




Venice: Jewel of the Adriatic 2026

25 SEP – 8 OCT 2026

Code: 22633

Tour Leaders David Henderson, Ali Oveissi

Fitness Level 

Level 2 - Intermediate

For people with energetic lifestyles and very good mobility

A detailed history of Venice: visit galleries, museums, churches, private palaces, Byzantine Ravenna, Giotto's Padua, Vicenza and attend a private recital by acclaimed soprano Rosemary Forbes-Butler.

Overview

"It is the city of mirrors, the city of mirages, at once solid and liquid, at once air and stone."
Erica Jong, *Shylock's Daughter* (1987)

Learn about the history of Venice from a highly experienced tour lecturer, [David Henderson](#). David, is an award-winning artist & Royal Academy graduate who paints half the year in Italy. He has been leading ASA tours since 1996. David will be assisted by [Ali Oveissi](#) who has been working with ASA as a tour manager since 1998.

- Spend 14 days based in the 4-star [Avani Rio Novo Venice](#) ideally located in the heart of the Dorsoduro district – a neighbourhood renowned for showcasing the 'real Venice' and bustling with restaurants, shops, and artisan boutiques.
- Chart the development of Venetian painting through visits to the Gallerie dell'Accademia and a number of churches; view works by Giovanni Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese and Tiepolo.
- Enjoy a private reception at the sumptuous Palazzo Mocenigo, where in conversation with owner Francesca Bortolotto Possati we gain a deeper understanding of efforts to restore and preserve Venice's artistic and architectural heritage.
- By special appointment, visit the historic Bevilacqua textile workshop and the prestigious Rubelli Textile Collection to learn about the development of Venice's inimitable luxury textiles.
- Dine in some of Venice's best restaurants including Torcello's Locanda Cipriani, made famous by Ernest Hemingway, and at John Ruskin's abode, Pensione La Calcina.
- Attend a symphonic concert at Teatro La Fenice, an evening mass at St Mark's, and a private recital by acclaimed soprano Rosemary Forbes-Butler in her *palazzino*.
- Visit Ravenna, the capital city of the Western Roman Empire from 402 until 476, to view its magnificent Byzantine mosaics.
- In Padua, view Giotto's masterly frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel and take a tour of Palazzo Bo's 16th-century anatomical theatre.
- Meet Italian author Roberto Plevano, who will give an exclusive talk to our group.
- Study the superb architecture of Andrea Palladio during visits to his Venetian churches, the Teatro Olimpico and Villa Rotonda (Vicenza), the Villa Barbaro (Maser) with exceptional frescoes by Veronese, and an exclusive visit to the gardens of the Bauer Palladio hotel.
- Discover Venice's very early history on the lovely islands of Torcello, Burano and Murano.
- Learn about fresco technique during a live demonstration with artist [Claudia Piasentin](#).
- View modern art at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

Lecture by David Henderson: 'The Art of Venice'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heHuzer21Ts>

Testimonials

The great thing about ASA tours is that they scratch below the surface – you experience things you can't access alone – the Venice tour was like that. I got a real appreciation for Venetian life in past centuries. Marion, WA.

This was a wonderfully well-balanced tour. The content was perfect, the timing excellent, the tour leader had an excellent balance of expertise, personality, presentation, humour and care for us all as a group and individually. The whole tour will stay with me as very treasured memories. Susan, TAS.

A wonderfully varied program from churches and art galleries, to tours of private palaces and trips outside Venice. A must for lovers of art, its history and the history of Venice. Pauline, VIC.

This tour delivered a wonderfully encompassing yet detailed experience in Venice and the Veneto region. It gave unusual opportunities such as visits to the fascinating Rubelli and Bevilacqua textile workshops and showrooms. Little touches like the leisurely long table lunch in the gorgeous gardens of Locanda Cipriani on Torcello and a gourmet farewell dinner served beautifully at Alle Corone, all added to the Venetian experience. Heather, NSW.

Leaders



David Henderson

Award-winning artist & Royal Academy graduate who paints half the year in Italy, David brings an artist's eye & profound knowledge of European art to ASA tours.

After initial studies in architecture, David Henderson spent four years at London's Royal Academy Schools where he was awarded the S.J. Solomon prize for figure painting and was twice selected for the Academy's annual summer exhibition. Since then, he has held over 30 solo exhibitions in London, Rome, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. His work has been selected for a number of prestigious group exhibitions, including the New English Art Club, the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize and Tattersall's Landscape Prize. David has been the recipient of numerous awards including - on two occasions - Best of Show at the Brisbane Rotary art exhibition. In 2021, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Queensland Art Society. David has lectured for the Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland University of Technology and the Brisbane Institute of Art. He has accompanied over 50 tours for ASA to Italy, France, the UK and the USA and now spends a part of each year living and working in Italy. David brings a trained artist's eye to an analysis of painting, sculpture and architecture and takes great pleasure in sharing his knowledge.



Ali Oveissi

For many years, Ali has earned the close friendship and deep respect of many ASA travellers to Iran. Without exception, tour members have admired his polite, personable, good natured style and his extraordinarily dependable, well organised tour leading. Ali currently leads ASA tours to Iran the Caucasus and Venice.

