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## NEIGHBOURHOODS

### top picks

- **Basilica di San Marco** (p61)  
A mosaic-filled treasure chest.
- **Palazzo Ducale** (p67)  
The Gothic headquarters of centuries of Venetian power.
- **Gallerie dell'Accademia** (p75)  
Home to countless marvels of Venice's Old Masters.
- **Ca' Rezzonico** (p80)  
A fascinating peek into 18th-century noble life.
- **Ca' Pesaro** (p83)  
Western art and Eastern armour in a grandee's mansion.
- **Burano** (p113)  
Pastel-hued houses and old lace.
- **Torcello** (p114)  
Ancient monuments on a quiet northern isle.
- **Jewish Ghetto** (p92)  
Fascinating synagogues in what was a thriving Jewish quarter.
- **Scuola Grande di San Rocco** (p87)  
A temple to the power of Tintoretto.
- **Peggy Guggenheim Collection** (p79)  
A stroll through 20th-century art.

# NEIGHBOURHOODS

The grandest surprise for the casual stroller is that Venice is not completely teeming with outsiders in the manner of a wheat field swarming with locusts. Certainly, the main trails linking the train station to Piazza San Marco and the vaporetti of the Grand Canal are a year-round stage for the incessant, awkward pageant of international tourism. But most of Venice's 20 million annual visitors get little further. It is an uncommon pleasure to lose yourself in the backstreets and marvel in comparative calm at the many faces of this unique creation.

Venice is built on 117 small islands and has some 150 canals and 410 bridges. Three cross the Grand Canal: the Ponte di Rialto, the Ponte dell'Accademia and the Ponte dei Scalzi. They will one day be joined by a fourth, the Ponte di Calatrava.

To the north and south stretch the shallow waters of the Laguna Veneta, dotted by a crumbling mosaic of islands, islets and rocks, many of them well worth a visit.

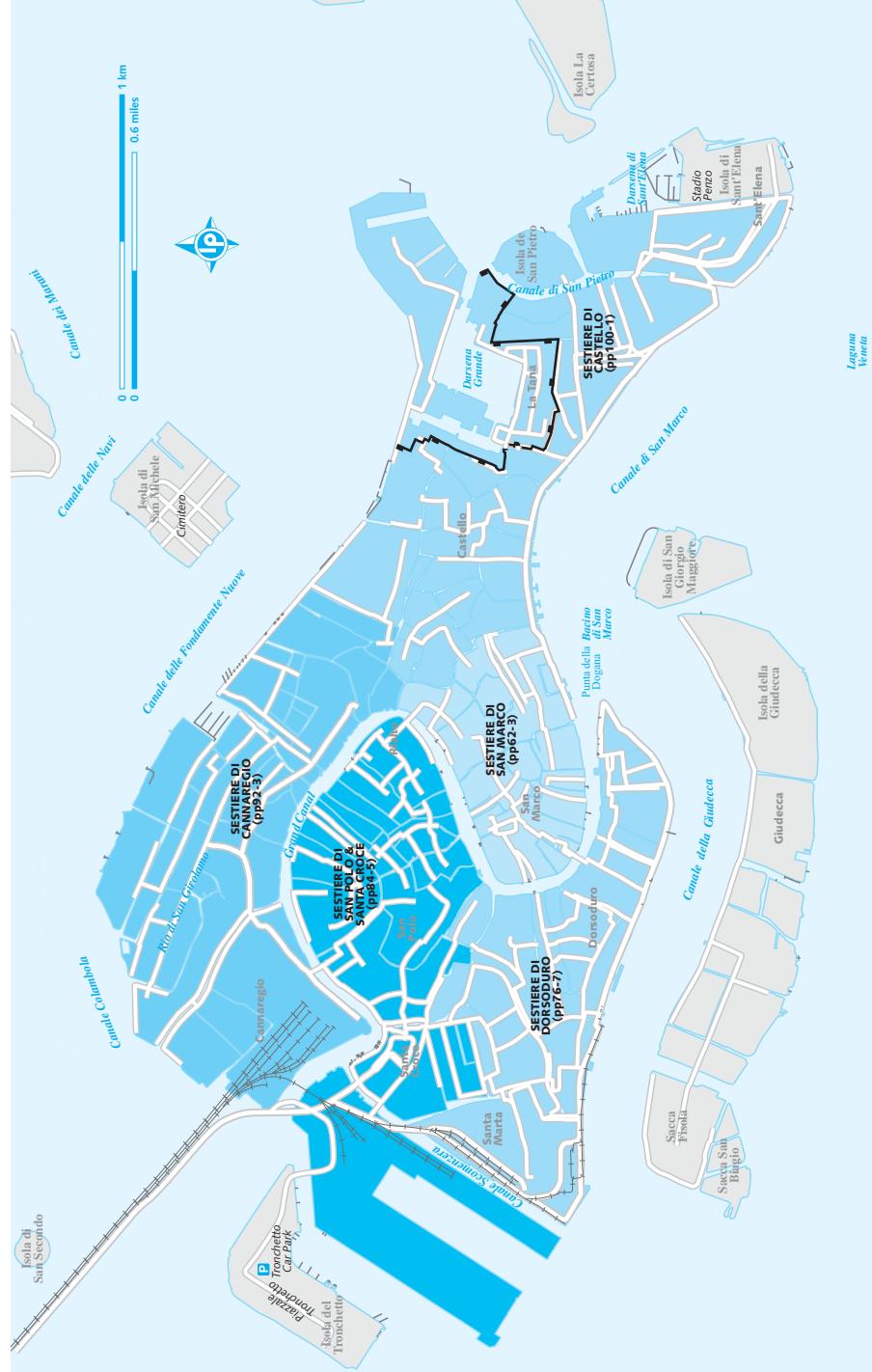
You can drive to Venice and park on arrival (it is cheaper to do so in Mestre on the mainland). Ferries transport cars to the Lido (although buses there are more than adequate). In Venice itself, all public transport is by various types of vaporetto. The alternative is to go *a piedi* (on foot). To walk from the train station to Piazza San Marco (St Mark's Square) will take a good half-hour.

The city is divided into six *sestieri* (municipal districts): Cannaregio, Castello, Dorsoduro, San Marco, San Polo and Santa Croce. These divisions date to 1171 and seemed good enough for us to follow in the course of this guide. In the east, the islands of San Pietro and Sant'Elena, largely ignored by visitors, are attached to Castello by two and three bridges, respectively.

With possibly the most beautiful square in all Europe, Piazza San Marco, the Sestiere di San Marco is the epicentre of the city and centre stage of much of its long and colourful history. One could be tempted to see it as a loose and compact equivalent of London's Oxford St, Trafalgar Square and Buckingham combined, and similarly (if not more densely) thronged.

Dorsoduro is the sunny side of the city, a broad urban sweep that takes up the entire southern waterfront. Its eastern end concentrates much of the city's wealth in paintings and sculpture, old and new, while its western extremity is barely trodden by tourists. San Polo and Santa Croce fill in the southern half the city below the Grand Canal, from the tight bustling warren near the Rialto bridge and petering out somewhat ingloriously in the Piazzale Roma car parks and bus station. The northern canals of Cannaregio have a quiet, residential feel, with just a hint of bohemian lifestyle at night. Castello is possibly the most mixed neighbourhood of all. Its western end is barely distinguishable from neighbouring San Marco, but you quickly breathe easier as you move east into a more genuine district.

Beyond the ancient city spreads what for so long has given it life and protection, the lagoon. It is dotted with islands that each constitutes a miniworld unto itself. The long sliver of an island that is the Lido, together with Pellestrina to the south, largely protect the lagoon from the Adriatic. The former is the Venetian's local seaside, with a series of beaches and a faded glamour. Murano is home to Venice's famed glass-makers; and pretty, pastel Burano, to lace. Torcello's cluster of monuments reminds of when it was the leading island in the lagoon. On the mainland, Chioggia is a fishing town with Venetian canals and a busy seaside, while Mestre is a rather more drab affair.



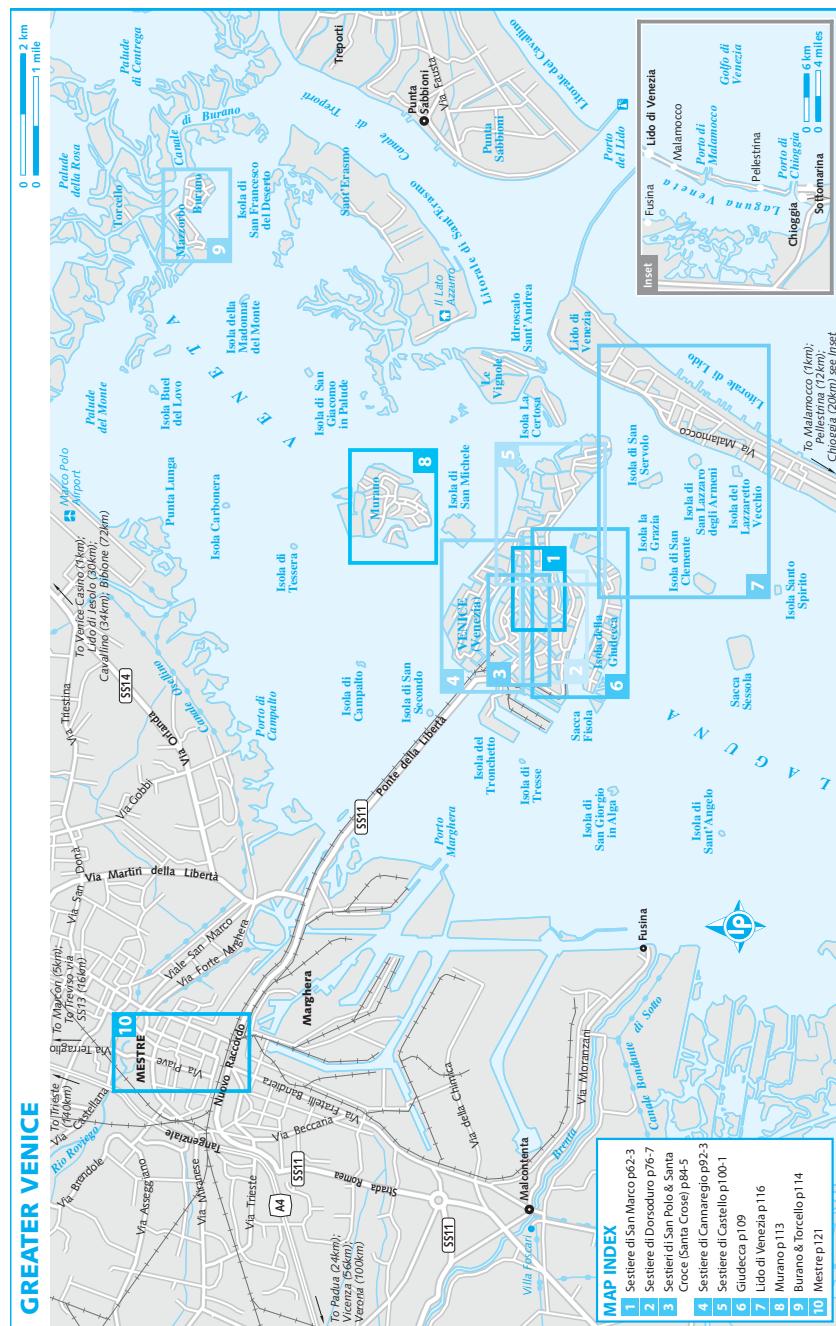
# ITINERARY BUILDER

There are many ways to approach Venice, but more than in any other city, you'll be doing it on foot. The table below gives some quick hints to main attractions and tips on where to take a load off, or max your cards out.

## HOW TO USE THIS TABLE

The table below allows you to plan a day's worth of activities in any area of the city. Simply select which area you wish to explore, and then mix and match from the corresponding listings to build your day. The first item in each cell represents a well-known highlight of the area while the other items are more off-the-beaten track gems.

AREA	ACTIVITIES	Sightseeing	Shopping	Eating	Drinking
San Marco		Basilica di San Marco (p61) Palazzo Ducale (p67) Museo Correr (p70)	Legatoria Piazzesi (p158) Vivaldi Store (p158) Godi Fiorenza (p156)	Osteria alla Botte (p171) Ai Assassini (p171) Vini da Arturo (p171)	Aurora (p187) Centrale (p187) Caffè Florian (p188)
Dorsoduro		Gallerie dell'Accademia (p75) Peggy Guggenheim Collection (p79) Chiesa di Santa Maria della Salute (p80)	BAC Art Studio (p159) Ca' Macana (p159) Le Forcole di Saverio Pastor (p159)	Ristoteca Oniga (p173) Osteria alla Bifora (p173) Ristorante La Bitta (p172)	Al Bottegon (p189) Margaret Duchamp (p190) El Chioschetto (p190)
San Polo & Santa Croce		Ca' Pesaro (p83) Scuola Grande di San Rocco (p87) Rialto (p84)	Aliani (p160) Atelier Pietro Longhi (p161) Gilberto Penzo (p160)	Antiche Carampane (p174) Vecio Fritolin (p173) Osteria Mocenigo (p174)	Ai Postali (p191) Muro Vino e Cucina (p191) Sacro e Profano (p191)
Cannaregio		Ghetto (p92) Ca' d'Oro (p91) Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Miracoli (p91)	Jesurum Outlet (p163) Libreria Internazionale Marco Polo (p162) Studio in Venice (p162)	Anice Stellato (p178) Antica Adelaide (p179) Boccadoro (p178)	Dogado (p192) Fiddler's Elbow (p192) Paradiso Perduto (p192)
Castello		Chiesa dei SS Giovanni e Paolo (p99) Ospedaletto (p105) Arsenale (p98)	Giovanna Zanella (p164) El Fero Novo (p164) Ca' del Sole (p164)	Enoteca Mascareta (p181) Alle Testiere (p181) Hostaria da Franz (p181)	Zanzibar (p193) Inishark (p193) Bar Dandolo (p193)
Around the Lagoon		Murano (p112) Burano (p113) Torcello (p114)	Berengo (p165)	Mistrà (p183) Marco Polo (p165) Murano Collezioni (p166)	Mojito Bar (p193) La Favorita (p183) Al Gatto Nero (p183)



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## SESTIERE DI SAN MARCO

Eating p171; Shopping p155; Sleeping p201

Largely cobbled together by reclaiming (or simply creating) land from the salty lagoon waters, San Marco is named after its grand basilica and is the heart of the city. Long the centre of power, with the Palazzo Ducale at its core, it is today the magnet that draws everyone. Piazza San Marco is lined by key monuments, and connected by the historic Rialto bridge in the north to what was for centuries the financial hub, Rialto. A sprinkling of churches, La Fenice theatre and the bulk of the city's high-fashion shopping (especially west of Piazza San Marco, on and around Frezzaria and Calle Largo XXII Marzo), is concentrated in this district. The web of lanes between the piazza and Rialto bridge is known as Le Marzarie (or Le Mercerie). They are lined by shops and little cafés.

