

American Cemetery

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Spirit
of Place
Myrtle Hill
Mausoleum

Design

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CEMETERY PORTFOLIO

SCRAPBOOK OF INNOVATIVE CEMETERY DESIGN PROJECTS

SERVING THE COMMUNITY MYRTLE HILL MAUSOLEUM

Myrtle Hill Cemetery - Rome, Georgia

Building a public space with dual purpose is often a collaborative effort. Seven years ago, the city of Rome, Georgia, put in a request for a design-build estimate for a new mausoleum atop Myrtle Hill. Through solid concept design, and working with the client to understand their needs and requirements, **Milne Construction Co.**, of Portland, Oregon, won the bid.

When asked about his framework for the design, chief architect **Cal Pearson** noted a two-part approach focusing on the nature of the area as well as the site.

"Rome was a Confederate stronghold during the Civil War," he said, "and the town has a theme of an antebellum Greek revival, with lots of brick. In history's honor, I wanted to maintain a *genus loci*, or 'spirit of place.' Rome has a strong presence of character, so **maintaining** that feel was our top priority. Everyone was on board, especially **Stan Rogers**, the cemetery **department director** for the city of Rome."

Also driving the design was Pearson's vision for a flexible communal space: "I can see people gathered on the steps and in the park. Maybe they are gathering for a committal, or maybe there is a summer concert or play. Either way, it must be a beautiful structure, with a curved rotunda gesturing toward the city and **confluence** of rivers below."

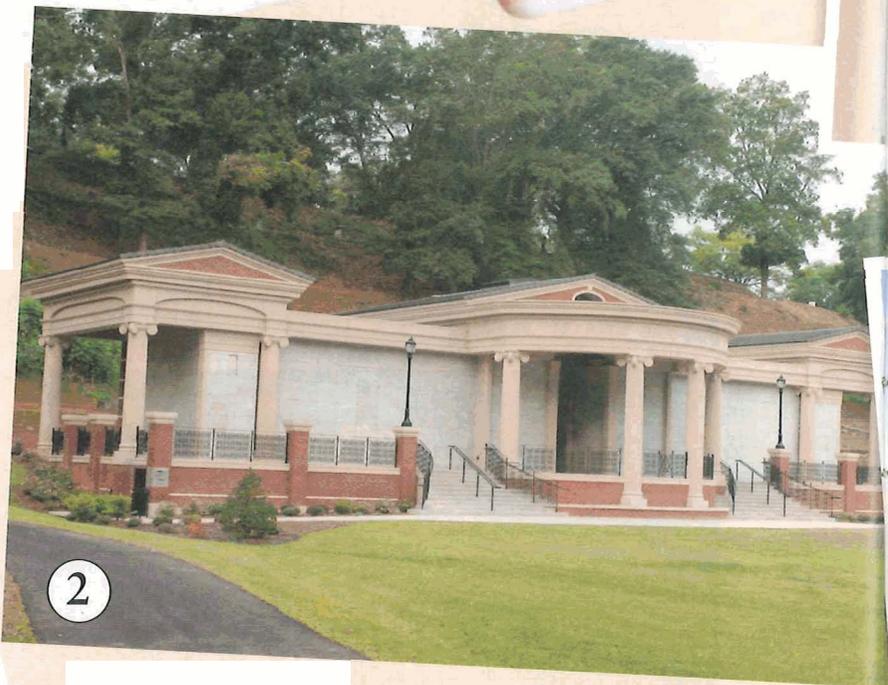
Built in 1857, the historic Myrtle Hill Cemetery is part of the "Where Romans Rest" **city** tour. **Across** from downtown Rome, at the confluence of the Coosa, Etowah and Oostanaula rivers, the cemetery's new classical-themed mausoleum now adds to the history of this beautiful cemetery and city.

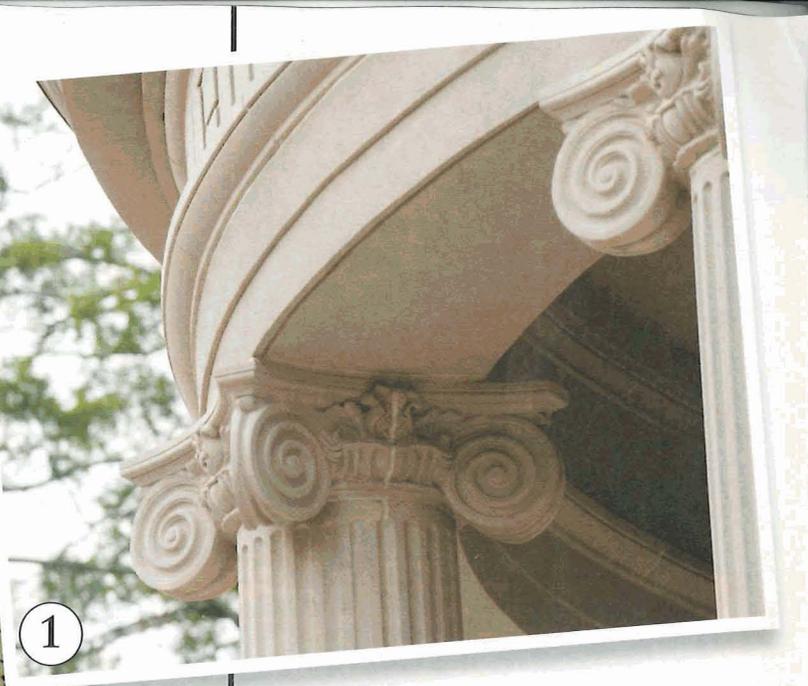
To realize this building from the initial vision through to this completed product, **Milne** pulled together its experienced team of construction professionals and craftspeople to hone the details.

Among this team were Laurie **Hauer-LaDuca** of Clarence, New **York**, the technical architect, and **her** assistant, Ruth **Iten**, "who were a joy to work with," said **Pearson**. "Same with Rajah **Selliah**, the superintendent on the job during construction. His crew worked through a lot of mud on that site. He did a great job managing the complexities of this project."

To accomplish the detailing level and character required for the building, the job called for a variety of quality, **time**-tested materials. Concrete, brick, precast shapes, granite, iron and concrete tile all adorn the site. Refining the assemblies and relationships of these materials throughout the construction **process** was necessary to ensure the **building** came together as intended.

From concept to completion, the commitment to detail throughout the construction process resulted in a successful mausoleum building that serves the community.





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THE WORK

1 | DETAILING. Myrtle Hill Mausoleum is a nod to the past, with intricate detailing of the roof assemblies, fluted ionic columns, iron railings and window grills. Lighting and lampposts are aligned with nearby antebellum-styled Rome, Georgia.

2 | SITE RESPONSE. The surrounding grassy knoll and rolling steps are an **invitation** for a community gathering place. The inflection of the curved rotunda is a place to view the city and rivers below.

3 | VALUABLE SPACE. The new mausoleum **includes** 588 crypt spaces and 596 niches – valuable inventory to a historic city-cemetery that was supposed to have been filled up. Once thought unusable land, this now helps support the perpetual care of the cemetery.

4 | LOCAL MATERIALS. To complement the area's architecture, and evoke a sense of permanence, local materials were used. Silver-cloud granite fronts and trim veneer came out of **Elberton**, as well as **Manchester** red brick from Fairmont.



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Photos courtesy of Milne Construction Co.