Combine this tour with

Crossroads of the Caucasus: Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia 2026

2 SEP – 22 SEP 2026

Slovenia: Villages, Castles, Vineyards, Scenic Valleys and the Julian Alps 2026

3 SEP – 20 SEP 2026

Cyprus, Kos & Rhodes: Civilisations of the Eastern Mediterranean 2026

8 OCT – 25 OCT 2026

Sicily and the Aeolian Islands 2026

9 OCT – 23 OCT 2026



Itinerary

The following itinerary describes a range of museums, villas and palaces which we plan to visit. Many are accessible to the public, but others require special permission which may only be confirmed closer to the tour's departure. Participants should note that the daily activities described in this itinerary may be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate changes in museum opening hours, flight schedules etc. Meals included in the tour price are indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=dinner.

Venice - 13 nights

Day 1: Friday 25 September, Arrive Venice

- Tour commences at 10.00am in the foyer of the Avani Rio Novo Venice
- Welcome Meeting
- Piazza San Marco, the Doge's Palace & Basilica San Marco
- Welcome dinner at local restaurant

Meeting Point: The tour commences at 10.00am in the foyer of the [Avani Rio Novo Venice](#).

After a welcome meeting at the hotel, we make our way to the heart of the city – Piazza San Marco. We shall study the square and the façades of its remarkable buildings: San Marco, the Torre dell'Orologio, the Procuratie, the Campanile and Loggetta, Sansovino's Library, the Mint and the Doge's Palace. We shall focus on the development of the republic's political core, its institutions and aspirations, and their expression in art and culture, from the Byzantine style of San Marco to Renaissance Classicism and Sansovino's vision for this most beautiful of all city squares.

We shall take a tour of Venice's magnificent Palazzo Ducale (Doge's Palace), which was the governmental, diplomatic, administrative and judicial centre of the Republic, as well as the Doge's residence, for nearly a millennium, until Napoleon destroyed the Serenissima's independence in 1797. John Ruskin called it 'the central building of the world', a consummate fusion of Roman, Gothic and Islamic elements that, despite

constant renovation, particularly after the great fire of 1577, preserves a unique sense of unity in diversity. The palace's canal façade constitutes a masterly balance. The great upper wall fronting the room of the Great Council is lightened by shimmering Islamic patterns of white Istrian and pink Verona stone so that visually it does not bear down oppressively upon the two stories of supporting arcades that represent the very best of Venetian Gothic. Within, the courtyard and governmental chambers add wonderful Renaissance architectural elements created by masters like Andrea Palladio. The interior presents a treasure house of late Renaissance painting, of masters such as Tintoretto and Veronese, the imagery of whose vast canvases extols the virtues of the Republic. As you walk from chamber to chamber you will become increasingly aware of the great wealth and powerful pride of the aristocratic elite that ruled Venice.

Following some time at leisure for lunch, we will explore the ethereal interior of the great church of San Marco, with a focus on the evolution of the mosaics which cover its domes, arches and walls and how they echo a medieval vision of heaven. This evening we dine together at a local restaurant. (Overnight Venice) D

Day 2: Saturday 26 September, Venice

- Ca' Rezzonico
- Lunch at Pensione La Calcina
- Private reception at Palazzo Mocenigo hosted by Francesca Bortolotto Possati
- Evening Opera Performance at Teatro La Fenice / Teatro Malibran (*to be confirmed in late 2025/2026*)

Today we begin with a visit to the Ca' Rezzonico, the grand 17th-century palace designed for Filippo Bon by the great exponent of the Venetian Baroque, Baldassare Longhena (1598-1682). In the 19th century it was home to Robert Browning, who died here. At this time his only son, the painter Robert Barrett Browning, owned the palace. The American artist John Singer Sargent had a studio here for a time and in the 20th century it was rented for a while by Cole Porter. Now a museum of 18th-century Venice, this palace contains fine frescoes by Tiepolo, furnishings, paintings by Canaletto and Tintoretto and a magnificent ceremonial staircase by Giorgio Massari.

We shall have lunch at Pensione La Calcina on the Zattere, made famous by John Ruskin (1819-1900), who stayed there in 1877. Ruskin wrote to Mrs Arthur Severn: "...The Grand Hotel was really too expensive; I was getting quite ruined so I came away to a little inn fronting the *Giudecca*, and commanding sunrise and sunset both, where I have two rooms for six francs a day, instead of one for twelve. Also, which I find a great advantage, I look along the water instead of down on it, and get perfectly picturesque views of boats instead of masthead ones, and I think I shall be comfy". (*The Complete Works of John Ruskin*).

By special arrangement we enjoy a private reception at the Palazzo Mocenigo, owned by Francesca Bortolotto Possati. Francesca, a native Venetian, is an interior designer, hotelier, author and philanthropist. She is also a board member of the not-for-profit organisation Save Venice, which is dedicated to preserving Venice's artistic and architectural heritage. This visit gives us a unique opportunity not only to glimpse the interior of a Renaissance Venetian palace, but also to learn about current endeavours to restore and preserve Venice's artistic treasures.

Nearby in the eponymous neighbouring palazzo, Byron lived a particularly dissolute life between 1817 and 1819. His biographer Peter Quennell describes his life there: "...among his horde of quarrelsome servants and grasping mistresses, [it] suggests a bohemianism verging on extreme disorder".

