

» **CULTURE**

A Museum All to Yourself

by Tiffany Parks

So you've been to the Vatican, the Capitoline, and the Borghese, and you're hungry to see a less famous museum. Or maybe this is your third or fourth visit to Rome, and you're longing to get off the beaten path this time. Or perhaps you just can't stand crowds. Whatever the case, we're here to help, so we've made a list of our top seven little-known museums that make for some quiet and secluded culturing.

❑ Masterpieces and Machines

Centrale Montemartini's vast collection, boasting mosaics, Etruscan tombs, Greek and Roman statuary, and Egyptian idols, is contrasted by its arresting setting of the city's former power plant. The industrial-era machinery makes a striking juxtaposition to the ancient works on display. Don't miss: the intricate 4th-century floor mosaic of a hunting scene, featuring over a dozen different animal species.



the special exhibit displaying engravings and sketches of Italian landscapes by both German and Roman artists, created during Goethe's lifetime.

❑ World City

This little-known museum dedicated to Norwegian-American artist **Hendrik Christian Andersen** displays more than 700 classically inspired sculptures, paintings, and graphic works. It was conceived as a manifestation of Andersen's vision of a great "World City" filled with art that would transport humanity to a utopian state. Don't miss: the thought-provoking temporary exhibit showcasing contemporary paintings, sculptures, and installations by Claudia Peill and Kaisu Koivisto.

❑ National Treasure

Palazzo Altemps is one of the four palaces that make up the National Museum of Rome, and a jewel of Renaissance architecture. Many important works of Greek, Roman, and Egyptian statuary make up the collection. Don't miss: *The Galatian Suicide* (right), a moving marble sculpture group capturing the dramatic moment after a conquered Gaul has stabbed his wife to save her from the vengeance of the enemy, just as he turns the dagger on himself.

❑ A German in Rome

Visit the **Casa di Goethe** for insight into the life and travels of the most famous German writer ever to fall in love with Italy, in the very house where he lived during his sojourn in Rome. Don't miss:



❑ A Loggia of Love

Idyllic **Villa Farnesina**, commissioned by the powerful Renaissance banker Agostino Chigi, is one of the city's best-kept secrets. Marvel at the spectacular loggia, frescoed by the workshop of Raphael, depicting the mythical love story of Cupid and Psyche. Don't miss: *The Triumph of Galatea* (above), the only work in the villa painted by Raphael's own hand.

❑ Owls and Enchantment

In the lush grounds of Villa Torlonia, the **Casina delle Civette** is like something out of a fairytale. The delightful building is part Swiss chalet, part medieval hamlet, with a dash of Art Nouveau thrown in for good measure. Don't miss: Duilio Cambellotti's spectacular stained glass windows featuring stylized owls among shoots of ivy.

❑ A Bird's Eye View

The **Museum of Roman Civilization** in the EUR district displays models, casts, and reproductions of ancient monuments, temples, and cities that give visitors a thorough—and visual—understanding of life during Roman times. Don't miss: architect Italo Gismondi's three-dimensional reproduction of Rome in the 4th century A.D, more than 2000 square feet and created to scale. **See listings for addresses and opening hours.**