The area is separated from Castello, the district that occupies the tail of this fish-shaped city, by the waterways of Rio di Palazzo della Paglia, which runs just behind the Palazzo Ducale and Basilica di San Marco, and its continuation in the Rio di San Zulian, Rio della Fava and finally Rio del Fontego dei Tedeschi, which empties into the Grand Canal just north of the Ponte di Rialto. San Marco's other boundary is the serpentine swing of the Grand Canal between the Rialto and the Bacino di San Marco.

Vaporetti 1 and N stop at various points along the Grand Canal on their run between the train station and Piazza San Marco. Stops include Rialto, Sant'Angelo, San Samuele, Santa Maria del Giglio and Vallareso. Number 82 stops at Rialto, San Samuele and San Marco.

### BASILICA DI SAN MARCO Map pp62-3

041 522 52 05; [www.basilicasanmarco.it](http://www.basilicasanmarco.it); Piazza San Marco; admission free; 9.45am-5pm Apr-Sep, 9.45am-4.45pm Mon-Sat, 2-4.30pm Sun & holidays Oct-Mar; [Vallareso/San Marco](http://www.vallareso.com)

The Basilica di San Marco is at once a remarkable place of worship and a singular declaration of commercial-imperial might. It embodies a unique blend of architectural and decorative styles, dominated by Byzantine and ranging through Romanesque and Gothic to Renaissance. Building work on the first chapel to honour the freshly

arrived corpse of St Mark (see the boxed text, p66) began in 828, but the result disappeared in a fire in 932. The next version was demolished when, in 1063, Doge Domenico Contarini decided it was poor in comparison to grander Romanesque churches in mainland cities.

The new basilica, built on a Greek cross plan with five bulbous domes, was modelled on Constantinople's Church of the Twelve Apostles (later destroyed) and consecrated in 1094. It was built as the private ducal chapel and was only made

### SPECIAL TICKETS

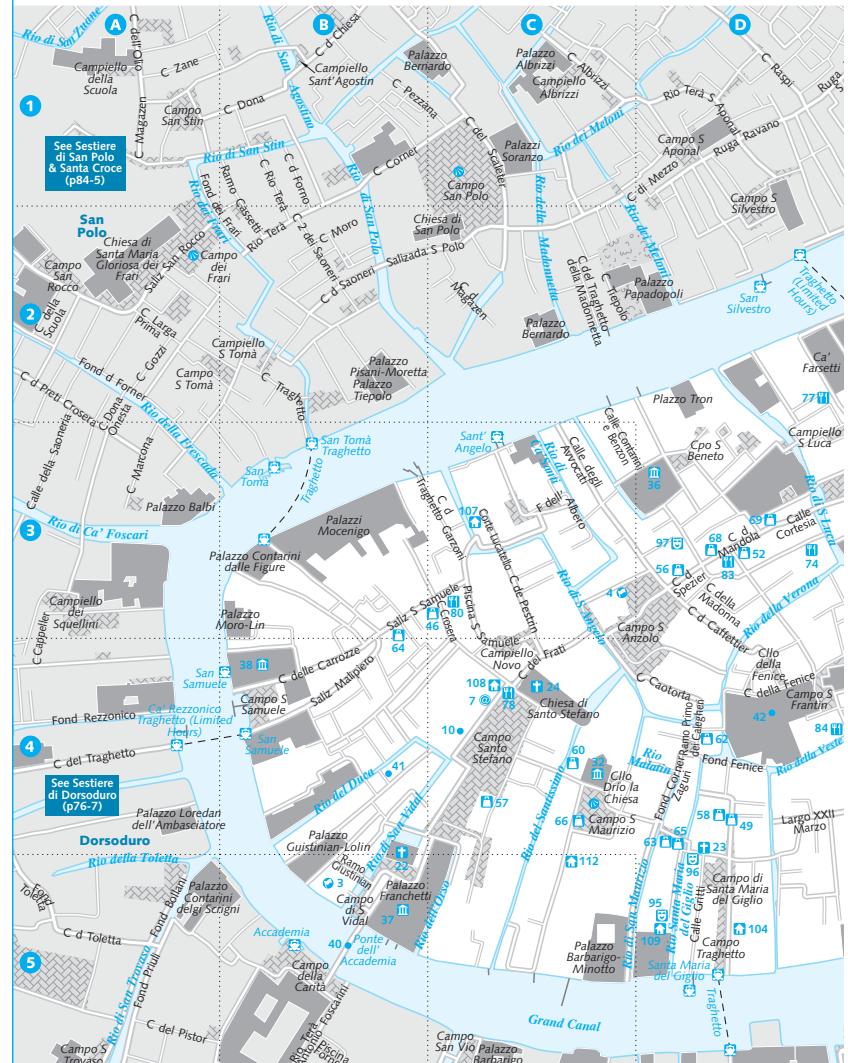
A **Museum Pass** (adult/EU senior over 65, EU student 15-29yr & Rolling Venice cardholders €18/12) covers admission to Palazzo Ducale, Museo Correr, Museo Archeologico, Libreria Nazionale Marciana, Ca' Rezzonico, Museo Vetrario on Murano, Museo del Merletto on Burano, Palazzo Mocenigo, Casa di Goldoni, Ca' Pesaro and the Palazzo Fortuny. The ticket is valid for six months and can be purchased from any of these museums. A **Museum Card** (adult/child/student €12/3/5.50) covers Palazzo Ducale, Museo Correr, Museo Archeologico and Libreria Nazionale Marciana only.

Combined tickets (adult/EU student €11/5.50) are also available for the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Ca' d'Oro and Museo Orientale in Ca' Pesaro.

You can book tickets ahead for the Palazzo Ducale (including the Secret Itineraries tour; see p69), the Gallerie dell'Accademia and Ca' Rezzonico, Ca d'Oro and the Torre dell'Orologio at [Weekend a Venezia](http://www.weekendavenezia.com) ([www.weekendavenezia.com](http://www.weekendavenezia.com)) and so avoid queues.

An organisation called **Chorus** (041 275 04 62; [www.chorusvenezia.org](http://www.chorusvenezia.org)) offers a ticket (adult/senior & student under 30yr/family €8/5/16), valid for a year, providing admission to 16 churches. Otherwise, admission to these individual churches costs €2.50. The ticket is available from any of the churches included, among the most worthwhile of which are: Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Santa Maria dei Miracoli, San Giacomo dell'Orio, Santo Stefano, San Polo and San Sebastian.

## SESTIERE DI SAN MARCO

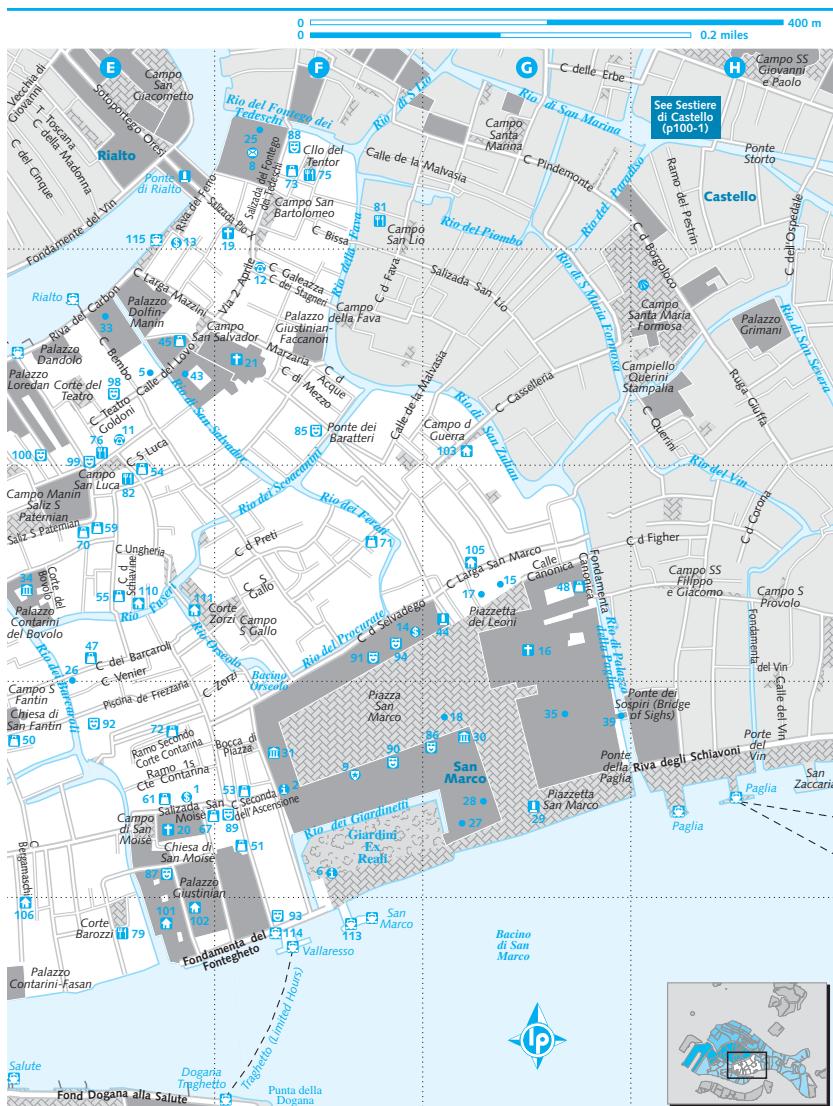


Venice's cathedral in 1807. But no-one was in any doubt that this was the city's principal church. Thus symbolically tied to the power of the doge (leader, duke), this state of affairs was an eloquent expression of the uncomfortable position of the Church in Venice, which had no intention of subordinating state interests to the Church.

For more than 500 years, the doge enlarged and embellished the basilica,

adorning it with an incredible array of treasures plundered from the East, in particular Constantinople, during the Crusades. Said John Ruskin in 1853 in *The Stones of Venice*: '...the front of St Mark's became rather a shrine at which to dedicate the splendour of miscellaneous spoil...'

The arches above the doorways in the façade boast fine mosaics. The one at the



left, depicting the arrival of St Mark's body in 828, is the oldest, completed in 1270. Above the doorway next to it is a later (18th-century) mosaic depicting the doge venerating St Mark's body. The mosaics on the other side of the main doorway date from the 17th century. The one at the right shows the stealing of St Mark's corpse, while next to it the Venetians receive the body. The three arches of the main door-

way are decorated with Romanesque carvings from around 1240.

The only original entrance to the church is the one on the south side that leads to the baptistry. It is fronted by two pillars brought to Venice from Acre in the Holy Land in the 13th century. The Syriac sculpture *Tetrarchi* (Tetrarchs), next to the Porta della Carta of the Palazzo Ducale, dates from the 4th century and is believed

## SESTIERE DI SAN MARCO

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to represent Diocletian and also his three co-emperors, who ruled the Roman Empire in the 3rd century AD.

On the Loggia dei Cavalli above the main entrance are copies of four gilded bronze horses: the originals, on display inside, were stolen when Constantinople was sacked in 1204, during the Fourth Crusade. Napoleon removed them to Paris in 1797, but they were later returned. It didn't occur to anyone to send them on to the original owner, the (by now) Muslim Istanbul.

Today, only at dawn or after midnight, when the piazza is largely deserted, does one fully feel its majesty and Eastern mystique. Most locals, however, seem largely inured to its charms. Perhaps it was always

so. Ruskin reports: 'You may walk from sunrise to sunset, to and fro, before the gateway of St Mark's, and you will not see an eye lifted to it, nor a countenance brightened by it. Priest and layman alike, soldier and civilian, rich and poor, pass by it alike regardlessly.'

Oh well. Through the doors is the narthex, or vestibule (a typical Byzantine element), its domes and arches decorated with mosaics dating mainly from the 13th century. The oldest mosaics in the basilica, dating from around 1063, are in the niches of the bay in front of the main door from the narthex into the church proper. They feature the Madonna with the Apostles. Look for the red marble spot in the floor,

which marks where Pope Alexander III and Barbarossa supposedly kissed and made up in 1177.

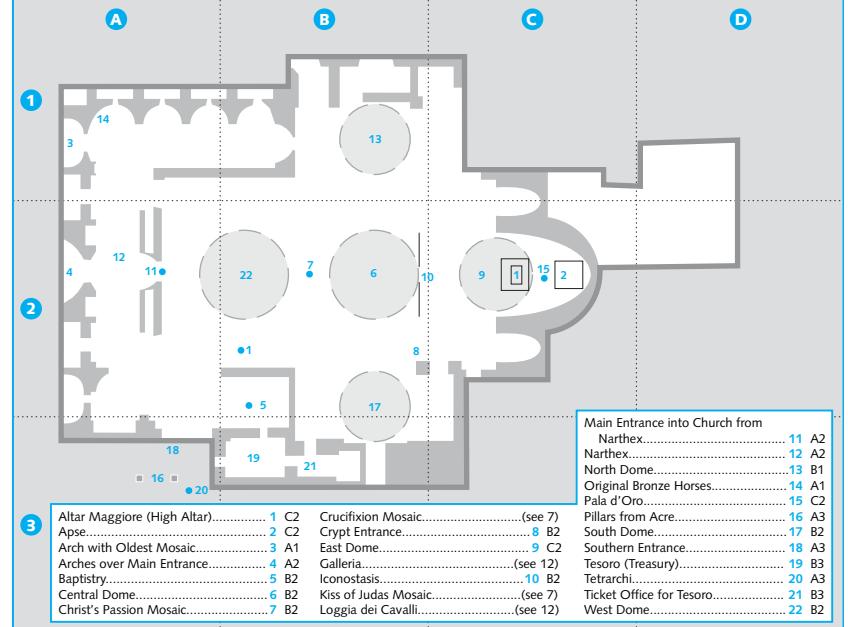
The interior of the basilica is dazzling: if you can take your eyes off the glitter of the mosaics, admire the 12th-century marble pavement, an infinite variety of geometrical whimsy interspersed with floral motifs and depictions of animals, made wavy by subsidence in parts. The lower level of the walls is lined with precious Eastern marble, above which the extraordinary feast of gilded mosaics begins. Work started on them in the 11th century. Those in the baptistry and side chapels date from the 14th and 15th centuries, and mosaics were still being added or restored as late as the 18th century.

