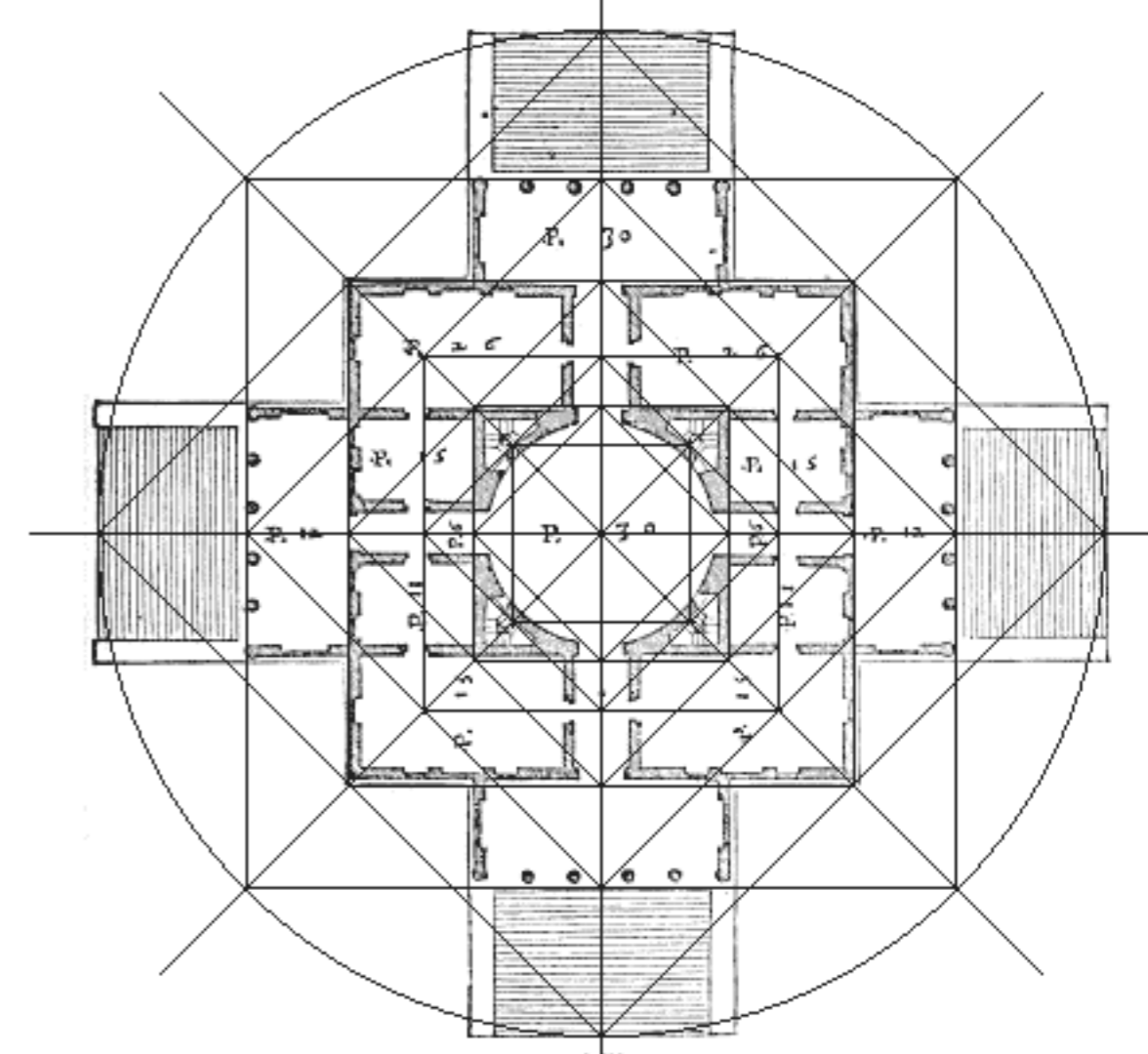