We finish our day with the opera performance either at Teatro La Fenice or at Teatro Malibran. (Overnight

Venice) BL

Day 3: Sunday 27 September, Venice – Vicenza – Maser – Venice

- Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza
- Palladian Palaces, Vicenza (exteriors)
- Villa Rotonda, Vicenza
- Villa Barbaro, Maser

Venice's greatest, most influential architect was Andrea Palladio (1508-1580). As a young man Palladio had travelled to Rome to study the architecture of antiquity. He was also deeply influenced by the writings of the Roman theorist Vitruvius. He did not, however, merely copy the proportions and decorative schemes of Roman buildings, but rather adapted these to a revolutionary spatial system that gave a new grandeur to traditional Venetian residential architecture. Palladio is considered by many the most influential individual in the history of Western villa architecture. His designs for Venetian villas, published in his treatise *The Four Books of Architecture*, were emulated in myriad country houses from Europe to the Americas.

We leave Venice in order to spend a day exploring Palladio's villas, palaces and civic buildings. At the age of 16 years Palladio, son of a Paduan stonemason, moved from Padua to the city of Vicenza, where he would reside for most of his life. The majority of his villas are located in the province of Vicenza, while his palazzi (palaces) are concentrated in the city itself. We begin our visit to the city with Palladio's famous theatre. Palladio's Teatro Olimpico (Olympic Theatre), constructed between 1580 and 1585, is the earliest surviving enclosed theatre in the world. Its *trompe-l'œil* stage scenery, designed by Vincenzo Scamozzi, gives the appearance of long streets receding to a distant horizon. It was installed in 1585 for the very first performance held in the theatre, and is the oldest surviving stage set still in existence.

The Basilica Palladiana's most notable feature is its loggia. This loggia clothed an earlier, 15th-century Gothic building known as the Palazzo della Ragione. It was the seat of government and also housed a number of shops on its ground floor. When part of the building collapsed in the 16th century, Vicenza's Council of One Hundred commissioned many architects to submit designs and selected Palladio to reconstruct the building in April 1549. Palladio added a new outer marble shell in the classical style; his loggia and a portico blanket the building's original Gothic core. We shall also view a number of Palladio's palace façades.

On the outskirts of Vicenza we shall visit Palladio's Villa Capra 'La Rotonda', built not as a functioning estate like his villa at Maser but as a retreat from the city in which theatrical entertainments took place. This strictly symmetrical villa is considered one of Palladio's best-known legacies to the architectural world. Monumental, temple-like porticoes grace each of its four walls; these porticoes represent the four seasons, a favourite theme of Renaissance art, literature, music and architecture. The villa's grand interior space rises to a majestic dome.

In the afternoon we shall visit one of his most important villas, the Villa Barbaro in Maser. Rises in grain prices during the 16th century encouraged Venetian aristocrats to build villas on Venice's terra firma. Villas like that at Maser were therefore working farms, unlike many of their counterparts in other parts of Italy. This beautiful house was decorated by Paolo Veronese with frescoes of theatre and pastoral scenes. Its central, residential, section echoes the style and proportions of a classical temple. Two wings that housed farm machinery and agricultural produce flank this grand central element. Two pavilions that held dovecotes in turn abut these wings, framing and thus unifying the whole façade. (Overnight Venice) B

Day 4: Monday 28 September, Venice

- The Venetian Ghetto
- Bevilacqua Tessuti (Textile Workshop)
- Afternoon at leisure
- Literary Talk with author Roberto Plevano (*to be confirmed in 2026*)

We begin this morning with a walking tour of what was once Venice's Jewish quarter, the Ghetto. 'Gèto', from which the term used worldwide to describe a place where minorities live derives, originally meant 'slag heap' or 'foundry' in Venetian dialect. In 1516 the Republic forced its Jews to live in an area dominated by an ironworks. The tall residential buildings that line the narrow alleyways of this fascinating quarter reflect the incredible overcrowding that Venice's Jews were forced to endure here. Today the quarter bears witness to the memory of one of Venice's most important minorities, represented by Shakespeare's unforgettable character, Shylock.

We then visit the fascinating luxury textile workshop of Luigi Bevilacqua. One of medieval Venice's most important manufactures was fine textiles. Luigi Bevilacqua Ltd in the Santa Croce district has maintained this tradition, using twenty-five 18th-century hand-operated looms; both looms and warpers were built in the peculiar Venetian style. The company's famous archives hold more than 3500 pattern-designs, all Bevilacqua originals, and there are warehouses and showrooms.

The afternoon is at leisure for you to enjoy Venice at your own pace; we will reconvene in the late afternoon at the hotel, where we shall meet the author Roberto Plevano. After graduating in Literature from the University of Pavia, he collaborated with universities and academic institutes all over the world. He taught medieval studies at the University of Toronto, worked as a researcher at St. Bonaventure University (NY) and as Associate Professor at the Catholic University of America (Washington, DC). In 2015 he was awarded the prestigious Neri Pozza National Literature Prize for his novel "Marca gioiosa". (Overnight Venice) B

Day 5: Tuesday 29 September, Venice

- Scuola Grande di San Rocco
- Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari
- Gallerie dell'Accademia

We begin today at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, which was the confraternity house of wealthy Venetians who aided plague victims; San Rocco (St Roche) is the patron of plague victims. Here we shall view Tintoretto's most complete painting cycle. The vast corpus of huge oil canvases set into its walls rivals Michelangelo's and Raphael's Vatican frescoes in its size, breadth and power.