Notable mosaics include the 12th-century Ascension in the central dome; those on the arch between the central and west domes, dating from the same period and including Christ's Passion, the kiss of Judas and the Crucifixion; and those between the windows of the apse depicting St Mark and three other patron saints of Venice, which are among the earliest mosaics in the basilica.

Separating the main body of the church from the area before the *altar maggiore* (high altar) is a magnificent, multicoloured marble iconostasis (another Byzantine element). Dividing the iconostasis in two is a huge cross of bronze and silver. To each side, the Virgin Mary and the Apostles line up. In a crypt beneath the majestic marble *altar maggiore* lie the remains of St Mark (or so they say).

Behind the altar, the exquisite *Pala d'Oro* (admission €1.50; 9.45am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun & holidays Apr-Sep, 9.45am-4.45pm Mon-Sat, 1-4.45pm Sun & holidays Oct-Mar) is a gold, enamel and jewel-encrusted altarpiece (measuring 384cm by 212cm) made in Constantinople for Doge Pietro Orseolo I in 976. It was enriched and reworked in Constantinople in 1105, enlarged by Venetian goldsmiths in 1209 and reset in the 14th century. Among the almost 2000 stones that adorn it are 526 pearls, 320 emeralds, rubies, amethysts, sapphires, jasper, topaz and coralline. Depicted in the altarpiece are, along the top, scenes from the life of Christ and beyond, ranging from the entry into Jerusalem to the death of the Virgin Mary, interrupted by an image of the Archangel Michael. Further

## BASILICA DI SAN MARCO



## MAKING HIS MARK

The story goes that an angel appeared to the Evangelist Mark when, while on his way to Rome from Aquileia (where he allegedly founded the church), his boat put in at the islands that would, centuries later, constitute Rialto. The winged fellow informed the future saint that his body would rest in Venice (which didn't exist at this point!). When he did die some years later, it was in Alexandria, Egypt. In 828, two Venetian merchants persuaded the guardians of his Alexandrian tomb to let them have the corpse, which they smuggled down to their ship, covered in pork to dissuade customs inspections (Egypt was by then a largely Muslim country) and sailed for Venice.

Why the bother? In those days, relics (bits and pieces of saints, real or purported) had enormous value in Christian countries, so the robbers probably saw a fast buck in the operation. Secondly, any city worthy of the name had a patron saint of stature. Venice had St Theodore (San Teodoro or Todaro), but poor old Theodore didn't cut the mustard. An Evangelist was altogether different. Did Doge Giustinian Partecipazio order this body-snatching mission? We will never know. Whatever the truth, it seems that someone's putrid corpse was transported to Venice and that everyone liked to think St Mark was now in their midst. St Theodore was unceremoniously demoted, and the doge ordered the construction of a church to house the newcomer. That church evolved into the Basilica di San Marco. St Mark was symbolised in the Book of Revelation (the Apocalypse) as a winged lion, and this image came to be synonymous with La Serenissima Repubblica (the Most Serene Republic).

Legend has it that, during the rebuilding of the basilica in 1063, the body of St Mark was hidden and then 'lost' when its hiding place was forgotten. In 1094, when the church was consecrated, the corpse (encased in bronze) broke through the column in which it had been enclosed. 'It's a miracle!' the Venetians cried. Or dodgy plasterwork? St Mark had been lost and now was found. A grateful populace buried the remains in the crypt, beneath the basilica's high altar.

down is an image of Christ Pantocrator, surrounded by the four Evangelists. On either side are angels, the 12 Apostles and prophets. At the bottom appears the Virgin Mary flanked by the Eastern Emperor and Empress. The whole is framed by New Testament scenes.

The **Tesoro** (Treasury; admission €2; ☎ 9.45am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun & holidays Apr-Sep, 9.45am-4.45pm Mon-Sat, 1-4.45pm Sun & holidays Oct-Mar), accessible from the right transept, contains most of the booty from the 1204 raid on Constantinople, including a thorn said to be from the crown worn by Christ. Some extraordinary 10th- to 11th-century chalices, made of sardonyx, alabaster, glass and silver, figure among the most beautiful pieces, along with some stunning icons and a 14th-century reliquary box that belonged to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

Through a door at the far right end of the narthex, stairs lead to the **Galleria** (aka Museo di San Marco; admission €3; ☎ same as basilica), which contains the original gilded bronze horses and provides access to the Loggia dei Cavalli (Horses Loggia). The Galleria affords wonderful views of the church's interior, while the loggia has equally splendid vistas of the piazza.

Note that no-one with bare shoulders or knees will be admitted – dress modestly. A set route has been instituted inside and, apart from visits to the Loggia dei Cavalli,

the Tesoro and the Pala d'Oro, you will probably find yourself being hustled through the main part of the church in 15 minutes or so.

All bags must be stored in the **Ateneo di San Basso** (Map pp62–3; Calle San Basso; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm), just off Piazzetta dei Leoni. Storage is free, but there's a one-hour limit.

## CAMPANILE Map pp62–3

Piazza San Marco; admission €6; ☎ 9.45am-8pm Jul-Sep, 9.30am-5pm Apr-Jun, 9.45am-4pm Oct-Mar; ☎ Vallareso/San Marco

The 99m-tall Campanile di San Marco stands apart from the church. It was originally raised in 888 and doubled as the city's main lighthouse. It was rebuilt in 1511–14 and served the faithful for another four centuries. Then suddenly, on 14 July 1902, it fell in a heap. The town fathers vowed to rebuild it brick by brick *dov'era, com'era* (where it was and as it was), which they did over the following 10 years. Alterations had already been made in the 12th and 16th centuries. On the second occasion, a statue of the Archangel Gabriel was positioned at the tip of the tower to serve as an elaborate weather vane. Oddly, the tower contains just one bell, the Marangona, the only one to survive the collapse. The bell was brought to Venice from the East in the Middle Ages and no-one knows when it was made. It maintains a rare sound from another age.

In more grisly times past, particularly unfortunate criminals might be strung up in a gibbet suspended high on the south face of the bell tower. There they would stay day and night, exposed to the elements, until their sentence was completed or they expired.

Enter the base of the tower through the Loggetta, a light Renaissance touch by Sansovino, and take the lift to the top, from where there are spectacular views across the entire city.

## PALAZZO DUCALE Map pp62–3

☎ 041 271 59 11; [www.museiciviciveneziani.it](http://www.museiciviciveneziani.it); Piazza San Marco 1; ☎ 9am-7pm Apr-Oct, 9am-5pm Nov-Mar; ☎ Vallareso/San Marco

The Doge's Palace, a unique example of Venetian Gothic fantasy, was the political heart of La Serenissima for most of the Republic's existence. As the palace's name suggests, the doge called it home, but its halls and dependencies also housed the arms of government and main prisons. For admission prices, see the boxed text on p61.

Established in the 9th century, the building began to assume its present form 500 years later, with the decision to build the massive Sala del Maggior Consiglio

## top picks

### FOR CHILDREN

Here are some sights to excite. See also p249.

- **Grand Canal** (p125) Choose a spot and gaze at the passing traffic – taxis, barges, vaparetto, police boats and more will keep kids (and grown-ups) fascinated. Similarly you could sit at the Zattere to watch the world go by on the Canale della Giudecca.
- **Museo Storico Navale** (p106) Kids will love the vessels of war and peace, real and models, or might indulge romantic daydreams when they behold Peggy Guggenheim's private gondola.
- **Giardini Pubblici** (p106) One of the few public green spaces, where kids can run about and play on the swings.
- **Campanile, Basilica di San Marco** (opposite) Kids love to climb things, and they will love looking across the city and out across the busy lagoon.
- **Torre dell'Orologio** (p71) The striking of the hours by Mori is as enchanting for children as for the child in adults.

to house the members of the Maggior Consiglio (Grand Council), who ranged in number from 1200 to 1700. The hall was inaugurated in 1419. The whole thing rests on what amounts to a giant raft of pylons and stone blocks rammed into the muddy depths of the lagoon.

The palace's two magnificent Gothic façades in white Istrian stone and pink Veronese marble face the water and Piazzetta San Marco. Much of it was damaged by fire in 1577, but it was successfully restored by Antonio da Ponte (who also designed the Ponte di Rialto). Thankfully, Palladio's pleas to have the burnt-out hulk replaced by another of his creations fell on deaf ears.

From the loggia looking onto the *piazzetta* (small piazza), death sentences would be solemnly read out between the ninth and 10th columns from the left, both of them darker than the remaining columns. The sentences were usually carried out between the columns on the *piazzetta*. On occasion, the condemned person might be offered one last chance to avoid the chop. They would be directed to the third column on the seaward side of the Palazzo Ducale from the corner of the *piazzetta*. Arms tied behind their back and facing the column, they had to try to turn around the column without falling off the low marble step at its base (no longer visible). They say that no-one ever managed it and that out of this rather macabre bit of Venetian humour was born a popular kids' challenge.

You enter the palace through the waterfront entrance. Beyond the ticket office and to the left is the **Museo dell'Opera**, which contains 42 capitals that once adorned the palace arcades and have slowly been replaced by copies to protect the originals from further deterioration. Careful observation reveals a wealth of sculptural whimsy. On one are depicted eight emperors and kings, from Priam of Troy to Julius Caesar. The message appears to be that, compared with the illustrious lagoon Republic, they were small fry.

You emerge from the museum into the main courtyard. The two 16th-century wells in the middle are the most exquisite in the city. Access to Antonio Rizzi's magnificent marble Scala dei Giganti (Giants' Staircase) at the northeastern end is closed, but you can view it easily enough. It is topped by Sansovino's statues of Mars and Neptune, behind which the swearing-

in ceremony of the doge took place. Here he would be presented with his ducal cap and swear fidelity to the laws of the Republic.

Climb the Scala dei Censori (Censors' Staircase) to the Piano delle Logge. The floor of the loggia is a classic *terrazzo alla Veneziana* (Venetian floor; see the boxed text, p103), of which you will see more inside the building. Back inside (from here on, the direction you are to follow is indicated), just before you climb Sansovino's grand Scala d'Oro (Golden Staircase), you will pass a *bocca della verità* (mouth of truth), into which people placed denunciations against wayward citizens.

The first rooms you visit comprise the Appartamento del Doge (Doge's Apartments). Among these, the grand Sala delle Mappe (Map Room) contains maps dating from 1762 depicting the Republic's territories and the voyages of Marco Polo. Also here is the standard of the last doge, Ludovico Manin. The Sala dei Filosofi (Philosophy Room) is so called because portraits of great philosophers once hung here. Titian's *San Cristoforo* (St Christopher), a rough fresco above a side stairwell (signposted) was one of the few works to survive the 1577 fire. They say he finished it in three days.

The highest echelons of government met on the next floor. In the Sala delle Quattro Porte (Four Doors Room), ambassadors would await their audience with the doge. Palladio designed the ceiling and Tintoretto added the frescoes. Titian's memorable *Il Doge Antonio Grimaldi in Ginocchio Davanti alla Fede, Presente San Marco* (Doge Antonio Grimaldi Kneels Before the Faith in the Presence of St Mark) dominates the wall by the entrance.

## NO-NOS IN PIAZZA SAN MARCO (AND ELSEWHERE)

Stretching out for a rest on the ground, settling in for a picnic and littering Piazza San Marco are all offences attracting €50 fines. Similar fines are applied to anyone caught swimming in the Bacino di San Marco (Lord Byron would no doubt take exception), or wandering around (anywhere in town) in swimming attire or bare-chested. Riding a bicycle (hardly a good idea anyway), inline skating or using any other wheeled mechanism is also prohibited throughout the city.

Off this room, the Anticollegio (College Antechamber) features four Tintorettoes and Veronese's *Ratto d'Europa* (Rape of Europa). The splendid Sala del Collegio (College Room) also boasts ceiling frescoes by Veronese and Tintoretto. The Sala del Senato (Senate Room) is graced by yet more Tintorettoes. Senators met here in the presence of the doge and the Signoria (Signory; a council that advised the doge on policy), which sat on the high tribune.

Veronese was again at work in the Sala del Consiglio dei Dieci (Council of Ten Room). This council acted as the Republic's main intelligence-gathering agency. The next room is known as the Sala della Busola (Collection Box Room). Note the small box in the wall. Members of the Consiglio dei Dieci picked up denunciations left here, poked though a hole on the other side of the wall.

A set of stairs on the right leads to the Armeria (Armoury), what is left of the palace's once considerable collection of arms. One flight of the Scala dei Censori back downstairs is the Sala della Quarantia Vecchia (Old Council of Forty Room). This body oversaw administrative matters. In the small Sala dell'Armamento (Armaments Room) next door are the remains of Guariento's 14th-century fresco *Paradiso* (Heaven), damaged in the 1577 fire. It had previously graced the immense Sala del Maggior Consiglio (Great Council Room), on the other side of the corridor.

The need to create the grand space of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio was dictated by the growth in size of the council and the order to build it was given in 1340–41. It was not completed until after 1400 and the council sat here for the first time in 1423. Although much damaged in the 1577 fire, essentially the hall has remained unchanged. It is dominated at one end by Tintoretto's replacement *Paradiso*, one of the world's largest oil paintings at 22m by 7m.

Among the many other paintings in the hall is Veronese's masterpiece, the *Apoteosi di Venezia* (Apotheosis of Venice), in one of the central ceiling panels. Note the black space in the frieze on the wall depicting the first 76 dogi of Venice. Doge Marin Falier would have appeared here had he not been beheaded for treason in 1355.

