
TRAVEL

PROGRAMS

Hidden Luxuries of Venice and Secrets of the Palladian Villas

Sunday, September 26th
– Sunday, October 3rd, 1999



JOIN *Michael Bentley* and *Tony Giacomini*, long time residents of Asolo and Venice, as they repeat the success of last year's program and take us on another unique journey. This is enhanced with expert study by *Dr. Franca Scoria Zanchi*, a scholar of Venetian art and architecture, and *Clemente di Thiene*, Professor of Architecture, Venice and The University of Virginia, and consultant to the Peggy Guggenheim Collection. We center ourselves in the luxurious *Bon Vecchiati* between St. Mark's Square and the Rialto in Venice and in the enchanting *Al Sole Hotel* in the heart of **ASOLO**. From here we are ideally situated to explore the hidden

luxuries of Venice and study the Palladian villas.

We examine how the sensuousness of Venetian style with its Byzantine fantasy and radiance of the early architecture of the Renaissance was a catalyst to Palladio. It transformed the scholarly and intellectual ingredients of his thought into the most human architecture of his age, and made it accessible to every succeeding generation. We view the rich colors and light and varied textures of Venice's most famous painters such as Veronese, Tintoretto and Titian and see how they find their counterpart in Palladio's harmonious forms.

Delving deeper into what comprises Venetian taste we enjoy private visits to *Venetian Contessas* as well as palaces, generally closed to the public. Here are interiors that speak of the genius of entire dynasties of craftsmen applying stucco, carving wood, gilding ceilings and laying terrazzo floors. Collections of Venetian furniture, chandeliers from Murano, fans, porcelain and paintings by masters of the Renaissance evidence this city's long delight in the arts.

In the Vicentine countryside we journey through a splendid landscape, through villages that have remained aloof from time, to villas conserved through the centuries in grand isolation. Most idyllic is the town of Asolo, known as the "Pearl of Veneto". It is one of the most beautiful and magical historic villages in Italy.

Meals and receptions at private houses are arranged to convey the pleasures of Venetian hospitality and to give participants the opportunity to meet local residents. Visiting at a time of year when the weather is still warm and the summer tourists gone we will see why we are continuously enticed to return to Venice. Palladio's villas in turn stand as silent sentinels to a golden age.

Sunday, September 26th

Airport arrival. Transfer by water taxi to the hotel.

We begin with a late afternoon visit

to **Palazzo Albrezzi**, a Renaissance palace privately owned. We are accompanied by *Contessa Lilliana Chiappari de Sorio*. She will guide us through the magnificent palace and discuss its collections. The palace with its superb and lavish architectural detail allows us to imagine how the nobility of Venice once lived. Dinner at a restaurant with typical Venetian cuisine.

Monday, September 27th

Visit the residence and private collection of *Contessa Luciana Moretti Adimari Forte*. Against an elegant backdrop we view 18th-century Venetian paintings and 19th-century Tuscan works as well as fine Venetian furniture and an outstanding and unusual display of porcelain.

We cross the waters of the lagoon to an island in St. Mark's basin. Here we lunch at the famous **Hotel Cipriani** where a special menu is prepared for us. *Dr. Franca Scoria Zanchi* then takes us through the Benedictine Church of **San Giorgio Maggiore**, designed by Palladio. We are introduced to the principles of his architecture and sense of space and light. Nearby we see further evidence of Palladio's work at the privately owned **Fondazione Giorgio Cini**.

Tuesday, September 28th

Morning free followed by a visit to the district of **Dorsoduro** with Dr.

Zanchi where we have special entrée to two impressive **18th-century private palazzi**, closed to the public. We also visit **Scuola del Carmini** with its rich cycle of paintings produced by *Gian Battista Tiepolo*. Private night visit to **St Mark's Church** where lighting adds luster to the sparkling mosaics, the mysterious Crypt and the Pala d'Oro. Seafood dinner at **Da Fiore** followed by ice cream at the famous **Caffé Florian** in St. Mark's Square.

Wednesday, September 29th

We explore the work of two of the great masters of Renaissance painting in Venice through a visit to the district of **Cannaregio**, one of the lesser known areas of the city. At the **Church of La Madonna dell'Orto** we study *Tintoretto's* remarkable depiction of the Last Judgement. Here too is the artist's tomb and not far away is *Tintoretto's house*. At the church of **S. Alvise** we gain a deeper understanding of the work of *Gian Battista Tiepolo*. After lunch we walk through the **Old Ghetto**, established in 1516, where taller buildings than in the rest of Venice lean over the narrowest of cobbled streets and where century-old Jewish synagogues suspend between rooftops. We then visit one of Venice's **loveliest private gardens**. We are received for cocktails by a Contessa who shares her **private collection** of over two hundred fans, exquisite

Venetian furniture and antique chandeliers from Murano. Evening free.

