The Venice Report, commissioned by Venice in Peril and produced in collaboration with the Department of Architecture of Cambridge University, was published in September (for details of how to buy a copy, see p.3).

The Report looks at how many people really live in Venice, how many tourists visit it, how the use of its buildings is changing and how the city is financed. Although there is some good news in it, particularly regarding the number of inhabitants, it also reveals that some alarming changes are taking place very fast.

After the great flood of 1966 until early this century, Venice was a city where policy was made very cautiously, where the authorities seemed to prefer to do nothing or even oppose action rather than do the wrong thing. Hence the many years it took for MOSF, the mobile flood barriers, to begin to be built. The Arsenale, the obsolete naval dockyard, is another case in point. After 50 years, the only, very limited, progress in turn over Euro 1.5 billion a year. Venice is a fertile forcing house; it is remarkable how quickly growth has come as soon as the private sector has been given its head. In just seven years, the number of B&Bs and rooms to rent has risen 1008 percent. The number of cruise ships sailing through Venice has risen from 200 in 2000 to 310 in 2007, facilitated by the privatisation of the passenger port management. Five years ago Venice was a city without noticeable advertising; now huge ads appear on most public buildings under restoration.

Venice, whose economy is mysterious because so much of it is undeclared, nevertheless is estimated by CISET, a research body at Ca’ Foscari University, to turn over Euro 1.5 billion a year. Venice is a cash cow for Venetians, but increasingly also for outside interests. The Venice Report describes the plans for a very big development at Tessera, around the airport on the edge of the lagoon. This is not only to have a vast hotel by prestige architect Frank Gehry, but a casino, shopping centres and a stadium. It is as much directed at the mainland as at Venice, but the guaranteed attraction of the Serenissima, the apparently endless curiosity to see this city, certainly encourages the investors. Could this be a kind of antechamber to Venice, where tourists would stay, and, as the economist John Kay suggested in his speech to the Istituto Veneto in 2008, pass through a didactic preparation for the transcendent experience of sailing down the Grand Canal? Or will it be an economic machine dependent on forcing more and more people into the already crowded alleys of the historic city?

Not for nothing does the airport have shares in the passenger port inside Venice, which boasts of generating 10 percent of the tourist economy of the city. Not for nothing is this port expanding; expect to see even more vast cruise ships dwarfing the Piazzetta of San Marco.

None of the above is irreversible, but the plans for a huge commercial port and transport hub at Marghera on edge of the lagoon would almost certainly be permanent in its effect on the city. Such a port would be very welcome for the mainland economy because the petrochemical works there are obsolescent, and government is looking for an alternative source of employment to be able to cease subsidising them.

But to make such a port economic requires dredging the channel from the Malamocco inlet to Marghera even deeper to let in the big bulk carriers, and it is precisely that...
channel, dug in the 1960s, that has contributed, with other environmental factors, to the degradation of the lagoon and the chronically raised water levels in the city. There is a great deal of scientific research on this matter, so it cannot just be brushed aside. But the Autorità Portuale, in its submission to the Italian Senate in May 2009 about the project, ignores this evidence and even makes a highly misleading statement: “The situation regarding the lagoon is completely changed and the problem of its hydraulic equilibrium is solved because it will be possible to manage it through judicious use of the MOSE system.” And with that statement, which confuses the role of MOSE in defending Venice from flooding events with the question of the degradation of the lagoon, the Autorità Portuale brushes aside the environmental risk to Venice of the port development project.

Who can speak up for Venice here? The mayor of Venice cannot be any more than a lobbyist with central government as he or she has no legal control over what happens with the port because it is an autonomous public body of the state. There is the Comitatone (big committee) for major policy decisions regarding Venice, made up of government ministers and representatives of local government, and presided over by the prime minister. But in Silvio Berlusconi’s government, with its enthusiasm for big infrastructure projects, disregard for the environment and its political indebtedness to north east Italy, the Comitatone is unlikely to favour caution. And neither is the project likely to be opposed by the electorate of Venice, as only 30 percent of it inhabits the historic city and lagoon islands, while 70 percent is on the mainland and is more likely to benefit in the short term from the port development.

Of course, the whole economy of the Veneto, indeed of Italy, benefits from Venice, one of the greatest tourist attractions in the world, but this seems to be so taken for granted that it is not explicitly part of the political discussion. It is therefore indispensable and urgent that a realistic study (also taking account of the black economy) gets carried out, showing how much money is generated, who spends it and who benefits.

Especially now that a greater degree of free enterprise is being allowed in and around Venice, two basic economic tools also need to be applied by the authorities and investors: risk assessment (particularly where the plans for the port are concerned), and cost-benefit analysis. For example, is it worth investing billions in a port and transport hub if, as a consequence, you have to spend billions long-term protecting the buildings of Venice from the water? Is it worth bringing in more and more day-trippers if they crowd out the tourists who stay at least one night in Venice and spend more money?

It is exciting to see that the latest, excellent study by the research group COSES has for the first time, and at the request of the Comune, worked out what the maximum number of tourists in Venice might be (86,000 a day—but not recommended). It is fascinating reading for anyone who has experienced alley-rage in one of the main routes through Venice; the Tourism Chapter of the Venice Report describes the COSES methodology and gives a summary of its findings. This is the first sign that the Comune is thinking of how to manage the numbers of visitors, rather than continuing with the laissez-faire policy it has defended hitherto. The question is whether they will be able make the investors in the business interests around Venice into allies, so that a policy bringing dividends in the long rather than the short term will prevail. No one should forget: the prize is the most beautiful city on earth, one of the most marvellous creations of man. That is beyond price.

A grant from the Leading Travel Companies Conservation Foundation paid for the publication of the Venice Report. Venice in Peril is very grateful to the Trustees of the Foundation for selecting the Venice Report as a beneficiary.

The Leading Travel Companies Conservation Foundation has made an additional grant that has enabled Venice in Peril to adopt the restoration of the Canova Monument in Santa Maria dei Frari.

To order a copy of the Venice Report see www.amazon.com or contact the office on +44 (0)20 7736 6891
Price: £12.75 + p&p
Health & Safety Rules May Rescue Venice from Overcrowding

Venice cannot carry on getting more and more crowded, but how do we estimate when the maximum is reached?

So far as transport into Venice is concerned, the 2009 COSES report [COSES is a research body financed by the Comune and Province] has modelled its data to produce three scenarios: comfortable, crowded and horribly crowded. Thus, for example, passengers can arrive at Sta Lucia railway station in the following numbers a day: 28,000 (comfortably seated); 42,000 (seated and standing); 63,000 (Mumbai rush hour). The vaporetti down the Grand Canal are comfortable at the rate of 13,000 passengers a day, crowded at 17,000 a day and very disagreeable at 24,000 a day (the number reached if the currently most crowded time, 7-9am, is projected over the whole day). It is reasonable to assume that future policies will aim to avoid at least the third option.