Nearby we visit the great Franciscan Church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, which houses some of the most significant works of the Venetian masters from the 14th to the 17th century, including Titian's *Assumption*, and his Pesaro Altarpiece. Painting styles range from a decorative Byzantine influence to Renaissance classicism.

Following some time at leisure for lunch, the remainder of the day is devoted to visiting the Accademia, which holds the most extensive collection of Venetian paintings. In this gallery we can chart the continuity and change that Venetian art underwent from medieval to Rococo periods, through major works by artists such as Paolo Veneziano (c.1333-c.1358), Giovanni Bellini (1430-1516), Giorgione (1477/8-1510), Titian (c. 1488/1490-1576), Paolo Veronese (1528-1588), Tintoretto (1518-1594), Giambattista Tiepolo (1696-1770), and others. The collection includes Giorgione's *The Tempest*, Titian's *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, Tintoretto's *Miracles of St Mark*, and Veronese's *Feast in the House of Levi*. We shall explore how

the Venetians reinterpreted the new geometric spatial construction – perspective – and classical proportion systems developed by the Florentines. We shall see how they used the medium of oils to introduce sumptuous colour and to bathe their scenes in a golden light, derived partly from the Byzantine mosaic tradition and partly from the exquisite light of their lagoon city. While our visit is planned to conclude around 4.30pm, the museum is open until 7.15pm and you may therefore wish to continue exploring this magnificent collection at your own pace. (Overnight Venice) B

Day 6: Wednesday 30 September, Venice – Ravenna – Venice

- Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna
- Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna
- Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna
- Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna

This morning we drive south along Italy's Adriatic coastal plain to Ravenna, which became capital of the Western Roman Empire in 402 AD, then of the Ostrogothic Kingdom of Theodoric in 493, and then was taken by the armies of Byzantine emperor Justinian the Great in the 6th century, becoming an exarchate of Constantinople. In this and the following century the city's bishops embarked upon a major building program, which has left a priceless heritage of Byzantine architecture and mosaic. In 751 the Lombards took Ravenna, which ceased to be a Byzantine outpost, ceding this status to the emerging settlement of what would become Venice.

We begin by visiting Sant'Apollinare in Classe outside the city, located at what was once the coast; it was the port of Ravenna. Its light, airy basilica has a magnificent apse mosaic depicting the *Transfiguration* and a fine image of Saint Apollinaris, to whom the church is dedicated. We shall then drive into town to visit the Church of San Vitale (548) and the tiny late antique Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (430). Ravenna plays a vital role in the history and art history of the transition from a pagan to a Christian empire. When, in the 4th century, Rome became difficult to defend, the Imperial court moved first to Milan and then to Ravenna. The scintillating mosaics of the little Mausoleum, like those of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, give a marvellous intimation of the transition from antique to early medieval modes of representation.

San Vitale is adorned with the greatest of all cycles of early Byzantine mosaics from the period of Emperor Justinian (483-565), its vivid green colouring contrasting to the strong blues of the mausoleum of Galla Placidia. Among the masterpieces in San Vitale are the scintillating hieratic courtly images of Justinian and his wife Theodora on the apse walls. We shall also visit the Byzantine church of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo. It has mosaics crafted during the reign of Theodoric the Ostrogoth, an Arian, which were changed by the Orthodox Byzantines. We will explore the theological differences between the Arians and orthodox Christians that led to the Council of Nicaea (325) and its great product, the Nicene Creed. (Overnight Venice) BL

Day 7: Thursday 1 October, Venice

- Ca' Pisani Rubelli: Rubelli Textile Collection
- Museum of Palazzo Mocenigo
- Ca' d'Oro (Galleria Giorgio Franchetti)

We devote today to understanding the development of the Venetian patrician palace. The façades of these beautiful 'houses', many fronting the Grand Canal, provided Venetian merchant aristocrats with a vehicle to display their wealth. Over the centuries the styles of the façades changed from Byzantine through a number of stages of Gothic to Renaissance and finally to grandiose Baroque. Although their façades changed in

style, the plans of these great houses changed little, due to limits imposed by their cramped sites. Most Venetian palaces were not located on large enough plots to allow the ample interior courtyards that lit their counterparts in other cities; light had to be brought to their interiors by other means. Venetian houses therefore had large windows that lit a central spinal room (*androne*) running through the palace on each floor, often from canal façade to canal façade.

We begin by visiting the famous Rubelli Collection of fine textiles in the Ca' Pisani Rubelli. This fine Venetian early Gothic style house is estimated to date to the 1370s and is the traditional family palazzo of the Rubelli family. The magnificent collection displayed in the palace documents the development of rich Venetian textiles since the end of the 15th century.

Our next visit takes in the Palazzo Mocenigo at San Stae. This late 17th-century patrician residence belonged to the Mocenigo family and was bequeathed to the city of Venice by its last descendant. The palace's 18th-century ceilings are decorated with frescoes by Jacopo Guarana and Giambattista Canal, and portraits of the Mocenigo family are found in the frieze and around the *portega's* double doorway. The green sitting room features scenes of events from the Mocenigo family's history, while the red drawing-room is decorated with allegories of the Contarini family. The palazzo houses a museum, renewed and expanded in 2013, whose exhibits explore aspects of aristocratic life in the 17th and 18th centuries. On display are valuable garments and accessories from this period. Among the new additions to the museum are five rooms dedicated to the history of perfume.