Thursday, September 30th

Depart for **Asolo** with *Dr. Clemente di Thiene* and en route on the banks of the Breta, half hidden behind tall trees is **Villa Foscari della "La Malcontenta"** built by Palladio in 1558 to impress the rich Venetian aristocracy. Next is a visit to **Villa Emo**, at **Fanzola** where we have the opportunity of being led through the house by *Contessa Emo*. She will also discuss the history of the Emo family who have had continuous ownership of the house since it was built. After lunch we drive through rich green countryside before we climb the hills to **Asolo**, long time haven to artists and writers such as Robert Browning. We are embraced by its silence and remoteness from time and place. At the **Al Sole Hotel** we have a glass of champagne on the terrace. Free time to relax and stroll through the town before dinner.

Friday, October 1st

Today we enjoy some of the most famous buildings in the world and certainly ones that have inspired generations of architects. The forms we see are so harmonious with the natural environment that they seem to grow out of the landscape. Palladio's brilliance and his eye for perspective is made obvious at **Teatro Olimpico** in the city of

Vicenza where we spend the day with *Dr. Clemente di Thiene* and explore other aspects of Palladio's work. After lunch we climb the hilltop to the "**Rotunda**" the most renowned of all Palladio's villas. In close proximity to this is the "**Valmarana ai Nani**" with its frescoes by *Giambattista Tiepolo*. On our return journey we are treated to an entrée to a privately held villa, the "**Villa Chiericati Lambert**" with its grand English style garden and frescoes by *Paolo Veronese*. Cocktails at a **private residence** in Asolo followed by dinner.

Saturday, October 2nd

Free morning in Asolo, time to relax in the gardens, take a walking tour of the historic buildings or explore the antique stores and book market. In the afternoon we continue our exploration of Palladio with *Dr. di Thiene* at **Villa Maser**. This allows for a look at how Palladio designed on a hillside making use of the cascading water for fountains. The villa is known for the vast cycle of frescoes carried out by *Paolo Veronese*. In order to contrast Palladio's work with other architects of the time we stop at a villa, now privately held, the superb "**Villa**

Negri-Piovene" conceived to satisfy 18th-century aristocratic taste.

We supply you with hand-made Venetian masks with fantastical plumes and faces for an 18th-century Venetian dinner masqué at the romantic villa of *Contessa Rosalind Buramisita*.

Sunday, October 3rd

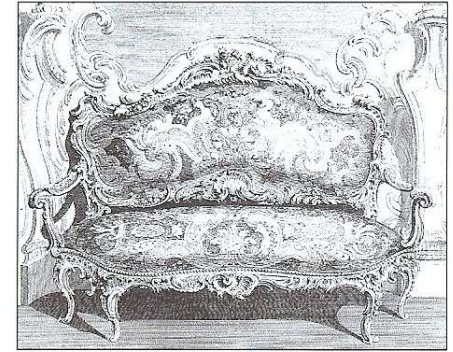
We return to the airport in Venice in time for departures at noon.

Fee and Registration

The fee for the program is \$4850 for double occupancy with a single supplement of \$500. This includes luxury hotel accommodation in Venice and Asolo, meals at top restaurants, commentary and guided side excursions throughout by Michael Bentley and Tony Giacomini, lectures and expert study, local transportation, cocktail receptions and all entrance fees. Registration is limited to 18 participants. A deposit of \$1500 is required at time of registration with full payment due on August 1st. Cancellations received before this date will be granted a refund minus \$150 registration fee. Cancellations after this date will not be refunded unless the space can be filled.

Paris: Decorators, Designers and their Interiors

November, Monday 1st
- Tuesday 9th, 1999



ASK any decorator where you can find the finest antiques and luxury goods and they will answer Paris. In this city of unrivalled beauty and style are interiors that celebrate the art of the designer. Here are rooms dressed in the finest of all epochs, a hallmark of some of the leading decorators such as *Jacques Grange* or *Frederic Mechiche*. Or they might express the individuality of other top names – the tranquil modernism and flowing lines of *Christian Liaigre*, the lushness of *Graaf*, and lavishness of *Jacques Garcia*. These are amongst the many people of the moment but behind them is a long tradition of refined decorating which has made all the world recognize France as an arbiter of taste. Parisian interiors are carefully guarded by their owners and rarely opened to the outside world.

We have structured a program that takes you into the secret world of the Parisian luxury market of art, antiques and decoration. We shall explore the city with the help of a long time professional whose

knowledge opens resources one would never find on one's own. The program is further enhanced with entrée to top decorators' homes and interiors executed by them. Sessions in museums with curators and visits to the most exclusive antique shops allow us to embark on a *voyage de découverte et surprises*. We examine present trends through discussion with decorators who will share with you the ideas that fuel their imagination. Visits to resources allow us to see trades carried out by skilled workers, dating from the time of the *marchands merciers*.

In order to protect the owners as well as honor professional relationships we have promised to preserve their anonymity in print. Described below is what you will see in each place. Accommodation will be in the elegant four-star **Montalembert**, a small luxury hotel decorated by *Christian Liaigre*. The hotel is on the left bank near the Rue de Bac in a neighborhood where all the top fashion designers from the Rue St. Honoré have established boutiques