As to how many people can fit into the city, the report has used straightforward arithmetic to arrive at its conclusions. First, it has charted the main pedestrian routes connecting the arrival points in the city (Tronchetto, Marittima, Piazzale Roma, Sta Lucia railway station, San Zaccaria-Cornoldi, the Zattere and the Fondamenta Nuove) with the main destinations (the universities, government offices, tourist hot spots, shops). The pulling power of these routes is demonstrated also by the very high concentration of shops along their way. The four principal routes are:

- Piazzale Roma to Sta Lucia railway station to the Strada Nuova to the Rialto
- Piazzale Roma to the Frari to Campo San Polo to the Rialto
- Piazzale Roma to Campo Sta Margherita to the Calle della Toletta to the Accademia
- San Zaccaria via the Riva degli Schiavoni and the Ponte della Paglia
- And from all these to St Mark’s Square.

A walking person needs 0.6 m², therefore 1.7 people fit into 1 m². These routes consist of around 135,000 m² of walking surface, so if you multiply 1.7 m² by 135,000 you get a theoretical maximum of 230,000 people—theoretical because people do not march along tidily like guardsmen but dawdle, double back on themselves, sit down on bridges and generally use up more space.

Then the COSES researchers consulted the Polizia Municipale of Venice to find out where the bottlenecks were and divided them by the modular measurement of a safety exit (0.6m) to find out how many people could get through them, applying the criteria for outflow from an indoor ground-floor space (a minimum of 50 people) and outdoor space (a maximum of 250).

Assuming therefore a walking speed of 2.5 km/h, and outflow capacity of 60 people per module of 0.60 and a time span covering the six peak hour of the day, the maximum number these routes can carry is 140,000-150,000, including people transported down the Grand Canal on vaporetti.

The main objective: St Mark’s Square

There is hardly a tourist who does not want to see St Mark’s Square, which with the Piazzetta, the Piazzetta dei Leoni and the Molo di San Marco extends over 25,000 m², from which you have to deduct 2000m² covered by cafés such as Florian and Quadri, leaving 23,000 m². On the 1.7 people per m² basis, this would allow for 39,000 in the square at any given moment, but if you think of it as night club and apply the Health & Safety test to its nine exits, the possible number is reduced to 19,000, with each person occupying 1.2 m², and for any length of time, even this is a pretty unattractive prospect. The average stay in the square is 50 minutes; thus, multiplied by the six peak hours and with a turnover index of seven, you get a maximum of 134,000 a day.

Further peak numbers for the area are the Basilica, which can take 14,000 a day on the basis of 350 people in the church for the current average visit of 10-15 minutes, and the Doge’s Palace, with its maximum of 8000 a day (1.4 million p.a.). These two are the only museums/ monument in the city to have possible problems of overcrowding, the other museums, with the exception of the Accademia, being sparsely attended, probably because most visitors consider the city itself enough of a cultural experience. The maximum of 134,000 a day in St Mark’s Square is close to the 140,000-150,000 that the main routes can carry, but the public is not the same for both: while nearly all the tourists in the square will have come down one of these routes, not everybody using them is a tourist because they are also the daily thoroughfares of Venice residents, commuters and students on their way to other objectives.

Peaks and troughs

Overall, January has the smallest number of tourists and July the highest, but the tourists who sleep in the city are the least seasonal. For them the peak months are July, August, September and October, but even in July, the numbers in hotel and non-hotel accommodation represent only 10 percent of the annual total sleeping in Venice, while in January, they represent five percent. In other words, these are tourists who come for the city itself and less for the weather or special festivities such as Carnival.

The COSES report admits that it needs better data about the day-trippers (47,000-67,000 day), but judging by bus passes and train usage, their season takes off in February with the Carnival, peaks in late April-May with Easter and the 1 May holiday, rises slightly in June, reaches its highest in July, falls sharply in August (which shows that day-trippers prefer not to come to Venice during their summer holidays), flattens out in September and then declines sharply for the rest of the year.

The conclusion is, if you want to avoid crowds it is particularly important not to book when there are feast days, festivals and special events: New Year and Epiphany, Carnival, the opening of the Salone Nautico (March/April), Easter, the national holiday for the Liberation (25 April), 1 May, the Vogalonga and Sensa (May), the opening of the Biennale of visual arts and architecture (especially the former, in alternate years), the Redentore (18 July), the Regata Storica and Film Festival (September), the Immaculate Conception (8 December), and Christmas.

The cruise ships are very seasonal, starting in April, peaking in July, August and September, with a sharp decline from October to zero activity in December, January and early February...

Conclusion

How many people can Venice hold, comfortably, crowdedly, unpleasantly? If the capacity of transport into Venice is considered together with the capacity of the vaporetti down the Grand Canal and the
The main routes with their bottlenecks

numbers that can get safely through the bottle-necks on the main routes and fit into St Mark’s Square, we have the fundamental elements for making an estimate, when combined with seasonality. ...If the number of over-nighting tourists and day-trippers from within the Comune is added to the residing population (all categories) and the commuters on the “population present” basis, the Report concludes that Venice is:

• Comfortably full with 26,000 tourists, the minimum to keep its tourist economy running (an earlier source estimates this minimum to be 33,000)
• Crowded with 36,000
• Saturated with 52,000

But, to these numbers you have to add the average of 34,000 day-trippers from beyond the Comune, so the totals become respectively:

• 60,000 tourists a day
• 70,000 tourists a day
• 86,000 tourists a day

What is not clear is whether the COSES report thinks that, with its current annual average of 59,000 tourists a day, Venice is already more than saturated, or just beginning to be comfortably full. At least, however, an absolute maximum of 86,000 emerges at the end, the first time a clear definition of the limit has been given.

The unstated implication is that the day-trippers from beyond the Comune are the category of tourist that most needs management, with the Venice Connected booking system and price incentives as a first step in that direction. The report concludes by hinting at stronger measures, regretting that only the parking silos and scheduled bus services are under the Comune’s authority if it came to limiting inflow, and that an agreement with Trentitalia, the rail system, and Venezia Terminal Passeggeri, the managers of the port, would be desirable. ■

This is an excerpt from the Tourism chapter, by Anna Somers Cocks and Thierry Morel, in the Venice Report.

Main findings of the Venice Report

• A new, important study of tourism in Venice has come up with the first assessment of how many tourists the city can hold comfortably and safely; a minimum annual average of 31,000 a day if the tourist industry is to keep going, with 86,000 as the disagreeable saturation point (over 2007, an average of 59,000 visitors a day came to Venice). An online incentive/disincentive advance booking scheme, Venice Connected, is as far as the Comune is prepared to go at present in managing the flow.

• Government funds for running and maintaining the historic city have diminished sharply. Since 2002, much of the special government funding that Venice used to receive has been diverted towards the building of MOSF, the mobile flood barriers that are expected to cost Euro 4.271 billion. While the Comune received Euro 592 million extra in 2002, in 2007, it was only Euro 133 million. This means that vital maintenance such as the dredging and repair of canals may slow down. Central government funding for the maintenance of listed buildings has also been cut, this year by 25.8% on 2008, which is the reason the authorities give for having allowed huge adverts to appear on buildings such as the Doge’s Palace.