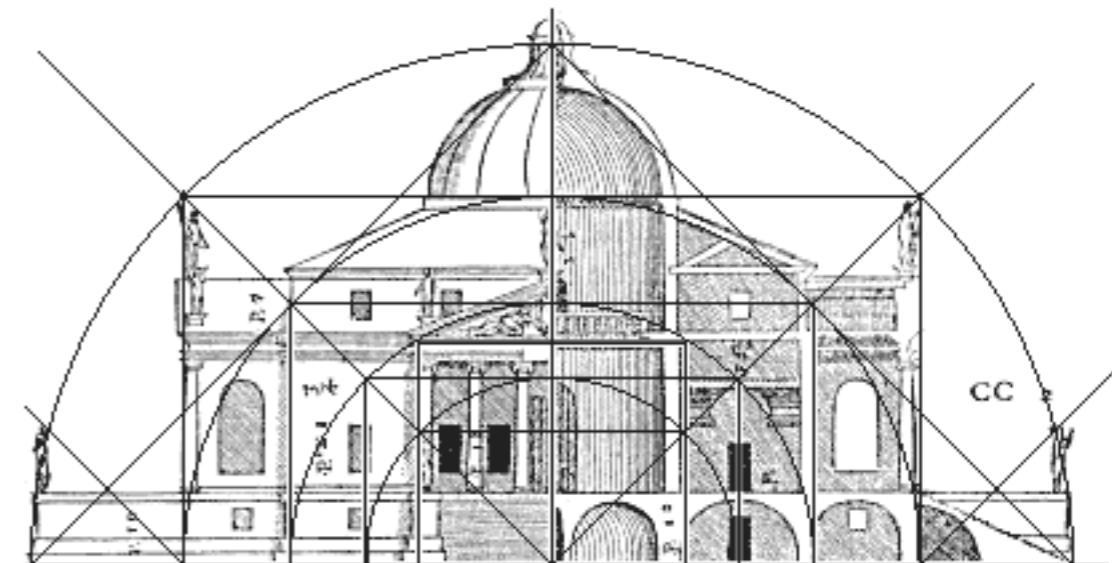


