My Venetian Dozen

by Dr Nicholas Penny
Director of the National Gallery

1. Filigree of reflected sunlight moving across the undersides of bridges.
2. Istrian limestone bleached chalk white against the blue sky but polished to ivory yellow where handled.
3. Elegant cast iron lamps with pink glass seen in fog or mist.
4. The interior of the great Gothic basilica of SS Giovanni e Paolo at dusk.
5. The patchwork of Byzantine symbols, saints and ornaments on the flanks of San Marco.
6. The quasi-architectural folds of the dirty linen awnings under the classical arches of the piazza.
7. Boito’s inspired medley of modern, gothic and baroque in the staircase of Palazzo Cavalli Franchetti (now the Istituto Veneto).
8. Imperial staircase by Lorenzo Santi of the Napoleonic Palace (now entrance to the Correr), with its subtle use of varied Verona marbles.
9. Church of S. Maria dei Miracoli for the perfect combination of lucid architecture and refined relief carving.
10. Grimacing masks and bristling trophies amid the massive rustication just above the water on the facade of Longhena’s Ca Pesaro.
11. Lotto’s melancholy youth with lizard and rose petals in the Accademia Gallery.
12. Tiepolo’s altarpiece with St Rose above first altar of the Gesuati, with the sculpture, the stucco and coloured marble that have always accompanied it.

We would like to thank

Ross Ali
Dott Andrea Antonnicola (Maserati GB Ltd)
Art Pursuits Limited
Peter Boizot
Noah Charney
Child and Child
The Estate of Muriel Durie Clarke
Context Foundation for Sustainable Travel
Dovecote Press
Mrs Ann-Marie Doyle (Venice Estates)
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Fondation Jean-Barthelemy
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Villa Sandi
Michael Volpe (Korn/Ferry Opera Holland Park)
Ted Wake (Kirker Holidays)
Nicola Winwood (GHAAF)
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And all those who continue to support the work of the Fund through their generous donations.

Venice in Peril

The British Committee for the Preservation of Venice

NEWSLETTER ● SUMMER 2008
Chairman’s Message
Draft law threatens to drive out even more residents of Venice

Anna Somers Cocks
Chairman

STATISTICS GATHERED by the Venice town council show that the demands of the tourist market have already deprived the city of over a 1,000 domestic dwellings, now converted into hotels and bed & breakfasts. But worse could be to come.

Despite the constant wailing in the media over the decline in the number of Venetians living in Venice—down to 60,000 from 150,000 in the 1950s—the regional government of the Veneto, which has considerable autonomy, has proposed a regional law that that would allow hundreds of private dwellings to be turned into hotel accommodation.

Unless there is powerful lobbying against it, it is likely to be implemented because the regional government is of the same political complexion as the government in Rome, and the former regional Assessore per il Turismo, Luca Zaja, who drafted this law, is now a junior minister in Silvio Berlusconi’s cabinet.

The draft law is entitled “New regional discipline for tourism”. Article 131 invents an entirely new type of guest accommodation, the “Venetian home”—a b&b with up to 18 rooms—on the sole condition it they be decorated in “traditional or period style”. Essentially, this licenses the creation of an unlimited number of b&bs and turns existing illegal hotels into legal operations.

Article 132 authorises every hotel to open an annex in any building in its own settiere (neighbourhood), thus allowing for any house or apartment to become an hotel.

Article 46, subsection 1, repeats the fiction of treating all b&bs as residences. This error, which was already present in the 2002 regional norm, has already allowed a huge increase in the conversion of residential housing into commercial lodgings over the past five years, with no possibility for the town council to intervene as it is in charge of concessions for the transformation of houses only if the commercial lodging is classified as a hotel.

What this draft law illustrates is that Venice badly needs a tourism strategy that meshes with a residential plan. It would also help immeasurably if the regional government and town council had coordinated policies for Venice, but the former is right-wing, the latter, left-wing, and they disagree on many important issues relating to the preservation of the city.