The room off the northwestern corner of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio housed

the Quarantia Civil Nuova (New Council of Forty), a kind of appeals court, while beyond lies the Sala dello Scrutinio (Ballot Room), where elections to the Maggior Consiglio were held. It is lined with stirring and bloody battle scenes.

A trail of corridors leads to the small, enclosed *Ponte dei Sospiri* (Bridge of Sighs). The bridge is split into two levels, for traffic heading into and out of the *Prigioni Nuove* (New Prisons; Map pp100–1), built on the east side of Rio di Palazzo della Paglia in the 16th century to cater for the overflow from the Prigioni Vecchie (Old Prisons) within the Palazzo Ducale. The bridge is presumably named after the sighs prisoners heaved as they crossed it on their way into the dungeons.

The cells of the *Prigioni Nuove* (aka the Palazzo delle Prigioni and occasionally used to host concerts, see Collegium Ducale p196)

are small and dank, but not bad by the standards of the times.

Back across the Ponte dei Sospiri, you end up in the offices of the Avogaria Comun (Venetian magistracy) and the Sala dello Scrigno (Room of the Coffer). Here the Libro d'Oro (Golden Book) was kept. The book identified those noble families of impeccable Venetian descent who had the right to join the Maggior Consiglio. Interclass weddings were forbidden and a vigilant watch was maintained for fraudulent attempts to pass off unsuitable persons as nobles.

The last office you pass through before arriving back in the courtyard is the Milizia da Mar (Marine Militia). An office of 20 senators was set up in 1545 to organise the rapid equipping and manning of emergency war fleets whenever the need arose. The organisation began here.

## SECRET ITINERARIES

Lesser known areas of the Palazzo Ducale, including the original Prigioni Vecchie (Old Prisons), can be visited on the *Itinerari Segreti* (Secret Itineraries) tour ( 041 520 90 70; adult/child under 6/student €16/free/7; tours in English 9.55am, 10.45am & 11.35am, Italian 9.30am & 11.10am, French 10.20am, noon & 12.25pm). Book tickets ahead for the tour at the Palazzo Ducale ticket desk or online (see Special Tickets, p61).

The 1½-hour tour is an intriguing look at the underside of the palace and the workings of government in the days of La Serenissima. You are first taken through some administrative offices, small timber-clad rooms in which the Republic's civil servants beavered away. These employees were often wealthy citizens but never nobles. They mostly went unpaid (to serve the state was an honour), although their chief, the Canceller Grande (like the doge, elected for life), received more than 3000 ducats a year (about €50,000 a month in today's coin).

Adjoining the *Cancelleria* (Chancellery), where 24 public servants spent their days writing three or four copies of the state's documents, treaties and the like (no photocopiers in those days!), was the *Camera del Tormento*, a torture room that started business in the evening when the human photocopiers went home for the day. Three judges, the Signori della Notti (Night Lords), would interrogate prisoners here, while other prisoners waited in the darkness of cells, terrified by the screams of the torture victim. To be fair to the Venetians, it appears physical torture did not feature high on the Serenissima's justice system. The last known case of torture here dates to 1660 and Venice was the first European state to abolish torture in the 18th century.

Up some narrow stairs you reach *Piombi* (Leads), prison cells beneath the roof of the building; prisoners froze in winter and sweltered in summer. Giacomo Casanova got five years here for his apparently wayward lifestyle (although many suspect that as a spy for the Republic, he was actually locked up because he had some embarrassing information). The guide will show you how he made his escape (according to his own account). You also get an explanation of the engineering behind the ceiling of the immense Sala del Maggior Consiglio below. The forest of tough larch-wood beams that holds up the immense ceiling without the help of pillars was made by workers from the Arsenal when Antonio da Ponte directed the Palazzo Ducale's rebuilding after the 1577 fire. They haven't been touched since.

You then get to pass the *Sala dei Tre Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci* (Room of the Three Heads of the Council of Ten), judges who would question those who had left denunciations in the *bocca della verità* (mouth of truth) distributed around the city. In 1386 it became obligatory to sign such denunciations with two witnesses. Denunciations could be made for any crime, from tax evasion to matters of state. If accusers were found to have fabricated the accusation, they were punished with the penalty that would have been applied to the accused. In this way, citizens were encouraged to think twice before making light-hearted accusations.

The toughest prisoners ended up in the *Pozzi* (Wells), two bottom storeys of dank cells at (but, contrary to popular belief, not below) water level. They are closed to the public, but from all accounts, by the rather dismal standards of the Middle Ages, they could have been worse.

Exit the courtyard by what was traditionally the main entrance, Giovanni and Bartolomeo Bon's 15th-century Porta della Carta (Paper Door), to which government decrees were affixed (hence the name).

### MUSEO CORRER Map pp62–3

041 240 52 11; [www.museiciviciveneziani.it](http://www.museiciviciveneziani.it); Piazza San Marco 52; 9am–7pm Apr–Oct, 9am–5pm Nov–Mar; Vallarese/San Marco

Begun by a certain Corsican general as a ballroom but not completed until halfway through the 19th century under Austrian rule, the Ala Napoleonica is home to the Museo Correr, dedicated to the art and history of Venice and loaded with all sorts of fascinating paraphernalia. The museum also gives access to the Museo Archeologico and, beyond, the beautiful Renaissance Libreria Nazionale Marciana. For admission prices, see the boxed text on p61.

The first rooms of the museum contain statuary and bas-reliefs by Antonio Canova, Italy's greatest sculptor of the late 18th century. Keeping the statues company is an assortment of 19th-century paintings (including some works by Hayez), books, documents, medallions, musical instruments, and other bits and bobs.

The following rooms are dedicated to Civiltà Veneziana (Venetian Civilisation), where you can inspect coins and standards of the Republic, model galleys, maps, navigational instruments and a display of weaponry from bygone days.

The Museo Archeologico is crammed mostly with Greek and Roman statues, along with a vast collection of ancient coins and ceramics. Some, but by no means all, of the material was collected in the Veneto.

From the museum you access the *Libreria Nazionale Marciana*, in a sense, through the

back door. The magnificent *Sala della Libreria* (Library Room) is the main reading hall, built in the 16th century to house the collection of some 1000 codices left to the Republic by Cardinal Bessarione in 1468. A battalion of artists chosen by Titian and Sansovino, the architect, decorated the ceiling. Veronese was considered the best; his three contributions form the second line of medallions after you enter.

The *Vestibolo* (Vestibule) follows. The centrepiece of its ceiling ornamentation is *Sapienza* (Wisdom) by Titian. The ancient statues cluttering the floor were part of a wider collection placed here late in the 16th century. Finally you arrive at the top end of the fine entrance stairway – a twin to the Scala d'Oro in the Palazzo Ducale across the square.

You now backtrack to the armoury in the Museo Correr. The western corridor of the Ala Napoleonica contains further baubles relating to the Civiltà Veneziana collection. About halfway along, a stairway leads up to the Arte Antica collection, a Noah's Ark of largely lesser known art, starting with 14th-century Byzantine painters and proceeding to Gothic art, with a series of rooms given over to Flemish and German paintings, and a room with eight works from the Bellini workshop.

The last section of the museum contains paintings of Venetian scenes, society games and a large collection of *bronzetti* (miniature bronzes), produced mostly in Padua and depicting everything from frogs to gods.

### LIBRERIA NAZIONALE MARCIANA

Map pp62–3

041 240 52 11; [www.museiciviciveneziani.it](http://www.museiciviciveneziani.it); Piazza San Marco 52; 9am–7pm Apr–Oct, 9am–5pm Nov–Mar; Vallarese/San Marco

## STOP THE PIGEONS!

If you get the impression that there are more pigeons in Piazza San Marco than inhabitants in the whole of Venice, you're right. Officials estimate the pesky pigeon population at around 100,000 (but how do you count them?). Tests have shown that around 15% of the flock have salmonella and can pass it on to their hapless human victims.

The handful of birdseed vendors pay about €100,000 each for the licence to feed the flying rats and throngs of tourists delight in allowing birdies to poop on their shoulders (they say it brings good luck).

Worse than the poop on the people is that on the monuments – the acid in bird droppings eats away at the stone. People in restoration pull their hair out at the thought of the vast sums spent on restoring monuments, only to see the work imperiled by the toilet habits of these gormless creatures.

Attempts (half-hearted?) to deal with these flying rats have all ended in abject failure. That doesn't mean we have to contribute to the problem: don't feed them!

Across Piazzetta San Marco from the Palazzo Ducale lies the gracious form of what Palladio described as the most sumptuous palace ever built (although Ruskin heartily disagreed). Designed by Jacopo Sansovino in the 16th century, the building occupies the entire west side of the piazzetta and houses the Libreria Nazionale Marciana (National Library of St Mark, aka the Biblioteca di San Marco or Libreria Sansoviniana, after its architect) and also the Museo Archeologico. The library extends around the corner on the waterfront into what was once *La Zecca*, the Republic's mint. It is a masterpiece of the Renaissance, featuring an arcade of Doric columns on the ground level, Ionic ones above and a series of 25 statues of various heroes and gods on the roof. For more information on the Libreria Nazionale Marciana and the Museo Archeologico, see Museo Correr (opposite). Admission to both sites is through that museum (for admission prices see the boxed text on p61).

### PALAZZO GRASSI Map pp62–3

041 523 16 80; [www.palazzograssi.it](http://www.palazzograssi.it); Campo San Samuele 3231; adult/child €10/6; 10am–7pm; San Samuele

Magnates can be a mercurial lot. And French wheeler-dealer and contemporary art collector François Pinault surprised just about everyone in France and Italy when he snapped up the grand Palazzo Grassi in Venice as the central home for his considerable and eclectic collection.

Palazzo Grassi is named after the family that commissioned its grand, classical design from Giorgio Massari (c 1686–1766) in 1749. It is built around an enclosed colonnaded courtyard. Pinault snapped up an 80% share (the rest is with the city of Venice) from former owners Fiat in 2005 for the bargain price of €29 million. Given a light-handed overhaul on the inside by star Japanese architect Tadao Ando (who left the original décor and beautiful ceilings untouched), the Pinault art headquarters is an important new contemporary art exhibition centre.

A part of Pinault's vast possessions (more than 2000 items) is often on rotating display in temporary themed exhibitions lasting around six months. His collection covers a broad canvas of modern and contemporary art, including such modern icons as Mark Rothko, Jeff Koons, Mario Merz and Cy Twombly.

### TORRE DELL'OROLOGIO Map pp62–3

041 520 90 70; [www.museiciviciveneziani.it](http://www.museiciviciveneziani.it); Piazza San Marco; admission €12; visit by prebooked tour only, in English 9am, 10am & 11am Mon–Wed, 1pm, 2pm & 3pm Thu–Sun; Vallarese/San Marco

The Clock Tower, an early-Renaissance gem built by Mauro Codussi on the north flank of Piazza San Marco, is a fitting timepiece for the grand square. The clock work was considered such a work of genius that it is said its designer (from the region of Emilia) was blinded to prevent him repeating the feat anywhere else! Unlikely, as he and his family moved in to look after maintenance. Their descendants only moved out of the tower in 1996!

The blue enamel and gold-leaf clock face shows not only the time but the position of the sun, the lunar phases and the signs of the zodiac. On the small terrace atop the tower, two dark bronze Mori (Moors, so called because of the patina of the bronze rather than intentional design by their makers in 1497) strike the hour on a huge bell. At midday and midnight, a hammer strikes the same bell no less than 132 times! On rare occasions (the Epiphany and the Ascension) you can also see the 18th-century wooden statues of the Three Wise Men preceded by an angel parade past a statue of the Virgin Mary and child on the level below the Mori.

Restoration was completed in 2006. The work on the clock mechanisms was backed by the Swiss watch people Piaget, so there should be no problems with the clock running slow. You can visit the inside (maximum 12 people per visit), climbing up four narrow floors, by appointment only. You get to see the complex mechanisms, the Wise Men and finally the Mori, from where you have a wonderful view of the piazza and across the rooftops of northern Venezia. The ticket includes entrance to the Museo Correr (where you book the tour).

### TEATRO LA FENICE Map pp62–3

041 528 37 80, reservations 041 24 24; [www.teatrolafenice.it](http://www.teatrolafenice.it); Campo San Fantin 1965; tours adult/student & senior €7/5; varies; Santa Maria del Giglio

First raised in the twilight years of La Serenissima in 1792 and then rebuilt after fires in 1854 and again in 2003 (about

80% of the building was lost in the 1996 (intentionally lit blaze), the Teatro La Fenice is one of the world's great opera stages. Emperor Napoleon enjoyed a show here in December 1807, and many of the greats of European opera have performed in the two centuries since.

The building is a careful reconstruction of the opera house raised in 1837, incorporating the latest in theatre technology and with room for 1000 spectators. More than 300 artisans were mustered to relearn old methods of everything from plaster-making to woodwork, chandeliers and gold-leaf decoration.

The foyer, with its columns and grand staircase, is the part that best resisted the fires of 1836 and 1996. Before entering the Palco Reale (Royal Box) to admire the theatre proper, you are shown an original-scale model of the 1792 theatre. The canal behind it was created especially. Theatre-going was long limited to the nobility, who arrived by gondola at what was then the main entrance. Today it's the goods entrance.

The seats can be removed to create an open space. In the 19th century, only part of the stalls had seats. The Fenice was to many nobles a kind of members-only club where, in winter especially, they would spend much of the day gambling, chatting and passing the time away. Many of Venice's great families were largely ruined and could not afford heating in their enormous *palazzi* (palaces or mansions). A clock (faithfully replicated) in the stage end of the ceiling reminded members when it was time to rush home and get tucked into bed! The habit of standing around in the stalls and chin-wagging extended to performances. They say the German composer Richard Wagner, when he first performed in Venice, insisted on the installation of seats and total silence during performances.

### PALAZZO CONTARINI DEL BOVOLO

Map pp62–3

041 271 90 12; Corte del Bovolo 4299; adult/child €3/2.50; closed for restoration until 2008;

This intriguing Renaissance mansion, hidden down narrow lanes off Campo Manin, takes its name from the dizzying external spiral (*bovolo* in Venetian) staircase. Built in the late-15th century, the palace maintains

a hint of the Gothic in its arches and capitals. You can enter the grounds and climb the staircase (when open), but it is perfectly visible from outside.