• Over the last 5 to 10 years, the private sector has begun to play a far bigger role in the future of the city. Planning laws have been liberalised to allow private homes to be turned into B&Bs and rooms to rent. On the one hand, this has ensured the maintenance of these buildings, on the other it has reduced the number of habitations available to residents by about 420 units and has contributed to the doubling of property prices since 2000, further encouraging residents to leave. The airport and passenger port of Venice, both run by private companies, are planning major expansions on the basis of growth in tourist traffic. The number of cruise ships sailing through Venice was 200 in 2000 but 510 in 2007, and the number of berths in the city for the big ships is being increased.

• There are plans for a huge expansion of the commercial port of Venice at Marghera on the mainland, partly to replace the economy of the obsolescent chemical factories there. The size of the investment would consolidate the need to keep the Malamocco to Marghera lagoon channel dredged to a depth of at least 12 m — indeed the president of the Venice Port Authority Paolo Costa has said that it will be taken down to 16 m—but there is good scientific evidence that this deep channel, which dates from the 1960s, is one of the causes of the degradation of the lagoon, which is damaging to the historic city. ■
Venice News

Frances Clarke

The Association of Private Committees for the Protection of Venice, to which Venice in Peril (VIP) belongs, held its AGM on 22 and 23 October in the UNESCO-BRESCE offices at Palazzo Zorzi. BRESCE is the Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, a modification of the previous designation adopted in 2006 in order to reflect more accurately its commitment to Science and Culture in South-East and Central Europe and the Mediterranean basin.

The director of the Unesco-Bresce office, Dr Engelbert Ruoss, told the meeting about UNESCO’s “Future for Venice” project, launched in July 2009, which aims to harmonise data about the lagoon. He wants to bring issues regarding Venice back into the remit of the Venice UNESCO office after years of focusing largely on South-East and Central Europe, apart from its administration of the private committees’ activities in Venice. He said that all World Heritage sites, including Venice, have been asked to prepare a management plan, to be ready by 2012. The Comune has allocated the small sum of Euro 60,000 to doing this. Dr Ruoss would like to involve the Private Committees and make all their restoration projects available online. At the suggestion of Venice in Peril, Professor Luigi D’Alpaos of the University of Padua was invited to make a presentation about the consequences for the lagoon of the port channels dredged since the 19th century. The president of the Magistrato alla Acqua (the local department of the ministry of public works) Ing. Cuccioletta gave a short reply, in which he said, “Man continually fights the lagoon for the sake of socio-economic progress”, but he did not stay for questions.

Relief of Crucified Christ

On the afternoon of 23 October, VIP presented its most recently completed conservation project, at the Church of the Gesuati on the Zattere, where a relief of the Crucified Christ supported by Two Angels, dated around 1480, faces onto Campo S. Agnese. VIP has funded the cleaning and consolidating of the relief in commemoration of one of its founders, Carla Malagola Lady Thornycroft D.B.E., who on her frequent sojourns in Venice worshipped at the Gesuati. The history of the relief and the process of its conservation were then explained by Dottorezza Amalia Basso, art historian on the staff of the Soprintendenza.

The ICCROM Stone Conservation Course finished successfully in July, with three participants, from Sudan, Mexico and Cambodia, among the 14 other nationalities, having benefited from VIP bursaries. They have returned to responsible positions in their home countries, well satisfied with the comprehensive course programme, which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, the Getty Conservation Institute, Venice University of Architecture and UNESCO.

The Capella Emilianis

One of the major projects undertaken by VIP with most generous funding from PizzaExpress was the Capella Emilianis on the cemetery island of S. Michele completed in 2006. Since then the Comune (who own the island), raised funds for a major restoration of the church of S. Michele to which the Cappella is attached. Closed in consequence for nearly two years, it re-opened on 2 November when the Mayor, Massimo Cacciari, formally handed back the church to the Cardinal Patriarch. The Franciscan Friars have given up their historic custody of the church and convent and have been replaced by Don Ettore Fornezza.

The Reparto Evangelico (Protestant section of the Cemetery) is maintained by the Comune so far as grass-cutting and tree pruning is concerned but many of the old graves are badly in need of restoration.

Punta della Dogana

A speedy and successful restoration of the former Customs House, the Punta della Dogana, leased by the Comune to the French businessman Francois Pinault for 30 years, was completed in time for the opening of the Biennale of Contemporary Art at the beginning of June. The restoration, supervised by the Superintendent for Architecture, is by the Japanese architect Tadao Andau and houses part of M. Pinault’s collection, another section being exhibited in Palazzo Grassi, now owned by M. Pinault, who was made an Honorary Citizen of Venice for his munificence.

The Accademia

On 10 October an exhibition of the recently restored Leonardo da Vinci foglio of the Vitruvian Man was opened at the Galleries of the Accademia by the recently appointed Superintendent for the Historic and Artistic Patrimony, Dottorezza Caterina Bon Valassina. Deposed with the Accademia in 1822, the work is very rarely exhibited. The fragile drawing will be shown in a small collection, “Leonardo: Vitruvian Man between Art and Science”, until 10 January 2010. The occasion was also an opportunity for the Superintendent for Architecture, Renata Codella, to give an update on the progress of work on the extension to the Gallerie, due to be completed during 2010.

Una Vita nella Musica

At the Fenice Theatre, this year’s “Una Vita nella Musica” prize, found in 30 years ago in honour of Arthur Rubinstein, was awarded to Daniel Barenboim on 12 December, when he gave a Chopin recital. The founder of the Prize, Bruno Tosi, arranged a showing on 11 October of a documentary film “Rubinstein in Venice” made in 1978 when the pianist, then just over 80, stayed in the city and was filmed with Ashley Clarke and Peggy Guggenheim.

The English Anglican Church of St George at S. Vio, which has benefited from a donation from VIP for its restoration campaign, is saying farewell to its tireless chaplain, the Reverend John-Henry Bowden, who with his wife, Marilyn, has ministered not only to St George’s for the past five years but also to the Nigerian Community established in Padua and the small British congregation in Trieste. We wish them a happy and comfortable return to Sussex. Until the arrival of the next appointee, St George’s is being administered by the Rev. Emanuel Saninger, currently studying at the Institute for Ecumenical Studies.

Warwick University

Finally, Warwick University’s History and History of Art courses resumed in mid-September at Palazzo Pesaro Papafava, where they kindly welcome the Circolo Italo-Britannico’s weekly Monday evening lectures which started on 12 October. At the annual seminar talking place from 8-10 December the work of Professor Michael Mallett, who was also a Trustee of Venice in Peril, will be commemorated.
The Armstrong Mitchell Crane
During 2009 the Armstrong Mitchell Crane in the Arsenale has been examined, measured and documented in detail by the Superintendency for Architecture in collaboration with engineers from Padua University. We have also arranged on-site visits by Geoff Wallis of Dorothea Restorations, specialists in industrial and engineering heritage and Dr EF Clark who, together with Sir Neil Cossons, are looking at methods of reducing the cost of the planned conservation work currently budgeted at Euros 2.5 million by the Superintendency. Early in 2010, Sir Neil and Geoff Wallis will arrange a visit to England by Arch. Claudio Menichelli from the Superintendency for Architecture and others in order to show them some industrial heritage restoration that has taken place in Great Britain and share some of their professional experience.