The date when this law will come before the regional government to be debated has not yet been fixed. To oppose it, please go to the website listed below and “sign”:

http://www.firmiamo.it/sign/list/venezianoneumalbergo2

Venice In Peril Newsletter

The Island of San Michele, Venice, around 1850
(notice the low water level)

The painter Friedrich Christian Nerly (1807-1878), aged thirty, was on his way home to Germany after several years in Milan and Rome when he visited Venice, for the first time, in 1837, only to linger and finally settle there. He drew and painted the city that so held him in thrall in pencil, watercolours and oils. He became best known for nocturnes and on a trip to Torcello was caught in a storm; the gondoliers refusing to take him any further, he took refuge at San Michele, which so entranced him that he cried: „Das soll mir der Nerly malen!” (This Nerly has to paint for me!). Nerly began the work in 1850. Two companion works for the king, of a regatta on the Grand Canal and of the façade of Santo Giovanni e Paolo, were destroyed in the Second World War.

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While not compromising his exactitude with regard to architecture, Nerly liked to enliven his oil pictures with more ephemeral or occasional elements, such as the monks, the fishermen, the sheet hanging out to dry and indeed the gulls in the present picture. He also imparted a certain Stimmung or mood to the scene through his choice of the time of day and weather, and his handling of the light; setting this peaceful scene in amber, he gives no hint of the city’s political conflict, despite having been briefly arrested for spying; he sent the work to Berlin probably in January or February 1850. Two companion works for the king, of a regatta on the Grand Canal and of the façade of Santo Giovanni e Paolo, were destroyed in the Second World War.

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This note is wholly indebted to Dr Julia Nauhaus, to whom many thanks.

Dr Nauhaus has written articles on Nerly, and her information about this painting derives from unpublished letters of the artist that she has researched.
Admiral La Rosa made a definitive Armstrong crane. In a rousing speech yardarm silhouetted in front of the offshore on the Riva Schiavoni and out in the Marco” and “San Giorgio” were moored Paolo La Rosa. The Landing Ships “San celebrated on June 10 in the presence of the The annual Festa della Marina Militare was Grimani as well as the Antisala of the illustrate how the pieces were arranged in them on computer. The presentation will with casts of these sculptures but will show was bequeathed to the Serenissima and is owned by the Ministry of Culture since the 1980s, it was closed for restoration until May 28 of this year, when it was formally handed over to the Polo Museale (State Museums network). It is due to open to the public 20 December, 2010. Venice in Peril has contributed towards this long-awaited opening. The palace was commissioned by Cardinal Domenico Griziani and his nephew Giovanni, Patriarch of Aquileia, over a period from 1530 to 1560, its design and construction being attributed variously to Sansovinci, Serlio and Sansovino. VIP’s bursary enabled Drissa Marcella De Paoli to carry out research into the history, location and dispersal of the famous collection of antiques – sculptures in marble and bronze – assembled by Cardinal Giovanni Griziani, most of which was bequeathed to the Serenissima and is now in the National Archaeological Museum in Palazzo Reale and Marciana Library. The Superintendency for Architecture has decided not to restore the Palazzo Griziani with casts of these sculptures but will show them on computer. The presentation will illustrate how the pieces were arranged in the Vestibule and courtyard of Palazzo Griziani as well as the Antisala of the Marciana Library.

Lazzaretto Nuovo Island

The successful season at the end of summer 2007, thanks to a donation from Venice in Peril. This first allocation of our funds also covered the opening of the massive counter-weight containing rock- metal ingots that were splitting at the point: a third of the ballast was removed to make it safe. The director of the project in the Superintendency is planning the next phase in collaboration with the engineering faculty of Padua University and Tunin Polytechnic. Lazaretto Nuovo Island The successful season at the end of summer 2007, thanks to a donation from Venice in Peril. This first allocation of our funds also covered the opening of the massive counter-weight containing rock-metal ingots that were splitting at the point: a third of the ballast was removed to make it safe. The director of the project in the Superintendency is planning the next phase in collaboration with the engineering faculty of Padua University and Tunin Polytechnic.

Arsenale and the crane

The annual Festa della Marina Militare was celebrated on June 10 in the presence of the President of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, accompanied by the Minister for Defence and Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Paolo La Rosa. The Landing Ships “San Marco” and “San Giorgio” were moored offshore on the Riva Schiavoni and out in the Bacino, while the sail training ship “Palinuro” was anchored within the Arsenale Basin, with the Palinuro crew manning the yardarm silhouetted in front of the Armstrong crane. In a rousing speech Admiral La Rosa made a definitive statement about the decisions taken for the future use of spaces within the Arsenale, emphasising the continuing presence of the Navy with the Institute for Maritime Studies, the Library and an area for the treatment of wooden craft recovered from the waters of the Lagoon. Agreement has also been reached on additional areas to be leased to the Biennale (this year Architecture, opening September 14).