### PALAZZO FORTUNY

Map pp62–3  
 041 520 09 95; [www.museiciviciveneziani.it](http://www.museiciviciveneziani.it); Campo San Beneto 3780; admission depends on temporary exhibitions; 10am–6pm Tue–Sun during temporary exhibitions; Sant'Angelo You'll recognise this building instantly by its two rows of *hectafores*, each a series of eight connected Venetian-style windows. Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo, an eccentric Spanish painter and collector, bought the building at the beginning of the 20th century. He left his works here and, together with another 80 by the Roman artist Virgilio Guidi, they make up the bulk of the Museo Fortuny. After years spent firmly shut, some rooms of the *palazzo* now open for temporary exhibitions. For admission prices, see the boxed text on p61.

### PALAZZO FRANCHETTI

Map pp62–3  
 041 240 77 11; [www.istitutoveneto.it](http://www.istitutoveneto.it); Campo Santo Stefano 2842; adult/student €9/6; 10am–7pm; Accademia The 16th-century mansion, home to a private bank from 1922 to 1999, is now owned by the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti (Veneto Institute of the Sciences, Letters and Arts, founded by the Austrians in 1838), which has an impressive programme of exhibitions here. From the entrance off the *campo* (square) a grand 19th-century staircase winds up to the noble 1st floor. A series of magnificent halls, especially the central one and the three overlooking the Grand Canal, form the stage for exhibitions. When you're finished, head for the peaceful canalside garden.

### CHIESA DI SAN SALVADOR

Map pp62–3  
 041 523 67 17; [www.chiesasan salvador.it](http://www.chiesasan salvador.it); Campo San Salvador 4835; admission free; 9am–noon & 4–6pm Mon–Sat, 4–6pm Sun Jun–Aug, 9am–noon & 3–6pm Mon–Sat, 3–6pm Sun Sep–May; Rialto Built on a plan of three Greek crosses laid end to end, San Salvador is among the city's oldest churches, possibly dating from the 7th century (although the bulk of what you see dates from later periods). The present facade was erected in 1663. Among the noteworthy works inside is Tit-

ian's *Annunciazione* (Annunciation), at the third altar on the right as you approach the main altar. Behind the main altar is another of his contributions, *Trasfigurazione* (Transfiguration).

To the right of the church is the former monastery of the same name, now owned by the national phone company Telecom, which has installed a communications museum there – the *Telecom Future Centre* (p74).

### CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DEL GIGLIO

Map pp62–3

Campo di Santa Maria del Giglio 2541; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun; Santa Maria del Giglio

Also known as Santa Maria Zobenigo, this church's baroque facade is a fanciful atlas, centuries old, featuring maps of European cities as they were in 1678. The facade also hides the fact that a church has stood here since the 10th century.

The church is a small affair, but it's jammed with an assortment of paintings. Of particular interest is Peter Paul Rubens' *Madonna col Bambino e San Giovanni* (Madonna and Child with St John), the only work of his in Venice. Behind the altar lurk Tintoretto's typically moody depictions of the four Evangelists.

Outside, the oddly out-of-place brick structure in the middle of the *campo* was the base of the church's bell tower, knocked down in 1775 because it was in danger of falling over of its own accord.

### CHIESA DI SANTO STEFANO

Map pp62–3

Campo Santo Stefano 2773; admission to church free, admission to museum €2.50 or Chorus ticket;

10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun; Accademia

When you walk in here, look up at possibly the finest timber ceiling (*a carena di nave* – like an upturned ship's hull) of any church in Venice. It is one of several examples in Venice and, for anyone who has tramped around the great churches of Spain, starkly reminiscent of that nation's Muslim-influenced *artesonado* ceilings (coffered, timber ceilings). Then head for the small museum to the right of the altar, where a collection of Tintoretto's paintings has been crammed. Among the most notable are the *Ultima Cena* (Last Supper), *Lavanda dei Piedi* (Washing of the Feet) and *Orazione nell'Orto* (Agony in the Garden).

### CHIESA DI SAN VIDAL

Map pp62–3

Campo di San Vidal 2862; admission free; 9am–noon & 3.30–6pm Mon–Sat; Accademia No longer a functioning church, San Vidal has found a use as home to one of the many baroque-music groups active in Venice. If you find it open (hours are subject to whim), the main object of interest inside is Vittorio Carpaccio's *San Vitale a Cavallo e Otto Santi* (St Vitale on Horseback and Eight Saints) above the main altar.

### CHIESA DI SAN MOISÈ

Map pp62–3  
 041 528 58 40; Campo di San Moisè; admission free; 9.30am–12.30pm Mon–Sat; Vallaresso/San Marco

Legend has it that the first church in this spot was founded in the 8th century, but the rather unrestrained baroque facade you see today is a product of the 1660s. Inside, among the more interesting works on view is Tintoretto's *La Lavanda dei Piedi* (The Washing of the Feet), in the sanctuary to the left of the main altar, and Palma il Giovane's *La Cena* (The Supper), on the right side of the church.

### CHIESA DI SAN BARTOLOMEO

Map pp62–3

Campo San Bartolomeo 5178; admission free; 10am–noon Tue, Thu & Sat; Rialto

Long the parish church of the German community related to the nearby Fondaco dei Tedeschi, the church has undergone many reincarnations. Evidence suggests there was a church on this spot in the 9th century, but what you see today is the result of reworking in the wake of the building of the Ponte di Rialto and later changes. Much of the artwork inside is signed by Palma il Giovane.

### FONDACO DEI TEDESCHI

Map pp62–3

Salizada del Fontego dei Tedeschi 5346; admission free; 8.30am–6.30pm Mon–Sat; Rialto From the 13th century onwards the German trading community occupied a *fondaco* (or *fontego*, an accommodation and storage facility for foreign merchants) on this privileged site. After a fire in 1505, the present building was erected in under three years (by 1508) – not bad going.

It looks sombre now, but imagine the exterior adorned with frescoes by Giorgione and Titian – you can see fragments in the *Ca'd'Oro* (p91). When they turned up at the Palazzo Ducale to collect their payment of

150 ducats, the two artists were told their work was worth only 130 ducats. Incensed, they insisted on an independent appraisal, which confirmed the original figure. The artists were told that more than 130 ducats couldn't be arranged, so they could take it or leave it. Perhaps such penny-pinching lay partly behind Titian's increasing tendency to accept commissions from abroad!

Inside, the building is simple but dignified. The Germans used the porticoed floors above the courtyard as lodging and offices, storing their merchandise below. They even had their own well, which remains. The courtyard was covered over in 1937 and the building is now the central post office.

#### MUSEO DELLA MUSICA Map pp62–3

041 241 18 40; Campo San Maurizio 2761; admission free; 9.30am–7.30pm; 

Housed in the restored neoclassical Chiesa di San Maurizio, this collection of rare and often very curious instruments spans the 17th to 19th centuries and is accompanied by informative panels on the life and times of Antonio Vivaldi. On sale is a huge range of music by, among others, er, Vivaldi.

#### PONTE DELL'ACADEMIA Map pp62–3

Campo San Vidal & Campo della Carità; 

Built in 1934 to replace its 1854 iron predecessor, the last of the Grand Canal bridges was supposed to be a temporary arrangement. That seems to have been forgotten, and the municipality is forever having to patch this timber job up. From the middle, the views in both directions along the Grand Canal are spellbinding. One of the most common images from Venice is the view of the *Chiesa di Santa Maria della Salute* (p80) from this spot. The bridge links the *sestiere* of San Marco with Dorsoduro. In front of you across the bridge are the *Gallerie dell'Accademia* (opposite).

#### TELECOM FUTURE CENTRE Map pp62–3

041 521 32 00; [www.futurecentre.telecomitalia.it](http://www.futurecentre.telecomitalia.it); in Italian; Campo San Salvador 4826; admission free; 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 

Set up in the 15th-century cloisters of the adjacent Chiesa di San Salvador, this interactive museum of the future shows us how we might communicate decades from now – a little science-fiction fantasy in the heart of the venerable historic city. See how we will spend countless hours creating MMMail personalities, personal TV shows on the web or converting written messages in to the artificially spoken word. If you get lucky and stumble on a seminar in the 16th-century refectory you will be able to admire the beautifully frescoed barrel-vaulted ceiling.

## SESTIERE DI DORSODURO

Eating p172; Shopping p158; Sleeping p203

Just by the Ponte dell'Accademia crossing from San Marco, you can embark on some serious art discovery at the Gallerie dell'Accademia and Peggy Guggenheim Collection. Between them cluster a hive of small private galleries. This *sestiere* occupies the southern flank of Venice, looking onto the broad Canale della Fusina and Canale della Giudecca and receiving the full force of the sun (blistering in summer and blissful in winter). The district is mostly quiet and residential, with the one major exception of Campo Santa Margherita, a nightlife hub. It is also host to a broad smattering of some of the area's major sights.

Starting from the Punta della Dogana in the east, which will one day host a major new contemporary art museum, you quickly move to modern art of the 20th century in the Peggy Guggenheim Collection and the Old Masters in the Gallerie dell'Accademia. For more art and an insight into the city's past, you shouldn't miss Ca' Rezzonico.

Behind the Fondamenta Zattere, the broad, south-facing Venetian boardwalk, a series of quiet canals run. Two *squeros*, or gondola repair yards, still operate in these parts.

West of the boisterous Campo Santa Margherita, with its bars and eateries, the area becomes eerily quiet, except where the university faculties breathe student life into the once louche district around the Chiesa di San Nicolò dei Mendicoli. South of Campo Santa Margherita a scattering of good eateries, especially around Campo San Barnaba and a handful of boutique and designer hotels add to the attraction of the area.

All Grand Canal vaparetto stop at Accademia, while vaporetto 1 also calls at Ca' Rezzonico and Salute. A branch line of vaporetto 82 and the N night vaporetto call at Zattere and San Basilio. Numbers 51, 52, 61 and 62 also call at Zattere and San Basilio.

#### GALLERIE DELL'ACADEMIA Map pp76–7

041 522 22 47, bookings 041 520 03 45; [www.gallerieaccademia.org](http://www.gallerieaccademia.org) in Italian; Campo della Carità 1050; adult/under 12yr, EU citizen under 18yr or over 65yr/EU citizen 18–25yr €6.50/free/3.25, video guide €6, audio guide €4; 8.15am–2pm Mon, 8.15am–7.15pm Tue–Sun; 

The single greatest repository of classic Venetian art lies here. The former church and convent of Santa Maria della Carità, with additions by Palladio, houses a swath of works that runs from the 14th to the 18th centuries. Renovation and expansion of the gallery (which now displays about 400 works) should be ready in 2008 and allow the display of another 250 works in storage. For admission prices, also see the boxed text on p61.

In 1750, the rococo painter Gian Battista Piazzetta founded the art school that later became the Accademia, Venice's official arbiter of artistic taste. The academy and its collections were moved here by Napoleon in 1807 and opened to the public 10 years later. The first works came from churches and other religious institutions suppressed during Napoleonic rule. Later additions came from private collections. In 1878, the galleries were hived off from the art school and passed into state control. Acquisitions have continued ever since.

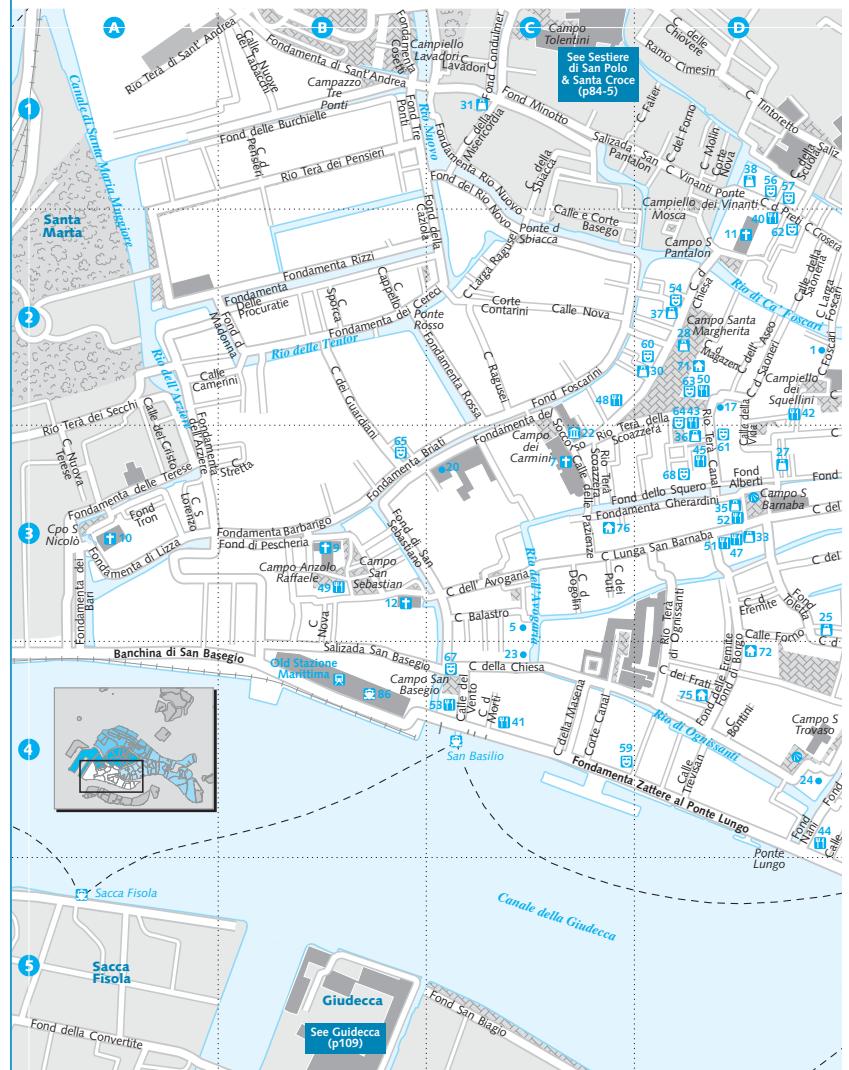
Ticket in hand, head upstairs to Sala 1, where the galleries' more or less chronological display begins. This was the main meeting hall of the Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Carità, the oldest of the Scuole Grandi (see the boxed text, p87).