2010 marks the bicentenary of the birth of William Armstrong. He was born in November 1810 and died in 1900, a few weeks before Queen Victoria, having become the first engineer – indeed, the first scientist – to be raised to the peerage. In the late 1860s, he had entered into partnership with Charles Mitchell to build warships, and the firm went on to supply ships, guns and hydraulic equipment to all the world’s leading navies. A branch of Armstrong’s firm was set up at Pozzuoli near Naples. Armstrong, whose company built the crane in the Arsenale was, in fact, the inventor of the hydraulic crane.

Canova’s Monument
In Sta Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, the marble statues on the famous pyramid-shaped monument to the sculptor Antonio Canova are losing their surface, scaling due to some as yet unidentified atmospheric pollution. With a generous donation from The Leading Travel Companies Conservation Foundation, the Superintendency has been able to begin a series of tests (microclimate, thermographic, humidity, photogrammetric, saline). The tests will take some months before reliable results can be obtained.

Historic Graffiti
Funding for the recovery and preservation of the historic ‘graffiti’on the walls of the Tezon Grande on the Lazzaretto Nuovo Island is continuing.

The port expansion plan should be tested against science and the environment law says Venice in Peril

At the AGMs of the Association of Private Committees for the Protection of Venice in Venice every October it has been customary for the joint meetings to approve “recommendations”, statements drawing attention to any issues seen to threaten the wellbeing of the city. These recommendations are given to the press. This year, at the suggestion of Venice in Peril and with a strong majority in support, the following recommendation was made:

“The Association of Private Committees for the Protection of Venice asks that the project of the Venice Port Authority to expand and develop the port of Marghera be submitted urgently to expert scientific examination to ascertain whether it is compatible with Art. 3 of Legislative Decree 152/2006 (as amended by Legislative Decree 4/2008), known as the environment law, which states that “every human activity juridically relevant under the present code must conform to the principle of sustainable development in order to ensure that the satisfaction of the needs of the present generation does not compromise the quality of life and opportunities of future generations.”

The law goes on to state: “The activity of the public administration must also be conducted in such a way that the principle of sustainable development can be implemented in the best possible manner. For this reason, in comparative choices involving public and private interests over which there is a degree of discretion, priority must be given to the interests of protecting the environment and the cultural heritage.”

Auguste Bouvard (French, 1882–1956)
The Doges Palace, Venice, oil, on canvas, 13 x 18 in.

Each January for 19 years the WH Patterson Gallery has held its very popular “Venice in Peril Exhibition” of contemporary and 19th-century paintings and watercolours.

Venice in Peril receives 10% of the proceeds and, over the years, this has amounted to a considerable sum; the Fund is extremely grateful for this on-going support.

The exhibition runs from 13 January to 5 February 2010 at 19 Albemarle Street, London W1.

(Further information on page 14)

Lectures 2009
Venice in Peril would like to thank Louisa Buck, Beverly Brown, Noah Charney and Detective Sergeant Vernon Rapley for delivering the 2009 Venice in Peril Lectures.
Developments to Watch Closely

By Anna Somers Cocks

Preliminary permission granted to the “sublagunare”
The plan to build a “sublagunare”, a partially underground underwate train linking Venice airport with Murano and the Arsenale, took a step forward with its approval, 11 votes to seven, by the Commissione di salvaguardia on 13 October 2009. The decision also covered the possible extension of the line to the Lido, Cavallino and Chioggia. The proposal was strongly supported by the mayor of Venice, Massimo Caccia, and representatives of the Regione and Magistrato all Aque. It was opposed by the Superintendencies for architecture and archaeology. Investigation of the possible impact of the project on the hydrogeology of the lagoon, its aesthetic implications (for safety’s sake it requires a large number of mushroom-like refuges above water along the whole line) and its effect on tourist numbers and circulation have been referred to the executive. The “sublagunare” is expected to cost Euro 600 million, to be financed 85 percent by the state and 48 percent by private investment. It would be capable of moving 1200 people an hour and the journey time from Venice to the airport would be 14 minutes.

Arsenale to host commercial fairs
With the 2010 edition the Venice boat show, the Salone Nautico, is moving permanently to the Arsenale from its past location at the Stazione Marittima. Due to the economic downturn, it will last four days instead of nine, from 15 to 18 April, and will focus on high quality second-hand boats and the charter segment of the market. The 2009 show had 150 boats in the water and 50,000 visitors. Lorenzo Policardo, consultant to Expo Venice Spa for the boat show, said, “We are aiming at a better quality visitor and creating an event that has synergies with tourism”. The Arsenale has largely been empty of boats since it ceased to be a major naval base in 1957. Past suggestions that it be turned into a commercial marina have been turned down by the authorities.

Also in the Arsenale and at the same time as the boat show, Expo Venice will be holding a new fair, TRE - Tourism Real Estate, for international operators in high quality tourism, local governments and the entire tourism supply chain. The organisers say it will not be a traditional trade fair but four days of discussion and meetings in “one of the few sectors untouched by the crisis”.

From 15 to 17 May, the Arsenale will house Mare Maggio + Pianeta Acqua, another Expo Venice event, focusing on 16th-century trade routes and all aspects of water; the website promises “sailing, culture, tourism, craftsmanship, the environment and gastronomy”.

The Comune’s Assessore alla Pianificazione rejects limiting tourist numbers
Laura Fincato, the Comune’s official responsible for strategic development, said at a meeting organised by Venezia-Progetta in Venice on 9 October that “limiting the number of tourists is a pleasant day-dream but impractical”. At the same meeting, the hoteliers present were unanimous in asking for the number of beds in Venice not to be allowed to increase any further.

Venice to send a major delegation to Expo 2010 in Shanghai
The Venice delegation at Expo 2010 in Shanghai opening in May represents the Comune of Venice and the Regione and Provincia of Venice, as well as the Chamber of Commerce and other bodies. According to the Gazzettino newspaper of 9 November, it will be promoting the development opportunities of the city and its hinterland, including the Arsenale, the island of San Servolo, the Giudecca, Mestre, and Marghera with its high technology zone and its port. Venice has been chosen to conduct the forum on tourism at Expo 2010. Laura Fincato, who has been working for a direct flight to be set up between Shanghai and Venice, is quoted as saying: “Venice is not only unique in the world but it is also a doorway to new and important relations with the Far East and the Chinese colossus”.

Venice a candidate for the 2020 Olympics
The Comunes of Venice, Padua and Treviso, the Regione and Confindustria (association of industries) of the Veneto have united to propose Venice as a candidate for the 2020 Olympic games in rivalry with Rome. Other candidates are Istanbul and Tokyo. In the unlikely event that Venice won, the vast majority of the events would obviously take place on the mainland, although it would almost certainly boost tourist numbers.