The Armstrong Mitchell crane has been accurately measured, scanned and photographed by a team from the University of Architecture, including post-graduates funded by bursaries from Venice in Peril. This first allocation of our funds also covered the opening of the massive counter-weight containing rock-metal ingots that were splitting at the point: a third of the ballast was removed to make it safe. The director of the project in the Superintendency is planning the next phase in collaboration with the engineering faculty of Padua University and Tunin Polytechnic.

Church Of Sta Maria Del Rosario (Gesuati): restoration in memory of The Lady Thorneycroft

The fine stone relief of the dead Christ supported by two Angels is set in the side wall of the church facing on to Campo S. Agnese, above the vault of the sacresta (covered mooring) which extended under the Church before the Rio S. Agnese was filled in. It is possible that the relief came from the small church of Gesuati suppressed in 1663 and replaced by the Dominican church of Sta M del Rosario in 1724, designed by Massari. The relief does not appear to be damaged but the surface is blackened and polluted, needing cleaning and consolidation. Carla Thorneycroft regularly worshipped at the Gesuati on her visits to Venice, when she stayed nearly on the Zattere.

Cemetery Island of S. Michele

During the week of European Culture in Cemeteries, a day’s visit was organised by the local Association for S. Michele in Isola on June 7, beginning in the cloister of the Magnolias. The whole island has been the property of the municipality since, under Napoleonic occupation, burials in parish cemeteries were banned and the two islands of S. Cristoforo and S. Michele were joined together by filling the intervening canal. The church of S. Cristoforo (depicted in a painting by Canaletto) was demolished to make space for the vast cemetery, while Codussi’s church of S. Michele, with the Cappella Emilia linked to its north-west façade, remains a landmark on the vaporetto route to Murano and the islands beyond. The Reparto Evangelico (Anglicans, Lutheran and Calvins) with the Greek Orthodox alongside, is frequently visited by those interested in historic figures such as Horatio Brown, Ezra Pound, Josef Brodsky, Diaulhale and Stravinsky. On June 7 a group including the city Councillor for Heritage and Public Works, architects and art historians made a three-hour tour beginning with the Cappella Emilia (restored by VIP) and the church, currently closed for restoration by the municipality. The forecourt of the church and chapel facing on to the Lagoon is constantly awash due to the moto eolico caused by passing vaporetto and taxi service (see front page article), although protected by a metallic breakwater. Inside the church the darkened plaster and fine wooden coffered ceiling are being cleaned: church and chapel have remarkable acoustic properties, as demonstrated by Professor Deborah Howard and experts from the Commission for the study of Architecture and Music in Renaissance Venice when the Choir of St John’s College Cambridge came to Venice in April 2007 to test acoustics in twelve Renaissance churches. The Comune hope the work will be finished next spring, so the re-opening might be celebrated also with a concert. Torcello – Il Millennnio A national commission has been formed under the chairmanship of Don Giannattasio Caputo, director of the Diocesan office for Cultural Heritage, to celebrate the millennium of the consecration of the present Basilica of St Maria Assunta. Three sub-committees will plan a seminar, exhibition and organisational events. In 1977 the International Torcello Committee – a group of some ten committees chaired by Rachel Clarke - was constituted to organise resources for the project undertaken by the Superintendencies for Architecture, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage to preserve and maintain the Basilica. A major undertaking was the consolidation of the mosaics on the West Wall, carried out by the mosaicists from the technical laboratory of S-Marcu under the direction of specialists. The campaign lasted until 1984.

The flood barriers

The Magistrato alle Acque (Venice office of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport) has accomplished 42% of the project for controlling flooding through the three entrances to the Lagoon (Lido, Malamocco and Chioggia) and expects to conclude the work in 2014, two years later than originally planned. Work on the breakwaters, beach protection and havens for ships unable to enter the lagoon when the barriers are raised can now be seen from the vaporetto routes. Besides work on the barriers, the State has invested in the renovation of the northern zone of the Arsenale, repairing the historic range of warehouses that, among other activities, house the international engineering laboratory of Thetis and dry docks for maintaining the ACTV vaporetto fleet. Further areas of the northern Arsenale will be used for the maintenance of the caissons of the barriers.

