

DISCOVERING PALAZZO DEI PENITENZIERI

In 1480, Cardinal Domenico della Rovere called on Baccio Pontelli to construct his residence in Rome, neighbouring the Basilica of San Pietro. The cardinal's palazzo looked over Piazza Scossacavalli. The square disappeared when Mussolini ordered construction of the Via della Conciliazione, but the building itself was saved (perhaps because it was no longer a private residence but the property of a religious organisation, the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, which still occupies half the structure). The spaces feature magnificent works of art, including the sixteenth-century cycle of the months and the mysterious Semi-Gods Ceiling by Pinturicchio.

The Penitenzieri, Papal confessors, came to use the palace as their seat in the eighteenth century. Pope Benedict XIV assigned to them the tasks of providing aid and protection for foreign pilgrims and hearing the confessions of these pilgrims in the Basilica of San Pietro, which was infested at the time by impostors and false priests who translated visitors' dialogues with their confessors for exorbitant fees. The other wing of the palazzo is occupied by a hotel. In the hotel a number of adornments remain, as in the restaurant located in the loggia of the internal garden.

Here, surrounded by Baroque frescoes and Renaissance arches, Jep and Ramona dine with the singer, Antonello Venditti. Sorrentino seems to have appreciated the intimate atmosphere of the location, where the adornments remain in the background.

For visitors

Via della Conciliazione, 33

The wing occupied by the
Order

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The wing occupied by the hotel

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