Venice theatre for hire
The Emir of Qatar booked the Fenice theatre for a gala evening in mid October. The Venezia Nuova newspaper of 4 September 2009 reported that Emir Hamad ben Khalifa Al Thani and his wife Sheikha Musa would be celebrating the start of production at the regasification plant in the Adriatic off Porto Levante near Rovigo. This processes the liquefied gas extracted in Qatar and shipped to Italy. Qatar Petroleum, Exxonmobil Italiana Gas and Edison are partners in the enterprise. According to the newspaper, Fest, the commercial fundraising arm of the Fenice opera house, charged Euro100,000-150,000 for the evening, a welcome subsidy to its finances, which are expected to end 2009 deeply in the red. This spring, Francois-Henri Pinault, son of the French magnate who has taken the Palazzo Grassi and the Punta della Dogana on long leases to show his contemporary art collection, hired the Fenice to renew his marriage vows with the actress Salma Hayek.

Diary Dates 2010

Tuesday 9 February – Premio Venezia

Wednesday 10 March – Who Wants To Be A Gondolier? Quiz night


Wednesday 22 September – Autumn Lecture: Sir Timothy Clifford, Titian and Sculpture

Sunday 24 October – Venice Marathon

We would like to thank Bisol for their support throughout 2009 and much look forward to working with them during 2010.
The Venice in Peril Team all managed to complete the Venice Marathon virtually intact (less a few pounds and a few toenails) and raised nearly £16,000 in sponsorship.

The start of the course was in the manicured grounds of the Villa Pisani at Stra, Napoleon’s vast, imposing palace, a few miles east of Padua. It was a fresh start but overwhelmingly beautiful, following the course of the Brenta with its rich smattering of Palladian villas dotted along both banks of the river. Running at a steady pace was a lovely way of seeing these charming villas that are largely unvisited despite being the mainland retreats of most of the great families from Venice’s Golden Book including Mocenigo, Foscari and Venier.

The atmosphere was superb, with cheering crowds of all nationalities lining the route. There were local brass bands playing traditional marches and rock bands giving their all to almost recognisable hits, positioned at intervals along the roadside. One drummer clearly had not managed to wake the rest of his band so early on a Sunday morning, but was dutifully playing the monotonous background beat, ever hopeful that the rest might turn up and provide the melody.

Arriving in Venice proper, turning the corner onto the Zattere, was an incredible sensation with the Lagoon twinkling in the, by now, bright sunshine, the Giudecca looking resplendent and the S. Giorgio Maggiore majestic. The water was enticing in the 23 degree heat and, perhaps realising this, a large number of the Pronto Soccorso (First Aiders) were closely spaced around the water’s edge of the Punta della Dogana. The final stretch was exquisitely beautiful, crossing the temporary floating bridge connecting the Zattere to the Piazza di San Marco, along the Riva delle Sette Martiri, past the Bridge of Sighs, and on to the finish. It was an extraordinary feeling of achievement and a great introduction to the world of marathons.

For the runners and their families and supporters, it was a fabulous weekend packed with partying in private palazzi on the Grand Canal, courtesy of David Landau and Victoria Press, and seeing the sights with Sir Timothy Clifford, formerly the director of the National Galleries of Scotland.

THE CALL UP 2010

Come and run for Team Venice in Peril at the 25th Venice Marathon on Sunday 24th October 2010

Entry fees and glamorous, action-packed weekend laid on to include:

- ‘Alternative Venice’, a private tour by style guru Stephen Bayley, and pre- and post-Marathon parties
- All you have to do is raise a minimum of £1000 sponsorship
- Contact Pandora in the office on +44 (0)20 7736 6891 or by email: pandora.clifford@veniceinperil.org

** spread the word from an early age **

Ilaria Risso-Gill, age four, having a discussion with her Uncle Fairfax about her parents’ whereabouts while her mother Tamara ran the marathon.

Ilaria: Where are Mama and Papa?
Fairfax: Mama and Papa are in Italy.
Ilaria: No, they are not. They are in Venice.
Fairfax: Venice is in Italy.
Ilaria: No, it’s not. Venice is in Peril!
The Sensualist’s Venetian Dozen
A highly subjective food & art guide to Venice

By Noah Charney

1. The Duck at the Trattoria della Maddalena
I love restaurants where you go to eat one thing. They may have a large menu, but ask the advice of the waiter, and they’ll lead you to the promised land. On the little visited island of Mazzorbo is a restaurant that does make a wonderful crab gnocchetti. But as the kind and lovely owner will tell you, if you took a trip here, you came for the duck. Choose fresh duck with roast polenta or duck fettucini (or both, if I often do), and revel in this restaurant that knows what it does well, and perhaps better than anywhere else in the world.

2. The Secret Itinerary Tour of the Doge’s Palace
Venice is over-run by tourists, true. But there’s a reason for this—its beauty and its destinations continue to inspire and amaze. One of the best made-for-tourist activities is the intriguingly-named Secret Itinerary Tour of the Doge’s Palace. You see all the most interesting rooms and hear the stories, including the tale of Casanova’s incredible escape from the prison. Then when you head home, try balancing a giant plate of sandw ichting the madness of Carnevale. But I feel that this is entirely the point. There is a second city in Venice, a second set of streets just beside the ones the tourists walk. If you cross the Rialto and follow the “To Piazza San Marco” signs, you’ll be one of the throng. But just at an underpass, take a sharp left down a quiet uninhabited street that looks like a dead end. Out of site around the corner, you’ll find a green sign for the nam e of this mystery restaurant. This is where Venetians eat. To be more specific, this is where gondoliers eat. The place is usually full of them, always a good sign. Order fish off the chalk board menu, and on your way out, take a look at a mortadella the size of a child’s fist, or even warm apple—the perfect accompaniment to a cappuccino. One of my favorite activities in the world is a cappuccino and fritelle “craw l” through Venice’s oldest, most atmospheric cafes. February can be a brutal month, but not where fritelle may be found.

5. That Restaurant to the left after you cross the Rialto
Of course I’m sitting in New Haven while my Venice journals are off in Europe, and I can’t remember the name of the restaurant I most frequent for lunch. But I feel that this is entirely the point. There is a second city in Venice, a second set of streets just beside the ones the tourists walk. If you cross the Rialto and follow the “To Piazza San Marco” signs, you’ll be one of the throng. But just at an underpass, take a sharp left down a quiet uninhabited street that looks like a dead end. Out of site around the corner, you’ll find a green sign for the nam e of this mystery restaurant. This is where Venetians eat. To be more specific, this is where gondoliers eat. The place is usually full of them, always a good sign. Order fish off the chalk board menu, and on your way out, take a look at a mortadella the size of Nelson’s Column. Whatever the name of the place is, you’ll want to come back.

6. Café M. Bonifacio
Home of the cappuccino to request at breakfast before your execution. This tiny café, hidden on calle degli Alhames and with no sign marking it (it was taken down to keep the number of customers under control), has the best cappuccino in Italy. Of course, everyone has their own opinion of the best cappuccino in Italy (in Rome alone I have four “bests” on my list), but it’s safe to say that this one is pretty darn good. The café is only large enough for about four people to stand—no chairs on offer. That means you’ll drink your coffee the Italian way, or find another café. The family that owns it is Piedmontese, and prepares regional pastries (and a fantastic apple fritelle in February, if they haven’t run out).