Villa Rotonda





Villa Capra "La Rotonda" in Vicenza.

Villa La Rotonda is a Renaissance villa just outside Vicenza in northern Italy, and designed by Andrea Palladio. The proper name is Villa Almerico Capra, but it is also known as La Rotonda, Villa Rotonda, Villa Capra and Villa Almerico. Along with other works by Palladio, the building is conserved as part of the World Heritage Site "City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto".

In 1565 a priest, Paolo Almerico, on his retirement from the Vatican, decided to return to his home town of Vicenza in the Venetian countryside and build a country house. This house, later known as 'La Rotonda', was to be one of Palladio's best-known legacies to the architectural world. Villa Capra may have inspired a thousand subsequent buildings, but the villa was itself inspired by the Pantheon in Rome.

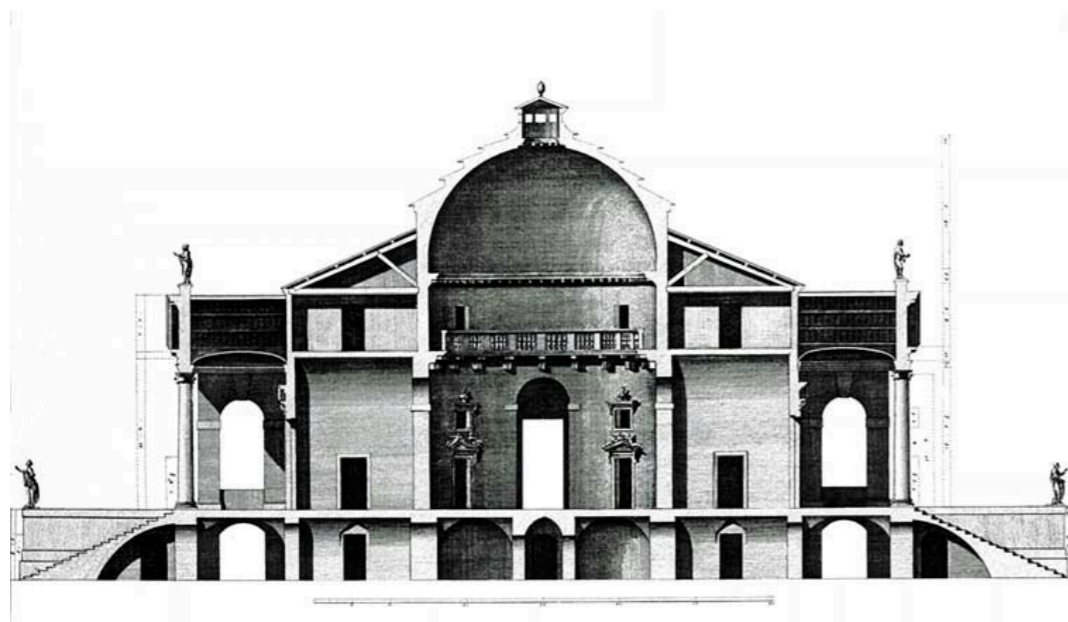
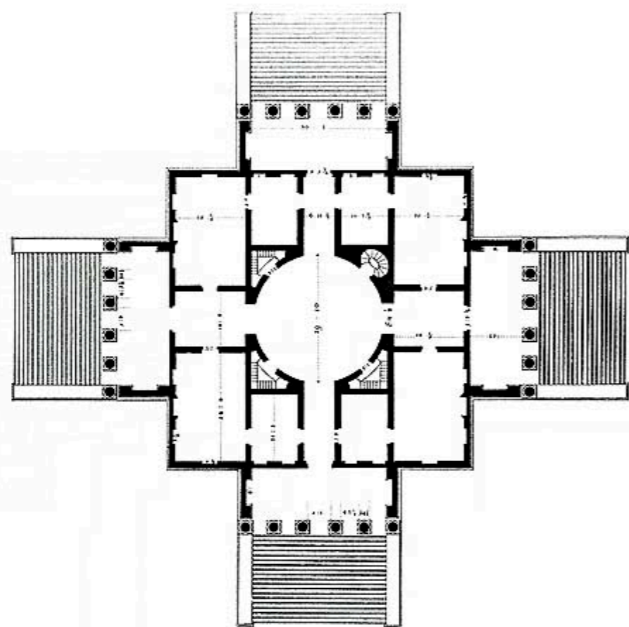
Design:
 The site selected was a hilltop just outside the city of Vicenza. Unlike some other Palladian villas, the building was not designed from the start to accommodate a working farm. This sophisticated building was designed for a site which was, in modern terminology, "suburban". Palladio classed the building as a "palazzo" rather than a villa.
 The design is for a completely symmetrical building having a square plan with four facades, each of which has a projecting portico. The whole is contained within an imaginary circle which touches each corner of the building and centres of the porticos. The name La Rotonda refers to the central circular hall with its dome. To describe the villa, as a whole, as a 'rotonda' is technically incorrect, as the building is not circular but rather the intersection of a square with a cross. Each portico has steps leading up, and opens via a small cabinet or corridor to the circular domed central hall.
 This and all other rooms were proportioned with mathematical precision according to Palladio's own rules of architecture which he published in the Quattro Libri dell'Architettura.

The design reflected the humanist values of Renaissance architecture. In order for each room to have some sun, the design was rotated 45 degrees from each cardinal point of the compass. Each of the four porticos has pediments graced by statues of classical deities. The pediments were each supported by six Ionic columns. Each portico was flanked by a single window. All principal rooms were on the second floor or piano nobile.
 Building began in 1567. Neither Palladio nor the owner, Paolo Almerico, were to see the completion of the villa. Palladio died in 1580 and a second architect, Vincenzo Scamozzi, was employed by the new owners to oversee the completion. One of the major changes he made to the original plan was to modify the two-storey centre hall.
 Palladio had intended it to be covered by a high semi-circular dome but Scamozzi designed a lower dome with an oculus (intended to be open to the sky) inspired by the Pantheon in Rome. The dome was ultimately completed with a cupola.



VICENZA, "LA ROTONDA" DEL PALLADIO
NICHELE LEONARDI © 2006





Villa Savoye



Villa Savoye

Villa Savoye (French pronunciation: [sa vwa]) is a modernist villa in Poissy, in the outskirts of Paris, France. It was designed by Swiss architects Le Corbusier and his cousin, Pierre Jeanneret, and built between 1928 and 1931 using reinforced concrete.^{[3][4]}

A manifesto of Le Corbusier's "five points" of new architecture, the villa is representative of the bases of modern architecture, and is one of the most easily recognizable and renowned examples of the International style.

The house was originally built as a country retreat on behest of the Savoye family. During WWII the Jewish Savoye family was sent to concentration camps by the Nazis who took over the house and used it for storage. After being purchased by the neighbouring school it passed on to be property of the French state in 1958, and after surviving several plans of demolition, it was designated as an official French historical monument in 1965 (a rare occurrence, as Le Corbusier was still living at the time). It was thoroughly renovated from 1985 to 1997, and under the care of the Centre des monuments nationaux, the refurbished house is now open to visitors year-round.