We then visit Ca' d'Oro (Palazzo Santa Sofia), arguably the most beautiful of all Venetian palaces. It is one of Venice's oldest palaces with exquisite, elaborate floriated Gothic arcaded façades. It has always been known as Ca' d'Oro (golden house) due to the gilt and polychrome external decorations that once adorned its walls. It was built between 1428 and 1430 for the Contarini family, who provided Venice with eight doges between 1043 and 1676. Its architects (and sculptors) were Giovanni Bon and his son Bartolomeo, best known for their work on the Doge's Palace. The palace now houses the important Franchetti art collection, which includes Titian's *Venus with a Mirror* (1550) and Paris Bordon's *Sleeping Venus*. The jewel of the collection is Andrea Mantegna's *San Sebastiano*. (Overnight Venice) B

Day 8: Friday 2 October, Venice

- Church of SS Giovanni e Paolo
- Santa Maria dei Miracoli
- Gesuiti (Santa Maria Assunta)
- Afternoon at leisure

This morning we visit a number of Venice's most important churches, beginning with the great Basilica di San Giovanni e Paolo, Dominican counterpart to the grand Franciscan Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. One of the largest churches in the city, it became, after the 15th century, the funeral church of Venice's doges; twenty-five doges are buried in the church. It was built on the site of an earlier church that was demolished in 1333, and took until 1430 to complete. The vast interior, lit by high Gothic windows, houses a treasure trove of Venetian art, including paintings by Giovanni Bellini, Cima Conegliano, Lorenzo Lotto, Vivarini and Veronese. Outside is the equestrian statue of the Condottiero Colleoni, a Captain General of the Republic, by Andrea del Verrochio (1483).

We next visit a small Renaissance gem, Santa Maria dei Miracoli, one of the finest examples of early Venetian Renaissance architecture, especially noted for the colored marble inlays on its walls. The exterior walls are articulated and organised by a false colonnade rising to a false arcade. A grand semicircular pediment caps its façade. This small masterpiece (1481-1489) was designed by Pietro Lombardo to house a

miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary.

The last church we visit this morning, the Gesuiti (Santa Maria Assunta), is a monumental edifice constructed for the Jesuits in 1715. It contains a magnificent *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence* (1557) by Titian and an *Assumption of the Virgin* (1555) by Tintoretto.

The afternoon is at leisure so that you may relax or continue to explore the city for yourself. (Overnight Venice) B

Day 9: Saturday 3 October, Venice: The Islands

- Basilica of Santa Maria Assunta, Torcello
- Archaeological Museum, Torcello
- Lunch at the historic Locanda Cipriani, Torcello
- Islands of Burano & Murano

This morning we take the vaporetto to the island of Torcello; we shall return via Burano and Murano. Although Torcello is much visited it is still amazingly peaceful. Much of the island is a nature reserve, accessible only on the walking paths. First settled in the 5th century, before the local population moved to the Rivo Alto (Rialto) in the centre of the lagoon, Torcello may once have had a population of around 20,000 souls. Eventually malaria killed much of the population, and the survivors left it. Buildings were plundered for building material so that little remains of its once splendid palaces, churches, and monasteries; it is now a lovely dreamy backwater.

Torcello's cathedral, Santa Maria Assunta, was built in 639. It has a tall 11th-century bell tower (*campanile*) that dominates the island's profile. Within are stunning Byzantine mosaics from the 11th to 13th century. Above the apse is a fine mosaic image of the Virgin in a gold field and below her, the Apostles. *The Last Judgement* on the west wall is particularly impressive; the angels trumpeting to awaken the dead are masterful. The cathedral has a fine inlaid floor and an old *iconostasis* (altar screen). Across from the cathedral is the small Torcello Archaeological Museum housed in 14th-century mansions that were once the seat of the government. It houses medieval artefacts, mostly from the island, and archeological finds from the Paleolithic to Roman period discovered in the area of Venice. In the courtyard is a large stone throne known as 'Attila's Throne'.

After exploring the church and the archaeological museum we shall walk a short distance to the famous Locanda Cipriani for lunch. Locanda Cipriani was founded by Giuseppe Cipriani and is still owned by the Cipriani family. Giuseppe Cipriani, the world-famous founder of Harry's Bar in Venice, Hotel Cipriani (Venice) and Villa Cipriani in Asolo, fell in love with Torcello in the late 1920s. In 1934 he bought a modest wine and oil shop there. He transformed the shop into an inn (*locanda*) featuring just a few, beautifully appointed guestrooms and a pleasant restaurant surrounded by a garden of flowers and vegetables and boasting an unparalleled view of Torcello's churches.

The Locanda became a literary legend after Ernest Hemingway wrote *Across the River and Through the Trees* during his stay there. He devoted whole pages of his novel to Torcello. As a result, the Locanda became a destination of choice for stars and celebrities in the post-war era. Right from the start Giuseppe's wife's sister Gabriella helped him run the Locanda. In the early 1980s Giuseppe's daughter Carla took over the business, involving her son Bonifacio Brass in the venture. Bonifacio Brass now owns and manages Locanda Cipriani.