The most recent acqua alta in Venice reached 96 cm above mean water level on May 20; exceptionally heavy rainfall caused flooding also in Mestre on the mainland. The annual General Meeting of the Association of Private Committees for Safe Guarding Venice will take place in the offices of UNESCO at Palazzo Zorzi on October 23 – 24 2008. n

by Frances Clarke

Venice News & Current Venice in Peril Projects

Palazzo Griziani

Hidden at the end of a narrow calle off the Ruga Giuffa, just before it leads into Campo Sta Maria Formosa, the imposing portal of the 16th-century Palazzo Griziani still remains tantalisingly closed.
This is the 500th anniversary of the birth of Palladio, and the big exhibition on his life’s work and influence opens in Vicenza on September 20 (until January 6, 2009).

It is staged in the Palazzo Barbaran da Porto, and besides the many drawings by the architect himself and other great masters such as Michelangelo, Raphael, Bramante, and Inigo Jones, there will be 40 paintings by Bassano, El Greco, Giulio Romano, Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto, Van Dyck and Canaletto, with 30 models of Palladio’s buildings, and sculptures and architectural fragments.

The exhibition goes on to show how Palladio became one of the most influential architects ever to have lived, conditioning, for example, Thomas Jefferson when he built Monticello, his house in Virginia, and even how the modernist Le Corbusier tackled questions of proportion. The curators are Guido Beltrami and Howard Burns, and a modified version of the exhibition will be seen in London at the Royal Academy from January 31, 2009 to April 13. For information (not as complete as one would like) on other Palladio events, go to the Italian ministry of culture’s site: www.palladio500.it.

For his sixth exhibition with Francis Kyle Gallery since 1984 the distinguished German artist Malte Sartorius, well established now as the pre-eminent exponent of etching in the country where the medium originated, is showing the final, complete fruits of his single most ambitious project to date: The Venice Etchings.

Created over the course of numerous stays in the city and its immediate surroundings from Murano to Chioggia, the new series is able to take its place alongside the great woodcut of Jacopo de’ Barbari (1500) in offering a comprehensive experience of the city. This is Venice experienced by the Venetians everyday Venice in all seasons, in which no palatial buildings, no monumental sculpture, no horses or lions, nor indeed a single gondola can be seen. This is working, functioning Venice, in particular in early morning or after the day’s visitors have left. In this experience of the city, there is little time for the luxury of nostalgia or a contemplative overview from a superior standpoint.

Palladio then and now

Malte Sartorius

The Venice Etchings

9 September - 2 October 2008

For details of the Private View in aid of Venice in Peril, see page 10

In this experience of the city, there is little time for the luxury of nostalgia or a contemplative overview from a superior standpoint.

In May 2008, the Fund approved a grant to the 400th Anniversary Appeal of St George’s Anglican Church, to contribute to the cost of restoring the stained-glass windows. The Appeal, now underway for three years, has already achieved the complete restoration of the roof and the exterior. Once the outside scaffolding allowed the windows to be inspected closely, we saw they would be more difficult to restore than foreseen. Those on the Campo side particularly had suffered from pigeons and children’s games, panes were cracked or broken, the leading was wasted in many places, and sections were warped and threatening to fall out.

The windows are a significant feature of the building, being the full length of the upper level. Their great size and number (13 lights in all) give the church its bright and airy atmosphere, and the stained glass, unusual in other Venice churches, intentionally recalls those of England.

There are seven historic windows made by the Whitefriars Glass Company, six installed during the decade from 1904. Each depicts the memorial coat-of-arms of a distinguished member of the British community in Venice. (It is interesting to speculate which other members of that community might have been so honoured, had the Great War not apparently interrupted the series.)

They start with Sir Henry Wotton, King James I’s ambassador to the Serenissima, whose son ‘Pen’ served on the committee and hosted the services during the building works) and John Ruskin (d. 1900). The seventh is for the historian Horatio Brown, whose son Whitefriars (archived in the church) shows that he was instrumental in devising the original concept. It does not however extend to the installation of his own window; that was probably added after his death in 1926.

The Church is enormously grateful to the Venice in Peril Fund for its outstanding help. It would like to thank Kirker Holidays for their generous sponsorship of the Venice in Peril Annual Summer Lecture on July 1, 2008

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## Scottish Event

Details of a planned visit in September 2008 to the exhibition *The Art of Italy in the Royal Collection: The Renaissance* at The Queen’s Gallery in Edinburgh are shown on page 11. This is the first part of the exhibition previously held in The Queen’s Gallery in London.

