

# MOR ANTIQUITIES



LEISURE AND LUXURY IN THE AGE OF NERO:  
**THE VILLAS OF OPLONTIS**  
NEAR POMPEII

JUNE 18, 2016 TO DECEMBER 31, 2016

600 West Kagy Boulevard | Bozeman, Montana 59717  
[www.museumoftherockies.org](http://www.museumoftherockies.org)

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**MUSEUM**<sub>OF</sub>  
**THE ROCKIES**



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**June 18, 2016 to December 31, 2016**

More than 2,000 years ago, extremely wealthy Romans lived and played on the sunny shores of the Bay of Naples at Pompeii and in luxury villas nearby, unconcerned about Mount Vesuvius in the distance. One of the most luxurious of these retreats, Oplontis, set on a cliff 40 feet above the Mediterranean shoreline, was rumored to be the summer villa of Emperor Nero's second wife, Poppaea.

For whatever reason, the villa itself had been abandoned by the time of Vesuvius' catastrophic eruption in 79 AD, but a commercial wine distribution center next door was thriving. Falling ash and pyroclastic flows buried empty dining rooms that had seated more than a hundred people, an 80-meter swimming pool, private rooms adorned with spectacular frescos, and marble columns resting on mosaic floors ready for re-sale. Preserved next door were wine and oil-filled amphorae, a strong-box with coins, and people hiding in the barrel-vaulted storage rooms at the water's edge, waiting for a rescue that never came.

The Villas at Oplontis, now a World Heritage Site at present-day Torre Annunziata, eight kilometers from Pompeii, have been under archaeological excavation for many years and large parts of the villa and the wine center have been uncovered. Dr. Regina Gee, Associate Professor of Art History at Montana State University and Adjunct Curator of Art History at the Museum of the Rockies, is one of three researchers working on the villas and is an expert on frescos found there. Several years ago, she and her research colleagues from the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Michigan received permission from the *Superintenza* to organize an exhibit of artifacts from the site to travel to the United States for the first time.

*Leisure and Luxury in the Age of Nero: The Villas of Oplontis near Pompeii* will appear at the Museum of the Rockies from June 18, 2016 to December 31, 2016. MOR will be the only venue west of the Mississippi River.

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