7. The God-bearing Madonna on Torcello
There are certain works of art that stop me in my tracks, and I can’t quite explain why. One of them is the monumental mosaic in the ancient church on the deserted island of Torcello, once Venice’s most populous island and home to its first settlement, now a destination for the wise visitor. If I lock eyes with the mosaic Madonna on the curved dome above the altar, I can’t tear myself away. But when I manage to, you can’t do better on a warm day than to eat in the garden of the Locanda Cipriani next door.

8. All the Churches on a Chorus Pass
Venice is a better place to live in than to visit. This may sound funny for what is perhaps the number one tourist destination in the world, but you need time to see what makes Venice so wonderful. It’s not the Piazza, but the secrets, shadows, and sidestreets. Anyone can find their own hidden gems, their beloved stum blings to which you will direct friends on future trips. Just about my favorite thing to do is to look at art in churches, and church-hopping happens to be an excellent excuse to wander, get lost, and find your own treasures. The best way to do this is to buy a Venice Chorus Pass, permitting entry into the most important churches. The map that accompanies the Pass provides your itinerary for you. Given two weeks or more, you’ll be in for a treat.

9. Wandermg Masked at Night during Carnevale
Carnevale is its own planet. As many will tell you, you’ll have to work hard to dodge drunken French tourists in elaborate costumes, and the best of Carnevale is at the private parties in the Palazzi, by invitation only. In fact, many Venetians flee the city during this time, renting out their apartments for a year’s wages and avoiding...
Happy 80th Birthday, John Julius Norwich!

John Julius was the chairman of Venice in Peril from its outset in 1971 until 1999, and since then has been honorary chairman. We would like to draw attention to John Julius’s formative years through the words of an interview he gave to Jonathan Sale, 3 September 2009, 12 days prior to his birthday.

“...I learnt to read in my mother’s bed when I was four. She taught me from Reading Without Tears (a Victorian nursery book); it came out in 1861 and I include extracts from it in my Christmas Cracker series.

My first school was a kindergarten called Miss Betty’s in Regent’s Park run by the wife of a concert violinist. On my seventh birthday — I spent my life going back to school on my birthday, 15 September — I went to Egerton House, a little school in Dorset Square, near Marylebone Station. Every morning we went off to Regent’s Park, whistling ‘British Grenadiers’ and ‘Men of Harlech’. I was on the bright side, but not dazzling in the top four or five.

War broke out after three years and we were evacuated. Egerton House joined Westbury Manor, a rather seedy boarding school in Northamptonshire. It was on its last legs but the food was better: treacle suet pudding on Tuesdays.

I was there under a year. In June 1940, when France was falling and Dunkirk was being evacuated, my mother came down and said that I was being evacuated to America. My father was a cabinet minister and on Hitler’s “blacklist”, and my mother was terrified that the Germans would invade and I would be held as a hostage for my father. I found it absolutely thrilling: America — cowboys and Indians!

I went with my nanny. I spent my holidays in Long Island but went to school in Canada. I was in the prep school of Upper Canada College in Toronto for 20 months. In April 1942 the senior housemaster called for me and said, “Pack up: you’re going home”. He put me on the train for New York, and then I went to Norfolk, Virginia, where a cruiser gave me a lift home.

I took the Common Entrance to Eton and went to Mr. Herbert’s House. There was rationing; a 1 lb pot of jam had to last you a month. It was bitterly cold and you had a fire every other night. The teaching was, on the whole, pretty good, but there was too much emphasis on the Classics and sport. I never played the Eton Wall Game but we played the Field Game, a horrible sort of football.

Languages were a pleasure — a hobby as much as anything — and after School Certificate [O-levels], I specialised in French and Russian. In 1944, my father was sent to Paris as the ambassador and I went with him as the first Etonian to go abroad since the start of the war.

After my National Service in the navy I went to New College, Oxford, to read Modern Languages. The teaching was all right but I wish I’d done something less demanding academically and spent more time doing extracurricular things like OUDS [the drama society]. I spent too long reading Dostoevsky novels and write the following essay...’I’m a slow reader. I got an undistinguished Second. I’ve barely read a Russian novel since.”}

The Great Cities in History, edited by John Julius Norwich, was published by Thames & Hudson in October 2009.

Noah Charney is the founding director of ARCA, a non-profit think tank and research group on art crime and cultural property protection (www.artcrime.info). He is the author of The Art Thief (Simon & Schuster) and the forthcoming Art & Crime: Exploring the Dark Side of the Art World (Praeger). He is currently a Visiting Lecturer at Yale.

11. Gianduiotto at Gelateria Nico
The unprepossessing gelateria with a dynamite location, Nico serves up a particular treat that makes it my first destination on a hot day (and occasionally in mid-winter). Gianduiotto is a block of house-made iced hazelnut chocolate, mixed with sweet cream. Grab one, then walk the length of the Dorsoduro, and ask yourself why you continue live in New Jersey or Hull.

12. Scuola Grande di San Rocco
The most incredible complete work of art I have ever experienced, Tintoretto’s vast masterpiece simply must be visited. No video, photograph, or description can do it justice. One’s life is not complete without standing in the middle of the first floor of the confraternity meeting hall, the ceiling and walls painted by Tintoretto, who beat Titian for the commission by cheating. The Crucifixion in the side chamber is one of the most powerful paintings ever created.
Questions Arising after the Palladio Quincentenary

By Richard Haslam

Andrea Palladio’s quincentenary year has now run its course, this most influential of architects and writers having been born on 30th November 1508. So it is timely to report on the tributes to someone who, more than any other, made the Veneto and Great Britain look (as far as country-house-building goes) a bit like twinned states for a couple of centuries after his death.

While this may seem to have been a muted celebration in both lands (and especially in Venice where there was merely one room with books at the Correr Museum), two significant things have happened in honour of Palladio. A fine exhibition was put on, first in Vicenza, then in London, which was seen by 95,300 and 82,500 people respectively. Equally to the point, a definitive catalogue of over 400 pages was prepared in either language; selling 7,500 in Italy and 6,500 in Britain. And the 22 Villas by the master, surviving whole or in part, have just had their legal status confirmed. In Vicenza there was even a lively discussion among well known architects on Palladio as a local brand name.

The exhibition (subsequently sent to CaixaForum in Madrid – but not offered space in the United States) focussed on the architect’s drawings (largely held in English institutions, including new identifications), with the aim of revealing the workings of his mind, and was accompanied by models of his buildings both from the well remembered 1974 show, and newly made to reflect new understandings. In Vicenza, squeezed into the Palladio palazzo occupied by the Palazzo dell’Accademia, then in London, which was seen by 95,300 and 82,500 people respectively. Equally to the point, a definitive catalogue of over 400 pages was prepared in either language, selling 7,500 in Italy and 6,500 in Britain. And the 22 Villas by the master, surviving whole or in part, have just had their legal protection – a vital step in view of the recent over-development of the historic countryside from which they spring.

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For architects and students, this was a rare privilege; it is too early to say what clients or potential clients of new buildings may have yielded material for debate as well (surprisingly) as new information on Palladio’s works; and for the wider public, much stimulation. In Vicenza there was even a lively discussion among well known designers on Palladio as a local brand name.