The magnificent timber ceiling is divided into squares; at the centre of each is a sculpted face – every one different – of an angel. The room is given over to religious art of the 14th century, including Paolo Veneziano's *Madonna col Bambino e i Due Committenti* (Madonna and Child with Two Donors).

Sala 2, designed by Carlo Scarpa and with an unusual black *terrazzo alla Veneziana* floor, includes a couple of works each by Giovanni Bellini, Vittore Carpaccio and Cima da Conegliano. Note the commonality in themes adopted by all three in their depictions of the Madonna and child (for instance, the musicians at the Madonna's feet).

The most enthralling of the works is, however, Carpaccio's altarpiece *Crocifissione e Apoteosi dei 10,000 Martiri del Monte Ararat* (Crucifixion and Apotheosis of the 10,000 Martyrs of Mt Ararat). The story goes that some 10,000 Roman soldiers sent to quell rebellion in Armenia instead converted to Christianity. The Emperor sent more troops

## SESTIERE DI DORSODURO

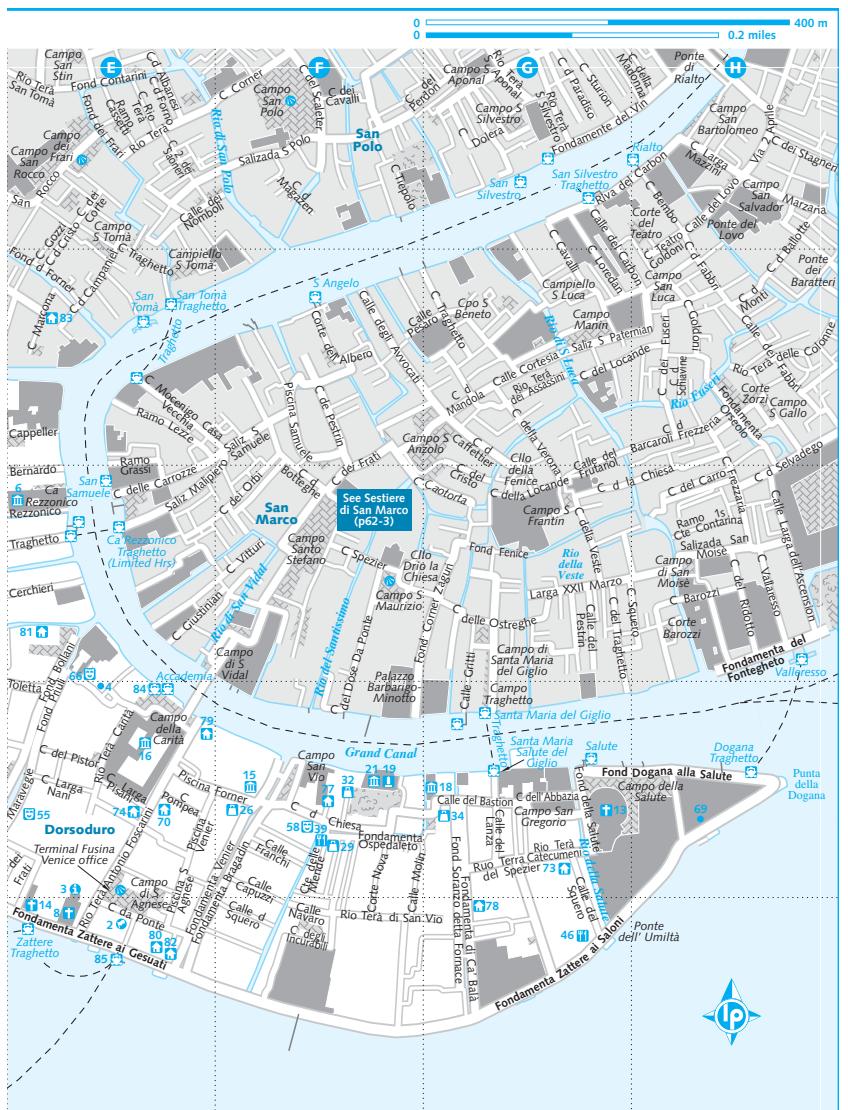


with orders to subject the 10,000 to the same trials that Christ had suffered if they didn't change their minds. The result was a massacre. The painting, representing a kind of collective sainthood, was a departure from the standard depiction of one or two saints in religious painting. The soldiers all have the appearance of Christ, while their executioners appear in the garb of nasty Turks – no doubt reflecting Venetian and

European feelings towards the infidels of their own time.

More works by Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano grace Sala 3, but the most curious is the faded fresco by Giorgione of a nude woman that once adorned the Fondaco dei Tedeschi.

In Sale 4 and 5 offers a mixed bag, which includes the work of some non-Venetians. These include Andrea Mantegna's *San*



*Giorgio (St George)* and works by Cosmè Tura, Piero della Francesca and Jacopo Bellini. In Bellini's pieces, note the comparative stiffness of his characters, a faithful reflection of a painting style still crossing over from earlier Gothic tenets. Bellini's son Giovanni has 11 paintings here, and the greater suppleness and reality of expression is clear – take, for instance, the remarkable *Madonna col Bambino tra le Sante Caterina*

e Maddalena (Madonna and Child Between Saints Catherine and Mary Magdalene).

The most striking paintings in these rooms are the two rare contributions by Giorgione, *La Tempesta* (The Storm) and *La Vecchia* (The Old Woman). Both are way ahead of their time. Look at the latter closely. The lines and brush strokes, the look in the eyes, indeed the very subject matter would be more at home in a collection of

## SESTIERE DI DORSODURO

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19th-century portraiture than in a Renaissance collection.

In Sala 6 are works by Tintoretto and Veronese, and one by Titian of St John the Baptist. In Tintoretto's *La Creazione degli Animali* (The Creation of the Animals) you can see the thick, splashy paint strokes that characterised much of this Mannerist painter's work. His use of muted crimsons and blues in this and other works reminds one of Spain's El Greco. Or rather, in Tintoretto's work you can see support for the claim that El Greco took with him to Spain a good deal of what he had learned in Venice.

The main interest in Sale 7 and 8 is Lorenzo Lotto's *Ritratto del Giovane Gentiluomo nel Suo Studio* (Portrait of a Young Gentleman in His Studio). What's the lizard doing on his desk?

In Sala 10 you are confronted by some major works, one of the highlights of which is Veronese's *Convito in Casa di Levi* (Feast in the House of Levi). Originally called *Ultima Cena* (Last Supper), the painting's

name was changed at the behest of the Inquisition (see p46). The room also contains one of Titian's last works, *Pietà*. The almost nightmarish quality of the faces has a Goya-esque touch and reflects, perhaps, the fact that Titian was working on it during an epidemic of the plague. Indeed, he died before finishing the work. Finally, there are some remarkable Tintorettos dedicated to the theme of St Mark. The *Trafugamento del Corpo di San Marco* (Stealing of St Mark's Body) is a mighty example of this artist's daring with a brush and the swirling movement he breathed into his subjects.

Less volatile but equally striking is Tintoretto's *Crocifissione* (Crucifixion) in Sala 11, where you can also admire frescoes by Giambattista Tiepolo salvaged from the Chiesa dei Scalzi after an Austrian bomb missed its target (the nearby train station) in 1915 and hit the church.

The following rooms are largely a procession of less impressive works, with the odd source of interest here and there (such as a

couple of works by Francesco Guardi and another attributed to Canaletto in Sala 17).

Just as you might have thought the exhibition was losing steam, you enter Sala 20. The crowd scenes, splashes of red and activity pouring from the canvases in this cycle dedicated to the *Miracoli della Vera Croce* (Miracles of the True Cross) come as a shock. They were carried out by Vittore Carpaccio, Gentile Bellini and others for the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista, home to a relic of the true Cross. Today, much of their fascination lies in the depiction of a Venice of centuries ago, with gondolas tooling about, classic Venetian chimneys in evidence everywhere and a faithful depiction of the timber Rialto bridge that preceded the present one. Bellini's *Processione in Piazza San Marco* gives us a remarkable time-travel look at the Basilica di San Marco and its square of centuries ago. It is curious to observe what has changed and what hasn't.

Carpaccio's extraordinary series of nine paintings recounting the life of St Ursula (Santa Orseola) follows in Sala 21.

Sala 22 hosts a few neoclassical sculptures, while Sala 23 is actually the late-Gothic former Chiesa di Santa Maria della Carità. Several works from the Bellini workshops are on display. The area is often used for temporary expositions, too. The last room (Sala 24) was the Sala dell'Albergo (a kind of reception area of what was the Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Carità), and is dominated by an exquisite timber ceiling and Titian's *Presentazione di Maria al Tempio* (Presentation of Mary at the Temple).

It is possible to see another 88 works of Veneto art spanning the 15th to 18th centuries in the Quadreria on the 2nd floor, but only on Friday mornings by appointment (✉ 041 522 24 47).

### PEGGY GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION

Map pp76-7

☎ 041 240 54 11; [www.guggenheim-venice.it](http://www.guggenheim-venice.it); Palazzo Venier dai Leoni, Fondamenta Venier dai Leoni 701; adult/senior over 65/student to 26/child to 11 €10/8/5/free; ✉ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon;  Accademia

Peggy Guggenheim called the unfinished, truncated Palazzo Venier dai Leoni home for 30 years until her death in 1979 (for an explanation of why this one-storey building remained unfinished, see p124). She left behind a collection of works by her favourite modern artists, representing most of the major movements of the 20th century.

Miss Guggenheim came into her fortune in 1921 and set off for Europe from North America. During the 1930s she developed a voracious appetite for contemporary art (and some of the artists!). She opened an art gallery in London in 1938, the Guggenheim Jeune, and embarked on a programme of collection that continued well into 1940. Seemingly oblivious to the conflagration raging around her, she returned to New York from Paris only when the Nazis were at the city gates. In New York she opened the Art of this Century gallery in 1942, but five years later returned to Europe. By 1949, her home and museum in Venice was open to the public. The Palazzo Venier dai Leoni was so called because, it is said, the Venier family kept lions here. Peggy herself preferred the company of dogs – many of them are buried alongside her own grave in the sculpture garden.

The bulk of the collection is housed in the east wing. It's the pleasing result of an eclectic collector's whim, and the list of greats of 20th-century art is long. Among the early Cubist paintings *The Poet* (1911) and *Pipe, Glass, Bottle of Vieux Marc* (1914) by Picasso, and Georges Braque's *The Clarinet* (1912). Look out also for Picasso's *Sulla Spiaggia* (On the Beach; 1937) in the main entrance. There are a couple of Kandinskys, including his *Upward* (1929). Interesting works from Spain include Dalí's *Birth of Liquid Desires* (1932) – a classic example of his psycho-sick 'eroticism' – and Miró's *Seated Woman II* (1939).

It wouldn't be right if Max Ernst, Guggenheim's husband and doyen of surrealism, were not represented. Among his many paintings on show is the disturbing *Antipope* (1942). Other names to look for include Jackson Pollock (his 1946 *Circoncisione* looks painful!), Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning, Paul Delvaux, Alexander Calder, Juan Gris, Kurt Schwitters, Paul Klee, Emilio Vedova, Francis Bacon, Giorgio de Chirico, Piet Mondrian and Marc Chagall. The sculpture garden is sprinkled with works by, among others, Henry Moore and Jean Arp. The pieces on display in the garden change regularly.

The rear of the mansion hosts a separate collection of Italian futurists and other modern artists from the peninsula, collected by Gianni Mattioli. Artists include Umberto Boccioni (in particular his mesmerising *Materia*, a powerful portrait of the artist's mother done in 1912), Giorgio

Morandi and Giacomo Balla, and there is one early work by Amedeo Modigliani.

Temporary exhibitions are held in the new wing on the western side of the garden. A highly agreeable café overlooks the garden.

### CA' REZZONICO (MUSEO DEL SETTECENTO VENEZIANO) Map pp76–7

041 241 01 00; [www.museiciviciveneziani.it](http://www.museiciviciveneziani.it); Fondamenta Rezzonico 3136; adult/student & child €6.50/4.50; 10am–6pm Wed–Mon Apr–Oct, 10am–5pm Wed–Mon Nov–Mar; Ca' Rezzonico

This superb 17th- to 18th-century mansion, facing the Grand Canal, houses, or rather is, the **Museum of the 18th Century**. Designed by Longhena and completed in the 1750s by Massari, it was home to several notables over the years, including the poet Robert Browning, who died here. The grand residence holds a collection of 18th-century art and furniture, and provides a rare insight into how the Venetian nobility lived towards the end of La Serenissima.

A staircase by the ground floor cafeteria leads up to the so-called Browning Mezzanine, home to the Mestrovich collection, including a few pieces by Tintoretto and Francesco Guardi.

The main, broad staircase by Massari ascends from the ground floor to the *piano nobile* (noble or 1st floor). This leads to the Salone da Ballo (Ballroom), a splendid hall dripping with frescoes and richly furnished with 18th-century couches, tables and ebony statues. There follows a series of rooms jammed with period furniture, *objets d'art* and plenty of paintings.

Particularly noteworthy is Tiepolo's ceiling fresco in the Sala del Trono (Throne Room), the *Allegoria del Merito tra Nobiltà e Virtù* (Allegory of Merit Between Nobility and Virtue). Tiepolo contributed several other frescoes and paintings, as did his son Giandomenico. The second floor is dominated by a fresco cycle by Giandomenico Tiepolo, which was moved here from a mainland villa at Zaniago (a village near Mirano). On both floors you will see works by Pietro Longhi, Francesco Guardi, Rosalba Carriera, Canaletto, as well as others.

On the 3rd floor are the contents of an 18th-century pharmacy that had existed in Campo San Stin until 1908. Beyond is the Egidio Martini art bequest, with an eclectic collection of Venetian paintings from the

16th to the 20th century, taking in pieces by many of the greats.

For information on special tickets and admission prices, also see the boxed text on p61.

### CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA SALUTE Map pp76–7

041 522 55 58; [www.seminariovenezia.it](http://www.seminariovenezia.it), in Italian; Campo della Salute 1b; sacristy €1.50; 9am–noon & 3–5.30pm; Salute

Possibly the city's most familiar silhouette, this bulging baroque beast is one of Longhena's masterpieces. Seen from close up, it's difficult to take it all in, but Longhena knew what he was doing and deliberately designed a monument to be admired from afar. Indeed it is more impressive on the outside than within, with one significant exception, the sacristy.

Longhena was commissioned to build the church in honour of the Virgin Mary, to whose intervention was attributed the end of a long and nasty outbreak of plague in 1630. The ranks of statues that festoon the exterior culminate in one of the Virgin Mary on top of the dome. The church is built on what amounts to a huge raft of, it is said, a million tightly knit pylons hammered into the lagoon floor.

The octagonal form of the church is unusual. Longhena's idea was to design it in the form of a crown for the Mother of God. Dominating the body of the church is the extraordinary baroque *altar maggiore*, into which is embedded a Cretan icon of Mary.

The sacristy ceiling is bedecked with three remarkable Titians. The figures depicted are so full of curvaceous movement they seem to be caught in a washing machine! The three scenes are replete with high emotion, depicting the struggles between Caino e Abele (Cain and Abel), David e Golia (David and Goliath) and finally Abraham and his conscience in *Il Sacrificio di Isaaco* (The Sacrifice of Isaac). Titian's eight medallions, depicting saints, are intriguing. St Mark seems to be winking to himself, while you could swear that, under his swirling beard, San Girolamo (St Jerome) is having a quiet chuckle.

The other star of the sacristy is Tintoretto's *Le Nozze di Cana* (The Wedding Feast of Cana), filled with an unusual amount of bright and cheerful light by Tintoretto's rather morose standards.

### SCUOLA GRANDE DEI CARMINI

Map pp76–7

041 528 94 20; Campo Santa Margherita 2617; adult/senior & student €5/4; 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, 9am–4pm Sun Apr–Oct, 9am–4pm Nov–Mar; Ca' Rezzonico

Just before you bump into the church of the same name at the southwest end of Campo Santa Margherita, you pass this *scuola* (literally, school; religious confraternity), with numerous paintings by Tiepolo and others. Tiepolo's nine ceiling paintings in the Salone Superiore (Upper Hall) depict the virtues surrounding the Virgin in Glory. The monochrome paintings downstairs are striking, and a rare display of black and white on canvas in Venice. The ceiling *boiserie* (carved timber) are of extraordinary richness, while Longhena's Scalone (grand staircase linking the ground with the 1st floor) is a good-humoured baroque tunnel.

### CHIESA DI SAN PANTALON Map pp76–7

041 523 58 93; Campo San Pantalon 3765; admission free; 3–6pm Mon–Sat; San Tomà

The stark, unfinished brick façade dates from the 17th century, although a church was here as early as the 11th century. Inside, the greatest impact comes from the 40 canvases representing the *Martirio e Gloria di San Pantaleone* (Martyrdom and Glory of St Pantaleone), painted for the ceiling by Giovanni Antonio Fumiani. The artist died in a fall from scaffolding while at work and is buried in the church. Veronese, Vivarini and Palma il Giovane have works here, too.

Stroll off right down a dogleg blind alley to Campiello Ca' Angara. On the wall (numbers 3717 and 3718) is a sculpted medallion of what could be a Byzantine ruler, dating perhaps to the 8th century. That is one of the remarkable things about Venice – what would anywhere else have long been removed and put behind glass here remains in the streets.

### CHIESA DI SAN SEBASTIAN Map pp76–7

Campo San Sebastian 1687; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun; San Basilio

Veronese's final resting place, this Renaissance remake of an earlier church is often attributed to architect Antonio Scarpagnino (c 1505–49). Inside, Veronese went to town, decorating the interior with frescoes and canvases that cover a good deal of space

on the ceiling and walls. The organ is his work, too, with scenes from Christ's life on its shutters. Titian left a notable item here as well – his *San Nicolò* (St Nicholas), first on the right as you enter.

### PALAZZO DARIO Map pp76–7

Ramo Ca' Dario 352; Salute

You can get some impression of this late-Gothic mansion (aka Ca' Dario) from the rear, but to really appreciate it you need to see the façade – a unique Renaissance marble facing that was taken down and reattached in the 19th century – from the Grand Canal. It was one of the first of Venice's Renaissance buildings to be faced entirely in marble. The building looks unsteady and many Venetians view it with misgiving, given that most of its owners – starting with the daughter of the man who had it built in 1479–87, Giovanni Dario – seem to have met mysterious or miserable ends, lost fortunes or become frightfully ill. Just staying here seems to be tempting fate. One week after renting the place for a holiday, The Who's bass player, John Entwhistle, died of a heart attack in June 2002. Some people can't read signs: the band's former manager and then owner of the building had committed suicide there decades earlier. Film director Woody Allen supposedly backed off from buying it in the 1990s, just in case.

### PALAZZO ZENOBIO Map pp76–7

041 522 87 70; Fondamenta del Soccorso 2597; admission €5; call to book tours; San Basilio

This grand baroque structure has housed the Collegio Armeno dei Padri Mechitaristi (Armenian College of Mechitarist Fathers) since the mid-19th century. The structure is the handiwork of Antonio Gaspari, but apart from the grand curved tympanum, the exterior of the building tells you little. To behold the Sala della Musica (Music Room), also called the Sala dei Specchi (Hall of Mirrors) is to witness Gaspari's voluptuous décor at its bubbly baroque extreme. This and adjacent rooms are handsomely decorated with frescoes depicting scenes from ancient mythology. The building is a world unto itself, with dormitories, classrooms, grand kitchen and halls used for expositions. The exuberant garden is sometimes the scene of private receptions, concerts and the like.

Guided tours can be organised by calling ahead.

### CHIESA DEI CARMINI Map pp76–7

041 296 06 30; Campo dei Carmini 2617; admission free; 9am–5.30pm Mon–Sat; Ca' Rezzonico

What remains of the original 14th-century Byzantine and then Gothic church sits a little uneasily beside the richer, and perhaps less digestible, ornament of the 16th and 17th centuries. Among the paintings on view are several works by Cima da Conegliano and Lorenzo Lotto.

### CHIESA DEI GESUATI Map pp76–7

Fondamenta Zattere ai Gesuati 909; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun; Ca' Zattere

Built for the Dominicans by a team of architects under Giorgio Massari from 1726 to 1735, this imposing church is more properly known as the *Chiesa di Santa Maria del Rosario*. It contains three ceiling frescoes by Tiepolo telling the story of St Dominic – the appearance to the saint of the Virgin Mary, the institution of the rosary (hence the church's official name) and St Dominic in glory. Tiepolo also had a hand in the frescoes in the dome, while Tintoretto left behind a *Crociissione* in his typically flowing reds and blues on the left side of the church nearest the altar.

Virtually next door is the little-visited *Chiesa di Santa Maria della Visitazione* (Map pp76–7), also called Santa Maria degli Artigianelli, which has a curious 15th-century chessboard timber ceiling with numerous scenes depicting the Visitation. Opening hours are erratic.

### CHIESA DELL'ARCANGELO RAFFAELE Map pp76–7

041 522 85 48; Campo Anzolo Rafael 1721; admission free; 9am–noon & 4–6pm Mon–Sat; San Basilio

The two towers of this stout church can be seen from all over southern Dorsoduro. The church was initially raised in the 7th century and for a long time it was the focus of community life for the quarter's fishing families. The present church dates to the 17th century. The series of paintings inside above the main entrance of this *chiesa* has been attributed to the Guardi brothers, but no-one is sure which one – the *vedutista* (landscape artist) Francesco or his lesser-known elder brother Gian Antonio (1699–1760).

### CHIESA DI SAN NICOLÒ DEI MENDICOLI Map pp76–7

041 528 45 65; Campo San Nicolò 1907; 10am–noon & 4–6pm Mon–Sat; San Basilio

Although fiddled with over the centuries, this church still preserves elements of the 13th-century original. The portico attached to one side was used to shelter the poor. The whole area was downtrodden and known for its *mendicoli*, or beggars. The church's tiny square, bound in by the canals and featuring a pylon bearing the winged lion of St Mark (one of the few not to have been destroyed under Napoleon), is at the heart of one of the oldest parishes in Venice.

### GALLERIA DI PALAZZO CINI Map pp76–7

041 521 07 55; www.cini.it; Piscina Forner 864; occasionally for temporary exhibitions; Accademia

With luck you may get to look at this curious collection of Tuscan intruders. Oddly, the main façade of this 16th-century building looks over the Rio di San Vio rather than the Grand Canal. Spread out over two floors are around 30 works, mostly from the 14th and 15th centuries, including some by Lippi, Piero della Francesca (*Madonna col Bambino*), Botticelli (*Il Giudizio di Paride*, or The Judgment of Paris) and Beato Angelico.

## SESTIERI DI SAN POLO & SANTA CROCE

Eating p173; Shopping p159; Sleeping p205

These two *sestieri* together form a neat whole, sandwiched in between Piazzale Roma and the Ponte di Rialto on the south side of the Grand Canal. The nature of the district changes enormously from the bustle of the ageless markets around Rialto to the jaw-dropping art of the Frari and Scuola Grande di San Rocco in the south, or the dreary Piazzale Roma bus station in the west.

Around the Ponte di Rialto a web of lanes converging on the produce markets is peppered with shops of all sorts and some wonderful old-time eateries, tiny bars and *cicheterie* (snack bars). Wandering southwest via the busy expanse of Campo San Polo you arrive at the Frari and then the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, a Tintoretto feast. From there you could walk directly west through tourist-free streets to reach Piazzale Roma.

Plunging deeper into the maze, you would find yourself up and down bridges and scurrying along lanes, some shop-lined and busy but most quiet, only to pop out every now and then in lovely, homey squares like Campo San Giacomo dell'Orio, itself home to a handful of places that will surely entice you to stop for a bite or drink. Major sights to visit include, above all, Ca' Pesaro.

Closer to Piazzale Roma you run into a student area around the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia (IUAV). Further west and south of Piazzale Roma, the truly adventurous could wander right off the beaten track into the Santa Marta area, once known for drug-dealing and still pretty run-down.

A plethora of vaporetti call at Piazzale Roma and Ferrovia, putting you in (or very close to) the northwest corner of Santa Croce. Otherwise, line 1 calls at Riva de Biasio, San Stae (the N stops here too), San Silvestro and San Tomà (82 and N call here as well). The Rialto stop, on the other side of the canal, is handy (lines 1, 4, 82 and N). The Rialto Mercato stop (line 1) is in use during the day only.

### CA' PESARO Map pp84–5

041 72 11 27; www.museiciviciveneziani.it; Fondamenta di Ca' Pesaro, Santa Croce 2076; adult/senior, student & child €5.50/3, see also Special Tickets; 10am–6pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, 10am–5pm Tue–Sun Nov–Mar; San Stae

Home to the *Galleria d'Arte Moderna* (Modern Art Gallery) since 1902, the mighty Ca' Pesaro was designed for one of Venice's senior families by Longhena, in a muted baroque style much influenced by the Renaissance ideas of Sansovino, and finished in 1710 by Antonio Gaspari, after Longhena's death. He died worrying about the mounting construction bills!

What you see here includes works purchased from the Biennale art festival, and an eclectic array of Italian and international modern art.

The *androne* (main ground-floor hall) is typical of the great patricians' mansions in Venice. You can look out over the Grand Canal from one side, while the inland end fronts onto a sunny courtyard dominated by a monumental fountain.

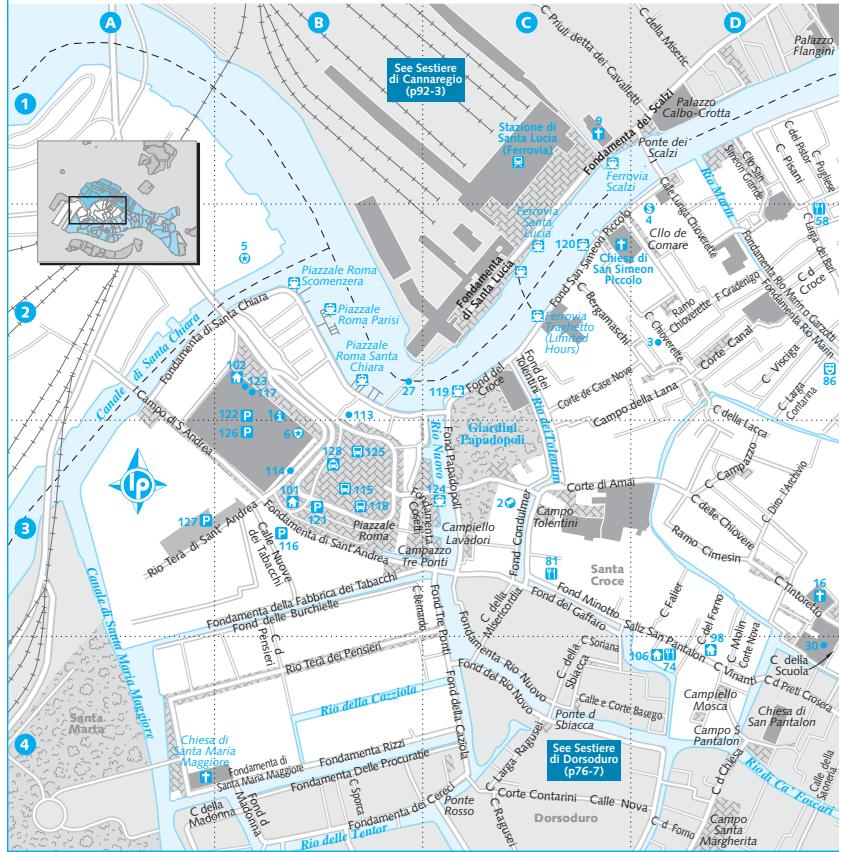
Up on the 1st floor is the central grand hall, or *portego*. Again facing the Grand Canal and the rear courtyard, it is the main artery

off which branch other rooms. While looking at the art on the walls, don't neglect the fine original ceiling frescoes and admirable terrazzo *alla Veneziana* floors. The building faithfully reflects the grandeur to which the Republic's senior families were accustomed.