John Beaton, a member who lives in Fife, is hoping to organise one or two fund-raising events in Scotland every year. If you would be interested in helping to organise such events, please contact him at Strathairly Cottage, Upper Largo, Fife KY8 6ED john@beaton.org.uk and telephone 01333 360214.

The Circolo Italo-Britannico

meets weekly at 18.00 in Palazzo Pesaro Papafava (Cannaregio) by kind invitation of Warwick University in Venice. Season opens October 13, 2008.

Information is available from Christine Marigonda +39 041 522 4487.

## Villa Sandi Prosecco supports the Venice in Peril Fund

The winemakers, Villa Sandi, are located in the Valdobbiadene hills of the Veneto, which are ideally situated for producing Prosecco. The range of Villa Sandi Prosecco is available in the UK solely through Playford Ros, Wine Merchants.

Playford Ros are based in Yorkshire but deliver throughout the UK.

Having recently supported the Venice in Peril “Tosca” event, Playford Ros and Villa Sandi are now pleased to be able to offer you the opportunity to have the same cases of Prosecco delivered to your home.

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If you would like any further information please contact Playford Ros on 01845 526777 or sales@playfordros.com

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**Special thanks to the Tosca Gala Committee**

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Mrs Anthony Billington  
Mrs Bob Bisas  
Mr Robert Booth  
Mrs Robert Duan  
Mrs Robert Drummond  
Miss Clare Field  
Lady Emily FitzRoy  
Mrs Jane Gorlin  
Mrs Andrew Graham  
Mr Ian Granger  
Miss Sara Hacton  
Mr Iain Henderson-Russell  
Mrs Wanda Kim  
The Hon Mrs Louloudis  
Mrs Sandie Mason  
The Hon Mrs Michael McLaren  
Mrs Marina Morrison Anwaver  
The Lord Phillimore  
The Lady Phillimore  
Lady Pabby  
Mrs Robin Purchas  
Sir John Shepherd  
Lady Shepherd  
Mrs Valentine Snell  
The Hon Mrs Sarah Taylor  
Mrs Nick Varian  

**Whit Patterson Fine Art – Venice in Peril Exhibition 2008**

The prize of a weekend in Venice was donated by Kirker Holidays.

L to R: Wayne Thornton of Whit Patterson, Nicky Baly of Venice in Peril, the winners Mr and Mrs Rod Van Tienen and Ted Wake, Sales Director of Kirker Holidays.
See Monet and Venice this October

A hundred years ago, in the Autumn of 1908, Claude Monet and his wife Alice spent six weeks in Venice. In the three years after their stay, Monet produced 24 oil paintings of Venice. This year, to mark the centenary, the Beyeler Foundation at Basel in Switzerland is mounting the largest exhibition of Monet’s Venetian paintings to be seen since 1912. Also on show will be Venetian pictures by another 10 masters, including Canaletto, Renior, Sargent, Turner and Whistler.

Robert Booth (writer, broadcaster, bookseller and Venetophile) is planning to take two or three small groups to Basel for two or three nights this October.

Costs have yet to be finalised and will largely depend on hotel availability, but will not exceed £450 for a three-night trip. This should be done by each individual traveller but Robert will happily advise.

Please contact Robert for more details: 01730 892283, robert@boothopenworld.com

Also included in the price for each traveller is a donation to the Venice in Peril Fund, to which Robert has generously contributed. Please let Robert know if you would like to pay it by standing order.

"... a full life, spanning 80 years, beautifully told."

The long-awaited memoirs of our Honorary Chairman have just been published to universal acclaim, and deal in detail with early years in Venice in Peril.

Monet’s Venice show will be Venetian pictures by another 10 masters, including Canaletto, Renoir, Sargent, Turner and Whistler.

On display are works by many of the great masters of 16th century Venice, Florence and Rome, including paintings by Giovanni Bellini, Titian, Lorenzo Lotto, Andrea del Sarto and Bronzino and drawings by Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael.

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The long-awaited memoirs of our Honorary Chairman have just been published to universal acclaim, and deal in detail with early years in Venice in Peril.

Monet’s Venice show will be Venetian pictures by another 10 masters, including Canaletto, Renoir, Sargent, Turner and Whistler.

On display are works by many of the great masters of 16th century Venice, Florence and Rome, including paintings by Giovanni Bellini, Titian, Lorenzo Lotto, Andrea del Sarto and Bronzino and drawings by Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael.