

EXCEEDING OUR EXPECTATIONS

The Calderona Roman cistern by Pablo Millán

2024

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When we arrive at the beautiful village of Porcuna in the Province of Jaén, on the outskirts of the town we are faced with something that has the air of a temple. Its base is a concrete box resembling a temenos, and sitting on top of it, a colonnaded building, like a temple. A Parthenon on a base.

Here we encounter a building that resolves all its essential functions in one fell swoop: defining and demarcating this ancient Roman cistern, known as the Calderona, allowing natural light to reach down to the bottom, while covering and protecting this archaeological space.

Architect Pablo Millán's solution is overwhelmingly logical. Having enclosed the cistern with a concrete box and attached the corresponding services, he showcases the Roman ruins with the light streaming in from above through the raised roof which, as well as letting in plenty of natural light, provides adequate protection for the ruins.

While the commission called for the protection of the ruins, the architect not only does that, but he also frames them, filling them with light and enhancing their value, giving back far more than what was asked of him, exceeding all expectations.

And while the surrounding landscape is beautiful seen from above, framed by Millán's Templar structure, after descending the walkway it is even more beautiful down below inside the ruins, inside the Roman cistern bathed in the light from above. Absolutely thrilling! A paragon of beauty!