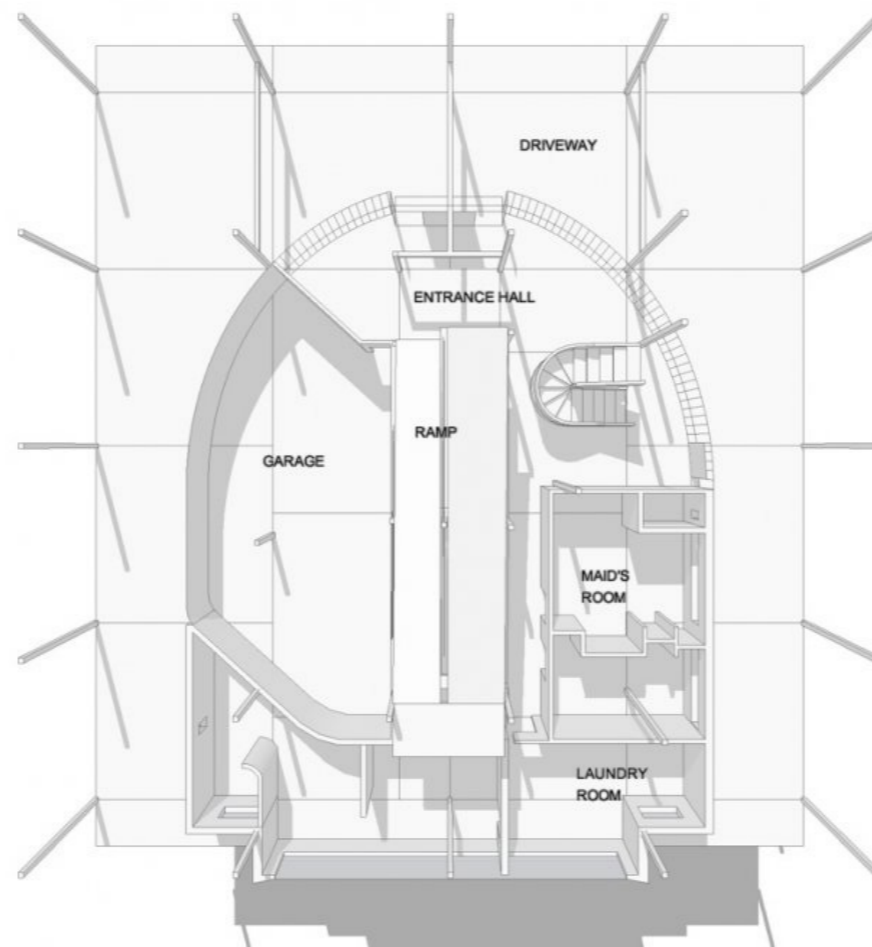
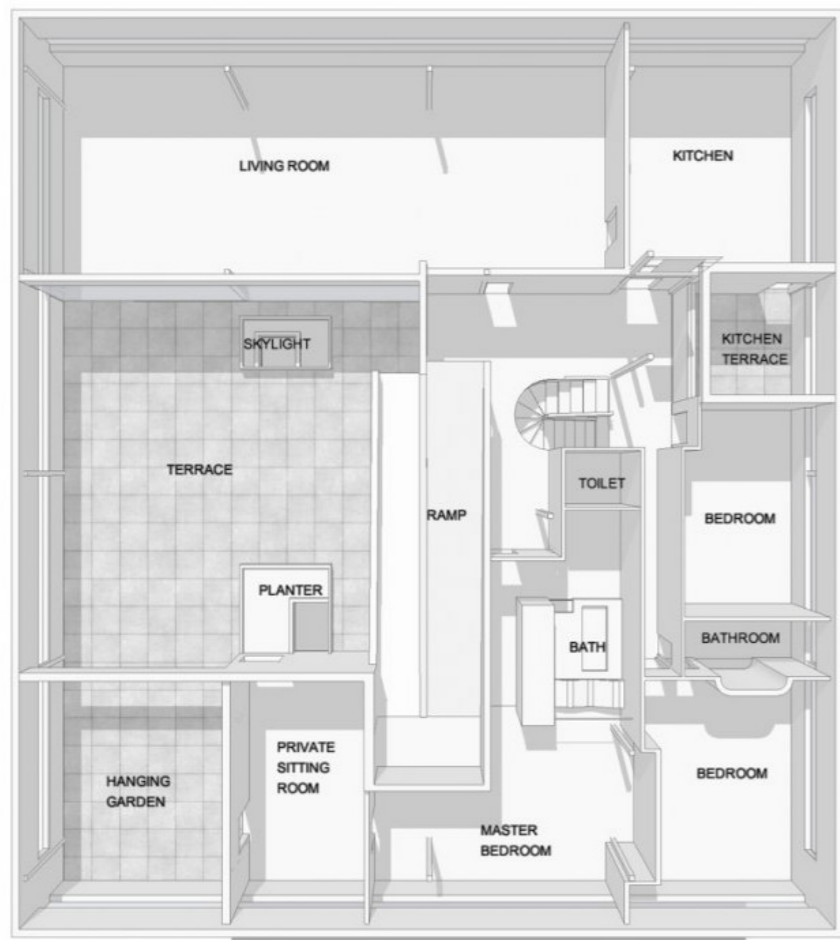
Background:

By the end of the 1920s Corbusier was already an internationally known architect. His book *Vers une Architecture* had been translated into several languages, his work with the Centrosoyuz in Moscow involved him with the Russian avant-garde and his problems with the League of Nations competition had been widely publicised. Also he was one of the first members of Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) and was becoming known as a champion of modern architecture.

The villas designed by Corbusier in the early part of the 1920s demonstrated what he termed the "precision" of architecture, where each feature of the design needed to be justified in design and urban terms. His work in the later part of the decade, including his designs urban for Algiers began to be more free-form.

