



## New dig reveals 'lost' blue pigment from 2,000 years ago



The 'blue room' at Pompeii. Credit: Pompeii Archeological Park.

<https://pompeisites.org/en/comunicati/pompeii-excavations-in-regio-ix-bring-to-light-a-sacrarium-with-blue-walls/>

Calcium copper silicate was forgotten until mid-2024 when an archeological dig in Pompeii revealed the 'blue room' in a newly excavated insula. Images of the room painted with this lost blue pigment published in the journal of Pompeii's excavations

<https://pompeisites.org/e-journal-degli-scavi-di-pompei/>

## Rare 'Pompeii Blue' room inspires Roncesvalles replica.

Toronto, ON, January 15, 2025 – Local history writer Don Fenton asked High Park Paints in Roncesvalles Village to re-create the blue pigment from the Pompeii archeological discovery, as he paints a room at home to celebrate his modest collection of Roman art.

Fenton imagined the lost colour on the walls of his own ‘blue room’ after studying reports of the find at Pompeii’s Archeological Park near Italy’s Amalfi Coast, where the town thrived before the Mount Vesuvius volcano devastated and buried it in 79 AD.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eruption\\_of\\_Mount\\_Vesuvius\\_in\\_79\\_AD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eruption_of_Mount_Vesuvius_in_79_AD)

News coverage has been enthusiastic: NBC, ABC, CBS, CNN, BBC, PBS, CTV, MSN, Aol, Today, Smithsonian Magazine, Archeology Magazine, Euronews, TikTok, FB, Instagram, The Guardian, CityNews, Fox, Good Morning America, Science, Daily Express, The Times and Newsweek, to name a few.

1<sup>st</sup> century Roman historians Pliny [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pliny\\_the\\_Younger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pliny_the_Younger) and Vitruvius <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitruvius> knew the blue pigment as an expensive Egyptian Blue, a calcium copper silicate produced in Egypt and visible in its art since the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. It was brought to Rome and produced there before disappearing with the empire’s decline.

Vitruvius wrote about it in his 10 books on architecture, book 7, chapter 11, verse 1, “,, made from sand and ground with sulphur into a flour, water and copper added to make a paste, rolled into balls, dried, then fired in a furnace” for the fine blue colour.

The one other reference to the lost pigment was in the Middle Ages when the painter Raphael mixed and used it with his 1514 wall painting ‘Triumph at Galatea’ on a wall in the Villa Farnesina, at Rome. It then faded again from view. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galatea\\_%28Raphael%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galatea_%28Raphael%29)

### Quick facts

- Gabriel Zuchtriegel, Director of the Archaeological park at Pompeii, says the find gives us “ideas for conversations about the past and life” from which we can “explore the way our lives are entangled with the broad sweep of history”
- This new excavation of Insula 10, Regio IX is part of a plan to protect excavated and unexcavated areas, improve hydrogeology, and make Pompeii’s 13,000 rooms in 1,070 residences more sustainable
- It reveals two interconnected houses with sumptuous frescoed rooms, a bakery and a laundry overlooking Via di Nola running through the centre of Pompeii

### Quotes

“Pompeii’s Archeological Park is preserving the richness of this incredible town’s history,” said Don Fenton, of Classic Time Travel. “It is discoveries like this – hidden for centuries – that make the story so exciting.”

“We are happy to recreate the formula for the rare colour Pompeii Blue, and excited to offer the completely new ‘Pompeii Blue colour palette’ to our customers in the Roncesvalles neighbourhood,” said Peter Wenglowsky, Manager, High Park Paints.

- **About ClassicTimeTravel** – We explore and write about classical Rome across Europe, Britain, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Our recent tour of Merida in Spain, founded by the emperor Augustus in 25 B.C., includes the still used Teatro Romano with its majestic double tier columns,” said Fenton.

- **About High Park Paints** - High Park Paints, a Benjamin Moore Paint Store, carries a wide selection of products. Enjoy color and design expertise that will help you create beautiful interiors and exteriors—and get insights on the best Benjamin Moore product for your specific project.  
[www.highparkpaints.com](http://www.highparkpaints.com)

For more information: Don Fenton TT 416-434-3681

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416-434 3681 [info@classictimetravel.com](mailto:info@classictimetravel.com)



Coming soon to CTT: Merida Spain, Teatro Romano.  
Photo by Don Fenton.