After lunch we shall take the ferry to the pretty island of Burano with its multi-coloured houses, and then to

Murano. This island was first settled in the 6th century. It garnered wealth from selling salt and fish, but slowly developed as the Republic's glass manufacturing centre. It is famous for its glass and for the beautiful Byzantine Church of Santa Maria e San Donato with its fine arcade surrounding the apse; it is one of the oldest churches in the lagoon, having been founded in the 7th century and rebuilt in the 9th century and again in 1040. After exploring Murano we return to Venice. (Overnight Venice) BL

Day 10: Sunday 4 October, Venice – Treviso – Conegliano – Venice

- Treviso Historical Centre
- Fresco live demonstration with artist [Claudia Piasentin](#)
- Lunch at a local restaurant
- Conegliano Historical Centre
- Duomo of San Leonardo in Conegliano and Sala dei Battuti

This morning, we drive north to the enchanting town of Treviso, a walled city characterized by narrow arcaded and cobbled streets and a network of picturesque canals.

Next, we travel to the small town of Conegliano, where we meet the multifaceted artist Claudia Piasentin, who will give a live demonstration of fresco techniques. Claudia, an expert in fresco, acrylic, watercolour, and egg tempera, is also a talented sculptress working with clay and ceramic. She will showcase the ancient art of fresco painting, a mural technique developed in Italy around the 13th century and perfected during the Renaissance period.

After our artistic encounter, we will enjoy a local lunch in the UNESCO-awarded Conegliano Hills. This region, renowned for its picturesque landscape characterized by the ciglioni, or 'hogback' hills, is also famous for its production of Prosecco wine. The unique interaction between man and environment has shaped these hills into a chequerboard landscape of narrow grassy terraces and rows of vines.

Following lunch, we will explore Conegliano old town, including a visit to the Duomo of San Leonardo and the Sala dei Battuti. The Duomo of San Leonardo, built in the 14th century, showcases a blend of Gothic and Renaissance styles. It features a striking bell tower and houses notable artworks, including an altarpiece by Cima da Conegliano. Our last visit for the day will be the Sala dei Battuti, distinguished by its rectangular layout, wooden ceiling, and frescoes primarily crafted by Francesco da Milano. This hall features a pictorial cycle that narrates events from the creation of the world to the Universal Judgment. (Overnight Venice) B

Day 11: Monday 5 October, Venice

- San Giorgio Maggiore
- Il Redentore
- Afternoon at leisure
- Evening Concert & Supper at the *palazzino* of Rosemary Forbes-Butler

Palladio (1508-1580) designed a number of Venetian churches, the most famous being S. Giorgio Maggiore and Il Redentore. San Giorgio sits on its own island opposite Piazza San Marco. A church was built here c.829, dedicated to the soldier saint. An old monastery on the site was demolished in 1516, and the monks considered building a new church by 1521. Palladio arrived in Venice in 1560, when the refectory of the monastery was being rebuilt. He made great improvements to this and in 1565 was asked to prepare a model for a new church. The magnificent shrine he designed reconciled the shape of an antique temple front to the massing of a Christian basilica, with its high central nave and side aisles. The church holds a magnificent *Last Supper* by Tintoretto.

We then visit Palladio's masterpiece, Il Redentore, a church built to celebrate Venice's redemption from the plague, and centre of a festival in which the Doge and his court walked across a temporary bridge to the shrine. If you compare the 'temple front' façade of the Redentore to San Giorgio you will see how Palladio's reconciliation of temple and church had matured. Il Redentore also has a distinctive interior with a 'temple' at the east end that was designed in connection with the annual festival. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure so you may explore Venice for yourself.

This evening we visit Rosemary Forbes-Butler, who has arranged a private reception and concert for us in her Venetian *palazzino*. Our refreshments will include *prosecco* (the local bubbly) and Italian canapés of the season. Rosemary, a classically trained soprano who has recorded with both Pavarotti and Michael Jackson, mingles with us and will be delighted to answer questions regarding life in Venice and as a singer. Following the reception, we enjoy a 40-minute concert entitled *Venetian Days*. The program is drawn from music composed over the centuries by Venetians or those who either worked in or were inspired by their time in Venice. The songs are introduced in English and are sung in both local Venetian dialect and other languages. (Overnight Venice) BD

Day 12: Tuesday 6 October, Venice – Padua – Venice

- Basilica del Santo (Basilica of St Antony of Padua)
- 16th-century Anatomical Theatre, Palazzo Bo, University of Padua
- Donatello's Equestrian Statue of Gattamelata
- Giotto's fresco cycle, Scrovegni Chapel

Today we drive to the city of Padua. We first visit the great complex of Sant'Antonio, dedicated to St. Antony of Padua. This huge domed basilica resembles the architecture of St Mark's; both derive from Byzantine domed churches. Sant'Antonio is a treasure trove of wonderful artworks, not least Donatello's magnificent high altar with its illusionistic reliefs depicting events in the life of the saint. Outside the church is Donatello's magnificent equestrian statue (1453) of the Renaissance *condottiere* (mercenary leader) Erasmo da Narni, nicknamed 'Gattamelata'. He served the Republic of Venice, which ruled Padua at the time. This equestrian statue emulated the equestrian portraits of antiquity and directly or indirectly inspired all Renaissance and post-Renaissance equestrian statues, including 19th-century equestrian portraits of imperial dignitaries in Australia.

We next visit the famous University of Padua, with its magnificent early Anatomy Theatre situated in the Palazzo Bo. This wooden structure is the earliest surviving anatomy theatre in the world; scholars know of earlier theatres, but these were moveable and/or temporary. The dissection of human bodies which developed earlier in the 16th century by anatomists such as Andreas Vesalius (1514-64), author of *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* and lecturer at the University of Padua, not only advanced anatomical knowledge but also inspired artists like Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci to dissect corpses in order to develop their understanding of anatomy.