Pierre and Emilie Savoye approached Corbusier about building a country home in Poissy in the spring of 1928. The site was on a green field on an otherwise wooded plot of land with a magnificent landscape view to the north west that corresponded with the approach to the site along the road. Other than an initial brief prepared by Emile^[9] for a summer house, space for cars, an extra bedroom and a caretaker's lodge, Corbusier had such freedom with the job that he was only limited by his own architectural palette. He began work on the project in September 1928. His initial ideas were those that eventually manifested themselves in the final building but between Autumn 1928 and Spring 1929 he undertook a series of alternatives that were influenced primarily by the Savoye's concern about cost. The eventual solution to this problem was to reduce the volume of the building by moving the master bedroom down to the first floor and reducing the grid spacing down from 5 metres to 4.75 metres.





The design:

The Villa Savoye is probably Corbusier's best known building from the 1930s, it had enormous influence on international modernism. It was designed addressing his emblematic "Five Points", the basic tenets in his new architectural aesthetic:

- * Support of ground-level pilotis, elevating the building from the earth and allowed an extended continuity of the garden beneath.
- * Functional roof, serving as a garden and terrace, reclaiming for nature the land occupied by the building.
- * Free floor plan, relieved of load-bearing walls, allowing walls to be placed freely and only where aesthetically needed.
- * Long horizontal windows, providing illumination and ventilation.
- * Freely-designed facades, serving only as a skin of the wall and windows and unconstrained by load-bearing considerations.

Unlike his earlier town villas Corbusier was able to carefully design all four sides of the Villa Savoye in response to the view and the orientation of the sun. On the ground floor he placed the main entrance hall, ramp and stairs, garage, chauffeur and maid's rooms. At first floor the master bedroom, the son's bedroom, guest bedroom, kitchen, salon and external terraces. The salon was oriented to the south east whilst the terrace faced the east. The son's bedroom faced the north west and the kitchen and service terrace were on the south west. At second floor level were a series of sculpted spaces that formed a solarium.

The plan was set out using the principal ratios of the Golden section: in this case a square divided into sixteen equal parts, extended on two sides to incorporate the projecting façades and then further divided to give the position of the ramp and the entrance.

In his book *Vers une Architecture* Corbusier exclaimed "the motor car is an object with a simple function (to travel) and complicated aims (comfort, resistance, appearance)...". The house, designed as a second residence and sited as it was outside Paris was designed with

the car in mind. The sense of mobility that the car gave translated into a feeling of movement that is integral to the understanding of the building. The approach to the house was by car, past the caretaker's lodge and eventually under the building itself. Even the curved arc of the industrial glazing to the ground floor entrance was determined by the turning circle of a car. Dropped off by the chauffeur, the car proceeded around the curve to park in the garage. Meanwhile the occupants entered the house on axis into the main hall through a portico of flanking columns.

The four columns in the entrance hall seemingly direct the visitor up the ramp. This ramp, that can be seen from almost everywhere in the house continues up to the first floor living area and salon before continuing externally from the first floor roof terrace up to the second floor solarium. Throughout his career Corbusier was interested in bringing a feeling of sacredness into the act of dwelling and acts such as washing and eating were given significance by their positioning. At the Villa Savoye the act of cleansing is represented both by the sink in the entrance hall and the celebration of the health-giving properties of the sun in the solarium on the roof which is given significance by being the culmination of ascending the ramp.

Corbusier's piloti perform a number of functions around the house, both inside and out. On the two longer elevations they are flush with the face of the façade and imply heaviness and support, but on the shorter sides they are set back giving a floating effect that emphasises the horizontal feeling of the house. The wide strip window to the first floor terrace has two baby piloti to support and stiffen the wall above. Although these piloti are in a similar plane to the larger columns below a false perspective when viewed from outside the house gives the impression that they are further into the house than they actually are.

The Villa Savoye uses the horizontal ribbon windows found in his earlier villas. Unlike his contemporaries, Corbusier often chose to use timber windows rather than metal ones. It has been suggested that this is because he was interested in glass for its planar properties and that the set-back position of the glass in the timber frame allowed the façade to be seen as a series of parallel planes.