At the highest level, Zaha Hadid evolved two abstract transcriptions of the proportional sequences of rooms at Villa Foscari, which were installed in that house for the summer. And the catalogue, as well as marking 50 years of study and teaching at the CISA centre in Vicenza, confirmed it once more as a publisher of significant books.

Away from this specialist ferment, things were quieter. In fact, Palladium Musicum, the American Marie West’s two-year cycle of concerts for young musicians and composers at some smaller Palladio sites, both in Rome and in the Vicentino (including Villa Saraceno), was one of the few further events inspired by the quincentenary. Coinciding with this was the insight into the choral-music acoustic performance of contemporary churches in Venice, by the Gentlemen of St John’s College, Cambridge, in which the chapel of the Ospedaletto (in which Palladio had a hand) scored particularly well.

And mention of Villa Saraceno, restored nearly 20 years ago by the Landmark Trust, leads to the qualifications that the controversial A11 motorway (which will now pass it beyond the nearest hamlet, and in a cutting) has brought to the last extensive and unspoiled fenland landscape of Palladio’s Renaissance estate-builder patrons. The campaign against the road began in the 1970s and was taken up by Landmark, Italia Nostra, Save Europe’s Heritage and local groups. However unsuccessful this may have been on the specific point, the broader argument against continuing the rapid industrial re-planning of the Veneto seems to have been won, for now. This has been followed by the official extension of landscape protection round a further 150 Villas in the Vicentino; it must be made to last.

While interest in Andrea Palladio for his gifts as a designer of an astonishing variety of buildings will, thanks to the Quattro Libri dell’Architettura, hopefully always be part of the broad canon available to clients and architects, attention is likely to move for a while to the settings, the uses and the repair of his buildings. The level water in which the Venetian marvels of the churches of San Giorgio Maggiore (albeit without the columned praonas he designed for it) and the Redentore stand, and the long, bleak fenland views of several of his Villas (and hundreds of other Renaissance examples in the Veneto) are alike threatened. The CISA now owns Villa Potenza; its rural context will be a concern for them.

Repairs to two of Palladio’s urban complexes are in their final stages – the courtyard of the Carità convent in Venice, long used by the art schools but now being incorporated into the Accademia galleries beside it; and the Basilica or town hall at the heart of Vicenza, its Palladio loggias cleaned (for a second time) back to white stone, and its medieval upper hall roof, replaced in reinforced concrete after the Allied bombings of 1943, again reinstated as timber trusses supporting a copper covering. The latter, because of its scale, is hard to use but it serves well for exhibiting contemporary architecture like the Dedalo Minosse International Prize for Commissioning a Building, begun in 1998 on the example of Palladio’s own clients. The CISA moved to his Palazzo Barbaro da Porto in 1996 and has put on notable exhibitions in its upper rooms – such as ‘Palladio in Northern Europe’ (1999), ‘Vincenzo Scamozzi’ (2003) and ‘Andrea Palladio and the Veneto Villa’ (2005).

It is the Villas perhaps which are still the most vulnerable, both physically and for their poetry. These “houses at villas” (as their architect called them) were always at a distance from domestic uses, the lesser structures embracing them containing spaces for living and cooking as well as the many farming functions – which is how Villa Emo, the last to have continued in unbroken family possession, came through. Several others are in the same boat, too purely architectural for non-architectural living, too small to be natural show-places.

A high responsibility rests on those who mind about Andrea Palladio as this milestone passes. As well as historical exegesis, it depends on simple facts, on the ground. The cities where Palladio studied and worked are still much as they were, as Guido Beltrami brings out in his little Palladio Privato, the original plaster surfaces of the Villas – the plain ones, not those frescoed (integral though these are) – express the wholeness of their perfection, as Francesco Doglioni brings out in Nel Restauro – Projects for the Architecture of the Past (both recently published books).

How to reconcile this intimacy with the Palladio industry and the tourist industry calls for pragmatic philosophers and philosophical pragmatists. Some of the best may yet be contributed by the old alliance of the Italians and the British. ■
On 15 June 2010 it will be the 700th anniversary of Bajamonte Tiepolo’s bloody conspiracy against the state of Venice; he planned to murder Doge Pietro Gradenigo and seize power for a few noble families. His defeat was one of the great occasions in Venetian history, when democracy triumphed over potential dictatorship. The establishment of the Council of Ten was a direct result.

After his downfall, Bajamonte Tiepolo was sent into exile and his palace was razed. A column of infamy was erected in Sant’Agostin, where the palace once stood. It bears these words:

This land belonged to Bajamonte
And now, for his iniquitous betrayal,
This has been placed to frighten others
And to show these words to everyone forever.

The column has a fascinating story. Even from exile, the Tiepolos sent a henchman to destroy it. The man succeeded in breaking it in three pieces before he was caught in the act. He was deprived of a hand and his eyes were put out. The column was repaired and re-erected behind the nearby church of Sant’Agostin.

Four hundred years later, in 1785, one Angelo Maria Querini purchased the column, leaving in its place a humble stone plaque that read Loc. Col. Bai. The. MCCCX.

Querini sent the column to his villa in Altichiero on the mainland. Then it passed into the hands of the antiquarian Sanquirico, and finally to the nephew of the Duke of Melzi, who used it as a garden ornament at a mansion on Lake Como. Some time in the early nineteenth century, the column was brought back to the Correr Museum in Venice. It now lies in the stores of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia. Yet, as its inscription says, this column was designed to be exhibited in public as a warning ‘FOREVER’. Moreover, the column is one of the earliest examples of public stone lettering in Venice. Why can it not be re-erected in Sant’Agostin, where it belongs, for the 700th anniversary? With an appropriate explanation of its provenance and history? Or could it at least be restored to public view in the Correr Museum for the anniversary, along with any other relevant artefacts?

Even Venice does not have many 700th anniversaries, and the re-erection of the Column of Infamy could be accomplished easily and without expense to the city, as various international charities would happily subsidise the costs, which would not be high. It would be a great gift to the city to restore one of Venice’s most fascinating monuments, a timely indication that Venice has not forgotten what she should most remember about her own past.

On the eve of its 700th anniversary, novelist Michelle Lovric evokes one of the most dramatic dawns in Venetian history and traces its physical aftermath.

It’s midnight on 14 June, 1310, the eve of the Feast of San Vito. The conspirators are gathered at Marco Querini’s palazzo at Rialto. Around the table are Marco and Piero Querini, Marco’s son-in-law Bajamonte Tiepolo, Badoero Badoer and others. They’re planning to kill Doge Pietro Gradenigo and take over the city. If all goes according to plan, Venice will be theirs just before dawn. The men agree to make three separate strikes on the heart of the city. Routes are planned. Strategies are agreed. They embrace, and hurry to their assignations. Unknown to them, there’s a betrayer in their midst …

Michelle Lovric is a novelist, writer and anthologist. Her novels include Carnevale, The Floating Book, The Remedy, The Undrowned Child and the recently published The Book of Human Skin. She divides her time between London and Venice. In her London home she holds a workshop with published writers of poetry and prose, fiction and memoir:

Tickets: £20 (£15 for Venice in Peril members)
+44 (0)20 7736 6891 or info@veniceinperil.org
The Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7
THURSDAY 13 MAY 2010, 7PM
Doors open at 6pm with public bar and garden
**Premio Venezia Concert**

Tuesday 9 February 2010  
7pm for 7.30pm  
4th annual concert & dinner

Fiorenzo Pascuccini, winner of the 2008 Premio Venezia Piano Competition

Il Premio Venezia is organised by Friends of La Fenice

The Venice in Peril Fund is especially grateful to Marina Morrison Arwater for sponsoring the dinner, and to Elisabeth and Bob Boas for their generous hospitality. We would also like to thank Luciana Malgara and Rosemary Lanza for their support.