This afternoon we visit the Scrovegni Chapel (Arena Chapel), which derives its names from the fact that the money lender, Enrico Scrovegni, built the chapel on the site of Padua's Roman arena (amphitheatre), whose walls still surround the precinct; Scrovegni built the chapel to atone for the sin of usury. The great artist Giotto di Bondone (1266/7-1337) decorated the chapel in 1303-1305 with one of the most important fresco cycles in Western art. The chapel has no interior architectural articulation, which suggests Scrovegni intended that it be decorated with frescoes. Giotto's *Life of the Virgin* and *Life of Christ* and his grisaille *Virtues and Vices* form a watershed in the evolution of Italian art, for they are monumental and naturalistic, and in them human action takes place in three dimensional space that is energised by the gestures of Giotto's figures. (Overnight Venice) B

Day 13: Wednesday 7 October, Venice

- Peggy Guggenheim Collection
- Afternoon at leisure
- Farewell Dinner at Alle Corone Restaurant, Hotel Ai Reali

This morning we visit the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, which holds the Peggy Guggenheim Collection. Peggy Guggenheim (1898-1979), niece of Solomon R. Guggenheim, accumulated this remarkable collection of 20th-century art. The Venice Guggenheim is one of the most significant modern art galleries in Italy. Its holdings embrace Cubism, Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism. It includes notable works by Picasso, Braque, Duchamp, Léger, Dalí, Magritte, Picabia, Severini, de Chirico, Brâncusi, Mondrian, Kandinsky, Miró, Giacometti, Klee, Arshile Gorky, Alexander Calder and Max Ernst.

The afternoon is at leisure. Tonight we meet up again for our farewell meal at the Alle Corone Restaurant – a charming restaurant overlooking a peaceful canal. (Overnight Venice) BD

Day 14: Thursday 8 October, Depart Venice

- Tour concludes in the morning
- At leisure/Check out

Our tour ends in Venice after breakfast. In the morning you will be required to check out of the hotel. Please contact ASA if you require assistance with a transfer to the Venice Marco Polo Airport. B

Accommodation

Avani Rio Novo Venice

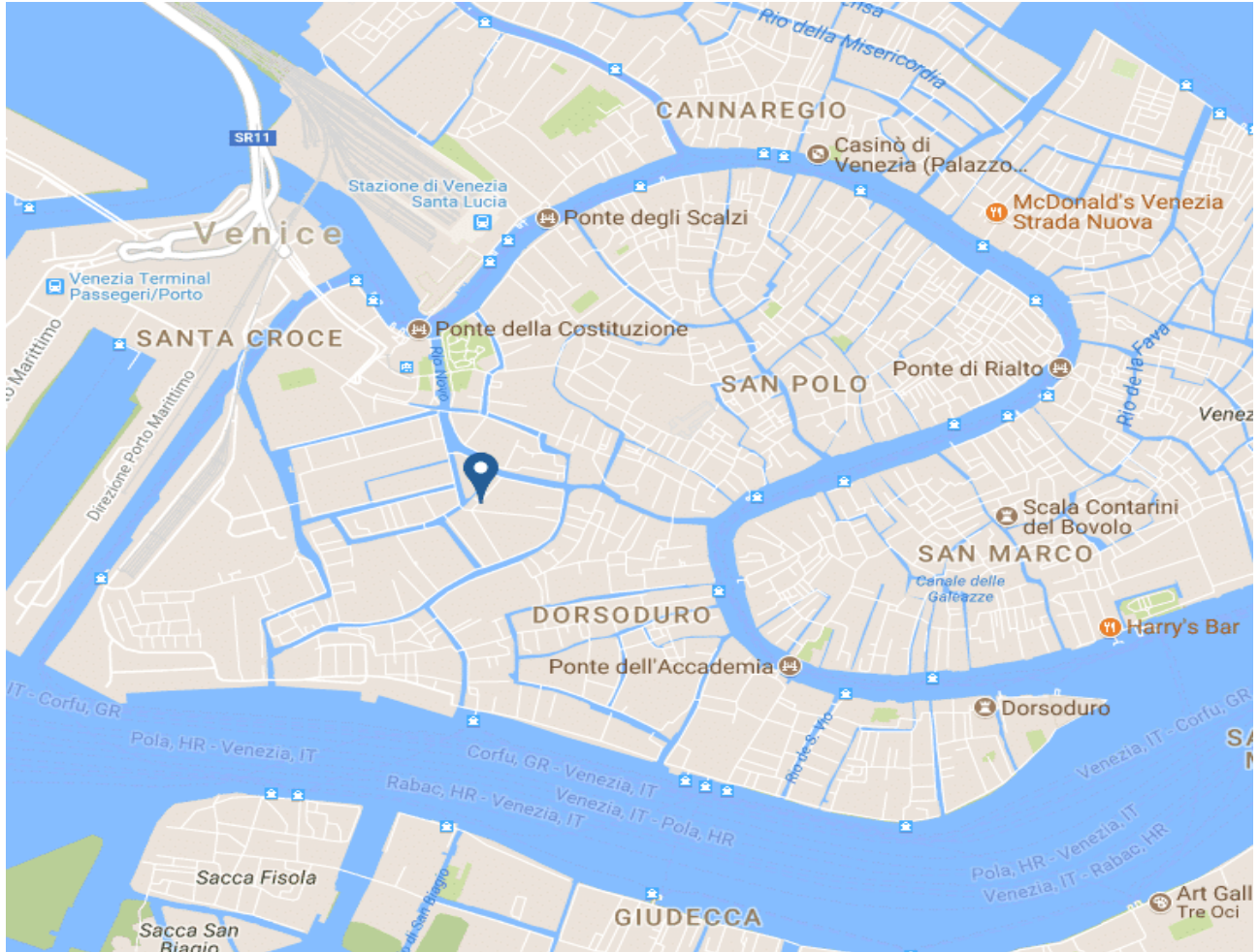
Calle Larga Ragusei, Dorsoduro 3489/E-C, Venice 30123, Italy

