground walls are depicted Hercules intending to strangle snakes sent by Juno, the torment of Dirce and Pentheus.

In the hall to the right are depicted the punishment inflicted on Ission and Bacchus noticing Ariadne sleeping on a tiger skin

The servant area of the house

In the servile area, however, we find a small atrium with impluvium and a niche probably used as a lararium (i.e., an altar) .

A kitchen that features a masonry counter with exposed tripods and 5 bronze pots. Inside it were found basins, earthenware vessels and pots.

In the room adjacent to the kitchen, however, a marble statue of Priapus was found, probably used as a fountain in the garden.