In order to reserve places for the concert and dinner we ask that you make a minimum donation of £75 per person to The Venice in Peril Fund.

There are a limited number of places available so please make your booking early.

Tickets available from the Venice in Peril office:  
+44 (0)20 7736 6891 or info@veniceinperil.org  

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**The Treasures of Venice: from Venice to Valdobbiadene**

The first traces of activity by the Bisol family in the heart of the Valdobbiadene Prosecco production area date back to 1542. The company continues to hand down from father to son. Currently, the owners are the two brothers, Antonio and Eliseo, together with their respective sons, Gianluca and Desiderio, Claudio and Alberto. Gianluca Bisol, managing director, says: “We work with great passion in order that, in 30 year’s time, Conegliano will have the same prestige as Reims, Valdobbiadene the same charm as Epernay and Altamarca the same fame as the Champagne region.”

The family have restored a former Cistercian monastery, Duca di Dolle, in Rolle, Cison di Valmarino, as a guest house. In the heart of the prosecco region, Rolle is an Historic village protected by FAI (Foundation for the Italian Environment). Bisol, always committed to the healthy management of its vineyards, has chosen to follow a biological and biodynamic regime on the Rolle estate and its neighbouring vineyards.

**Venissa, a bridge between Valdobbiadene and Venice**

The Venissa Estate is an island in the lagoon of Venice next to Burano and it will become a hospitality structure and centre for agro-environmental education and research, with the collaboration of Bisol and Vento di Venezia, Polo Nautico under Alberto Sonino. The Comune of Venice has awarded the management to Terre di Venezia – the company founded by Bisol and Vento di Venezia – whose proposal was declared the best among 12 competing projects. They have recovered an ancient walled vineyard that dominates Mazzorbo and replanted the Dorona, an historic and typically Venetian white grape variety.

This result comes after five years of research into the history of the local grape varieties of Venice, widespread until only a few centuries ago. By 2011, there will be 8000 bottles of this historic, valuable wine, which will be called Venissa, available only by reservation. The Estate will also host a vegetable garden dedicated to the cultivation of the true Venetian specialties and a fish-farm with typical lagoon fish. There will be a restaurant managed by Paola Budel and it will be possible to stay on the property.

Bisol: The quality of tradition
Who Wants To Be A Gondolier?

Venice in Peril’s inaugural mind-stretching Quiz and Dinner in the Neo-Baroque Edwardian splendour of Fulham Town Hall
7.30pm on Wednesday 10 March 2010

Hosted by the presenter, actor and comedian, Alexander Armstrong (one half of Armstrong & Miller, regular host of Have I Got News For You?, Life Begins, Mutual Friends, Beast)
Questions set by the iconic broadcaster and historian Bamber Gascoigne, the original presenter of University Challenge
Aperitivo offered by Bisol
Finest Prosecco from Valdobbiadene, Italy
3-course Dinner with wine … and Quiz!
Venetian glass trophy for the winning team
Wooden paddle for the losing team!

Gather a team of 10 – £75 per team member
Gather 10 of your finest and pit your wits against friends and colleagues. Will the combined intelligence of your guests be enough to see off the talents of your rivals? Are you smart enough to take a table and find out?

For more information or bookings please call Venice in Peril on +44 (0)20 7736 6891, or email at info@veniceinperil.org

Many know of Palladio, Veronese and Giorgione, major figures in Venice’s Golden Age, all born in the Venetian territories outside Venice. Many know something of their work in Venice though less of what is in the Veneto. This is a great opportunity to see and know both. As well as his major churches in Venice, the tour visits Palladian villas in the Veneto. We see Veronese’s frescoes in the Villa Barbaro and refectory painting at Monte Berico. And it includes an important exhibition of the works of Giorgione, including La Tempesta, on loan from Venice, in his birthplace Castelfranco, in celebration of the 500th anniversary of his death.

SECRET ITALY: The Heart of the Marches 6–12 June
Based: Macerata
Few have heard of the Marches, a truly secret paradise – medieval hill-top towns, wonderful works of art, beautiful and dramatic countryside from sea to high Apennines, excellent food and wine - and almost no tourists.

Information and Booking from John Hall Italian Journeys, telephone: + 44 (0)20 8871 4747
Email: info@johnhallvenice.com www.johnhallvenice.com
Peter Boizot celebrates his 80th Birthday

The founder of PizzaExpress, Peter Boizot, initiated the company’s longstanding partnership with Venice in Peril in 1975 when he heard about the work the charity was doing to contribute to the restoration of the heritage of Venice following the great flood in 1966. His support began with the invention of a special Venetian pizza, based on a medieval recipe, which he named ‘Pizza Veneziana’, sold throughout this famous restaurant chain. To this day a percentage of each Pizza Veneziana sold is donated to Venice in Peril. After 34 years this initiative has raised nearly £2 million. PizzaExpress remains a major contributing benefactor to Venice in Peril, and the Fund greatly relies on the regularity of the income provided by the partnership.

This is probably the longest-standing arts and business relationship and has given a small charity a national platform. Venice in Peril could not make the difference it makes without the ingenuity of Peter Boizot and continuing support of PizzaExpress.

Happy Birthday Peter and THANKYOU!

A new Trustee

We are delighted to welcome Jonathan Keates as a new Trustee of Venice in Peril

Jonathan Keates was born in Paris, France in 1946. Educated at Bryanston and Magdalen College, Oxford, he teaches English at the City of London School. He is the author of several acclaimed biographies, including works on Handel, Purcell and Stendhal, as well as a number of books about Italy, The Love of Italy, Tuscany, Italian Journeys, Umbria. One of his novels, The Stranger’s Gallery, is set in London and the Hawthorn Prize, and Soon to Be a Major Motion Picture.

He is a regular contributor to newspapers and journals, including The Observer and the Times Literary Supplement. His most recent work is a book of non-fiction, The Siege of Venice, the story of Venice’s last stand in 1848, against its Austrian rulers.

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Nicky Ialy

Special Events

Pandora Clifford

Education & Research

Tamara Risso-Gill

Accountant

Christine Freshwater

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And all those who continue to support the work of the Fund through their generous donations

Also

Pandora Clifford, Nicci Hawkins, Robert Lorrman, Chris Morgan, Angus Rankine, Tamara Risso-Gill, Richard Walker, who completed the Venice Marathon in such style and raised nearly £16,000 for the Fund.

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