The 4-star **Avani Rio Novo Venice** is located in the heart of the Dorsoduro district – a neighbourhood renowned for showcasing the 'real Venice' and bustling with restaurants, shops, and artisan boutiques as well as important sites like Ca' Foscari University and the Ca' Rezzonico. The hotel is just far enough from San Marco to escape the busiest of the tourist hotspots at the end of your day, but its central location makes it easy to get to the rest of the city and the main sites on foot or by *vaporetto*. The Avani rio Novo Venice offers 144 modern, air-conditioned rooms equipped with en suite bathroom, minibar, LCD TV and free Wi-Fi.

Single Supplement

Double rooms for single occupancy may be requested – and are subject to availability and payment of the Single Supplement. The number of rooms available for single occupancy is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 30 Sep 2025

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only

AUD \$TBA Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with en suite bathroom in the 4-star Avani Rio Novo
- Breakfast daily, lunches and evening meals as indicated in the itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=dinner
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach between cities and use of public transport in Venice
- Lecture and site visit program
- Tour Reference book
- Entrance fees
- Evening Performance at Teatro La Fenice (Opera program & schedule to be confirmed in late 2025. Please note that, in the event there are no suitable performances scheduled at Teatro La Fenice, this may be replaced with a performance at Teatro Malibran or another venue.)
- Use of audio headsets during site visits
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Venice, Venice-Australia
- Porterage at the hotel
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance



Fitness Criteria & Practical Information

Fitness Level



Level 2 - Intermediate

For people with energetic lifestyles and very good mobility

You must be able to:

- manage at least five to six hours of physical activity per day with ease.
- walk at a regular to moderate pace to explore Venice extensively on foot, walking at least 5-7km per day and negotiating numerous bridges with flights of steps.
- keep up with the group at all times
- board/alight coaches and *vaporetto* unassisted
- negotiate challenging historic sites which may include several flights of stairs, steep slopes or uneven terrain.
- stand for one to two hours during visits to galleries and museums without the need to sit.
- manage your own luggage.

Fitness Levels

Please also view the fitness criteria required for our tours, graded from Level 1 to Level 3, at www.asatours.com.au/fitness-level/

All ASA tours are active programs suitable for people with a good level of mental and physical fitness and good mobility. They are not suitable for people who lack stamina, have difficulty walking at the group's pace or who have mobility issues. An unavoidable aspect of every tour is the need to manage walking, stair-climbing and standing for long periods of time.

It is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour

participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. Before enrolling on an ASA tour please read the fitness requirements carefully.

Booking Conditions

Making a Tentative Reservation before the tour price has been published

ASA INTENTION TO TRAVEL APPLICATION FORM

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD \$200.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD \$800.00 per person. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your deposit of AUD \$1000.00 is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

Or

- CANCEL your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD \$200.00 per person deposit, less a \$66.00 service fee (including GST).



Intention to Travel Application

TOUR NAME _____

TOUR DATES _____

Booking before the tour price is available

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD\$200.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD\$800.00 per person applicable for International tours OR AUD\$300.00 per person applicable for Australian tours. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your full deposit is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

OR

- Cancel your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD\$200.00 per person deposit, less a \$66.00 service fee (including GST).

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Other _____

FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____

MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____

POSTAL ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____

TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____

EMAIL address _____

Date of birth ____ / ____ / ____ GENDER Male ☐ Female ☐

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: ☐ a twin-bedded room ☐ a double-bedded room ☐ a room for sole occupancy

I am travelling: ☐ on my own ☐ with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

☐ I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

☐ fish ☐ poultry ☐ red meat ☐ dairy products

☐ eggs ☐ pork ☐ nuts

☐ Other _____

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence ☐ Postal Mail ☐ Email Address _____

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour.

ASA's ability to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs, your health and safety and the health and safety of other tour members, is of paramount importance to us. For this reason the ASA Reservation Application includes a Medical Information section. As a general guideline, you must be able to accomplish each of these activities *without assistance or support*:-

- walk & stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions
- walk confidently on and over uneven surfaces
- climb at least 3 flights of stairs
- embark and disembark from ferries, buses and trains
- walk up and down steep slopes
- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1 km every 15 - 20 minutes
- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places
- administer your own medication.

Applicant's Signature _____

Dated _____

Tour / Course Name

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

Payment by (please indicate): ☐ Cheque ☐ Direct Debit (see below) ☐ Credit Card (see below)

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate
- via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

Date Money Transferred _____

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, Visa & American Express 2%

Please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____

Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) _____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

Postcode _____

State _____

Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature _____

AUSTRALIANS STUDYING ABROAD

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