The art starts with late-19th-century Venetian works (such as Giacomo Favretto's scenes from Venice) and broadens into a series of works from the same period by other Italians. After that it gets more interesting, with material from the early Biennale years and the 1930s, such as Klimt's *Judith II (Salomé)*, and artists including Kandinsky, Chagall, Matisse, Paul Klee and Spain's Joaquim Sorolla. Next come striking sculptures by the Milanese Adolfo Wildt, and then the eclectic De Lisi collection, with works by De Chirico, Miró, Kandinsky and Yves Tanguy. Max Ernst, Henry Moore and others follow in a room dedicated to the 1940s and 1950s. The final two rooms again return to Italian, and more specifically Venetian, art of the 1950s (including Emilio Vedova).

Upstairs is the curious *Museo d'Arte Orientale* (Museum of Oriental Art), one of the most important collections in Europe of

## **SESTIERI DI SAN POLO & SANTA CROCE (SANTA CROSE)**



Edo-period art and objects from Japan. During a two-year world tour in the 1820s, Count Enrico di Borbone amassed a store of Japanese arms and light armour (the samurai preferred ease of movement over heavy protection, judging their best defence to be their fencing skills) dating from the 17th to the 19th century. The display is replete with porcelain, art and elegant household objects, from snuff boxes to ladies' toiletry cabinets. The whole scene is fascinating, as the collection has been left much as it was organised in 1928, giving it a delightfully musty feel.

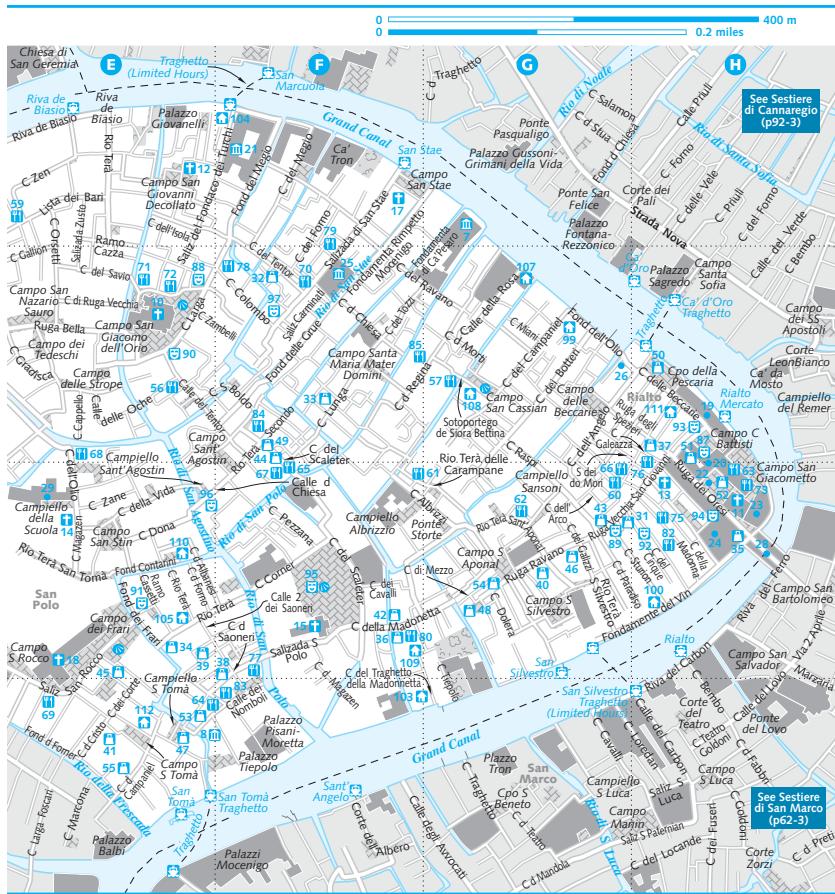
**RIALTO** Map pp84–5

 Rialto

Rivoalto (later contracted to Rialto), the highest spot in the collection of islets that

formed the nucleus of the lagoon city, was one of the areas of first settlement – although the more active part was initially on the San Marco side of the bridge. The San Polo side slowly gained the ascend-  
ance and became the centre of trade and banking for the Republic. This is where  
dosh traded hands, voyages were bank-  
rolled, insurance was arranged and news  
(or gossip) was exchanged.

The area continues to buzz with the activity of the daily **produce and fish markets** – why break the habit of 700 years? The **Fabbriche Vecchie** (Old Buildings), along the **Ruga degli Orefici**, were created by Scarpagnino in 1522. They were designed to accommodate markets at ground level and house offices in the upper levels. Next door is the **Palazzo dei Dieci Savi** (Palace of the Ten Wise



Men). The Dieci Savi administered taxes (the building now houses the Magistrato alle Acque, or Water Administration). The **Fabbriche Nuove** (New Buildings), running along the Grand Canal, went up in 1555 to designs by Sansovino and became home to magistrates' courts. Other magistrates, the 'chamberlains', were housed in a separate Renaissance edifice, the curious, five-sided **Palazzo dei Camerlenghi**, designed by Guglielmo dei Grigi. At ground level were prisons for common offenders.

The **Pescaria** (Fish Market, see p164), which extends into Campo delle Beccarie, was rebuilt in neo-Gothic style in 1907. They have been selling fresh fish here since 1300. While in Campo delle Beccarie, spare a thought for the Querini family. One wing of their house still looks onto the square, but

the rest was demolished in 1310 in reprisal for having backed the revolt against Doge Pietro Gradenigo.

From the Rialto docks, crusader fleets set sail. While men and provisions were gathered, knights and other notables stayed in hostels just behind the Fabbriche Nuove. Others camped out on Giudecca or around the Chiesa di San Nicolò on the Lido. They would hear their last Mass on land for some time in the [Chiesa di San Giacomo di Rialto](#). Virtually in the middle of the market, off the Ruga degli Orefici, it was supposedly founded on 25 March 421, the same day as the city.

Across the square from the church is a statue of a man bent beneath the weight of a staircase. Sculpted in 1541, the staircase allowed officials of the Republic to climb

## SESTIERI DI SAN POLO & SANTA CROCE (SANTA CROSE)

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onto the adjacent trunk of an ancient column to proclaim official decrees. Known to Venetians as **Il Gobbo** (The Hunchback), the statue also represented the finishing line for criminals sentenced to be paraded and flogged through the streets from Piazza San Marco. On reaching **Il Gobbo** they would kiss the statue, thus marking the end of their torment. The Church disapproved, not of the punishment, and eventually

ordained that the prisoners should kiss a small cross, etched for the purpose into a pillar to the left of **Il Gobbo**.

### PONTE DI RIALTO Map pp84-5



Given Rialto's importance from the earliest days of the Republic, it is hardly surprising that the city's first bridge over the Grand Canal was built here. The crossing had a

chequered history before Antonio da Ponte (Anthony of the Bridge) built this robust marble version. Commissioned in 1588, it cost 250,000 ducats, an enormous sum. Antonio's design beat others by Palladio and Michelangelo. When it was completed in 1592, all concerned must have been happy with the result – which has lasted nicely in the four centuries since.

The first bridge was little more than a dodgy pontoon arrangement thrown across the canal around 1180. A more permanent wooden structure was built in 1265, but it was cut in two in 1310 as Baiamonte Tiepolo and his fellow rebels beat a hasty retreat on horseback (see Knocking Rebellion on the Head, p25). The bridge was repaired, but it collapsed in a heap in 1444 under the weight of a crowd straining to watch the wedding procession of the Marquis of Ferrara. It was again rebuilt, as a timber drawbridge, before finally being dismantled and replaced by da Ponte's version.

### CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA GLORIOSA DEI FRARI Map pp84-5

Campo dei Frari, San Polo 3004; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 1-6pm Sun; 🏛 San Tomà

If you have seen Notre Dame in Paris or Cologne's Dom, you might be thinking: what is so Gothic about the Frari? Built for the Franciscans in the 14th and 15th centuries of brick rather than stone, and bereft of flying buttresses, pinnacles, gargoyles

and virtually any other sign of decoration inside or out, it is a singularly austere interpretation of the style. Nevertheless, some features give it away, among them the Latin-cross plan (with three naves and a transept), the high vaulted ceiling and its sheer, soaring size. A look inside is a must on any art-lover's tour of the city.

The simplicity of the interior (a red-and-white marble floor, with the same colours dominating the walls and ceiling) is offset by the paintings and funereal monuments. Titian is the main attraction. His dramatic *Assunta* (Assumption; 1518), above the high altar, praised unreservedly by all and sundry as a work of inspired genius, represents a key moment in his rise as one of the city's greatest artists.

Another of his masterpieces, the *Madonna di Ca' Pesaro* (Madonna of Ca' Pesaro), hangs above the Pesaro altar (in the left-hand aisle, near the choir stalls). Also of note are Giovanni Bellini's triptych in the apse of the sacristy, and Donatello's statue of *Giovanni Battista* (John the Baptist) in the first chapel to the right of the high altar.

### SCUOLA GRANDE DI SAN ROCCO

Map pp84-5

041 523 48 64; www.scuolagrandesanrocco.it; Campo San Rocco, San Polo 3052; adult/under 18yr/18-26yr €7/free/5; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Easter-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Easter; 🏛 San Tomà

Scarpagnino's Renaissance façade (exhibiting a hint of the baroque to come), with

### WHEN SCHOOL WAS COOL

When the welfare state had not even been dreamed of, the *scuola* (literally, school) served as a community and religious association. Its lay members formed a *confraternita* (brotherhood) under a patron saint and, apart from acting as a religion-based club, they dealt with such matters as financial assistance to the families of members fallen on hard times. The *scuola*, along with the parish church, formed the backbone of local social life and was regulated by the *mariegola* (from the Latin *matricula*), a kind of club rulebook.

The division between the rich and powerful big six (the Scuole Grandi, dedicated to San Marco, San Rocco, San Teodoro, San Giovanni Evangelista, Santa Maria della Misericordia and Santa Maria della Carità) and the rest (the Scuole Minori) was decreed in the 15th century. The Scuola dei Carmini was added to the big league in 1767. The bigger schools were born in the 13th century out of the movement of self-flagellants that had spread across Italy from Umbria.

The smaller *scuole* totalled about 400, many without a fixed headquarters. Pretty much all the city's workers' and artisans' guilds had their *scuola* and patron saint. The clergy was excluded from membership and wealthier members paid dues that in part were used to aid less fortunate ones. As club, welfare and cultural centre, and rallying point for the big parades and religious events in the city, the role of the *scuola* in Venetian society was fundamental and unique in Italy.

Early in the 19th century, all but San Rocco were suppressed under Napoleon. Some of the richer ones lost a good number of their works of art and precious artefacts in the course of heavy-handed plundering by the French. A few of the *scuole* were later resurrected and continue to combine religious, charitable and cultural functions.

its white-marble columns and overbearing magnificence, seems uncomfortably squeezed into the tight space of the narrow square below it. Whatever you make of the exterior of this *scuola* dedicated to St Roch, nothing can prepare you for what lies inside.

St Roch was born in 1295 in Montpellier, France, and at the age of 20 began wandering through southern France and Italy helping plague victims. He died in 1327 and a cult soon developed to celebrate his memory. His body was transferred to Venice as a kind of plague-prevention measure in 1485 (you can never be too careful when it comes to the plague).

After winning a competition (Veronese was among his rivals), Tintoretto went on to devote 23 years of his life to decorating the school. The concentration of more than 50 paintings by the master is altogether too much for the average human to digest. Start upstairs (Scarpagnino designed the staircase) in the Sala Grande Superiore (Upper Great Hall). Here you can pick up mirrors to carry around to avoid getting a sore neck while inspecting the ceiling paintings, which depict Old Testament episodes. Around the walls are scenes from the New Testament. A handful of works by other artists (such as Titian, Giorgione and Tiepolo) can also be seen. To give your eyes a rest from the paintings, inspect the woodwork below them – it is studded with curious designs, including a false book collection.

Downstairs, the walls of the confraternity's assembly hall feature a series on the life of the Virgin Mary, starting on the left wall with the *Annunciazione* (Annunciation) and ending with the *Assunzione* (Assumption) opposite.

#### PALAZZO MOENIGO Map pp84–5

041 72 17 98; [www.museiciviciveneziani.it](http://www.museiciviciveneziani.it); Salizada di San Stae, Santa Croce 1992; adult/senior, student & child €4/2.50, see also Special Tickets; 10am–5pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, 10am–4pm Tue–Sun Nov–Mar; San Stae

This mansion belonged to one of the most important families of the Republic. Originally a Gothic pile, it was overhauled in the 17th century and is typical of Venetian patricians' lodgings. The 16th-century philosopher Giordano Bruno was hosted here for a time by the Mocenigo family, who then betrayed him and handed him over

to the Inquisition. (He was subsequently tortured and burnt at the stake in Rome for heresy.) The mansion now houses a modest museum, with clothes, period furnishings and accessories from the 17th century.

Sweeping stairs take you up to the slightly dowdy *piano nobile*, divided in typical Venetian fashion. A *portego* divides the floor in two and is graced with period furnishings and portraits of various Mocenigo greats (the family provided seven dogi). The five big portraits are of rank outsiders, such as Charles II of England. The Mocenigo family stopped living here in 1945.

#### CHIESA DI SAN POLO Map pp84–5

Campo San Polo 2115; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun; San Tomà

Although of Byzantine origin, this church has lost much of its attraction through repeated interference and renovation. Worst of all, the pile-up of houses between it and the Rio di San Polo has completely obscured its façade. Inside, however, is a rich offering of Giandomenico Tiepolo's art. A whole cycle of his, the *Via Crucis* (Stations of the Cross), hangs in the sacristy. With them are other paintings and some wonderful ceiling frescoes. In the main body of the church are works by Tintoretto and Palma II Giovane.

#### CHIESA DI SAN GIACOMO DELL'ORIO Map pp84–5

Campo San Giacomo dell'Orio, Santa Croce 1457; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun; Riva de Biasio

The charming, leafy Campo San Giacomo dell'Orio is graced by the modest outline of one of Venice's few good examples of Romanesque architecture. The initial 9th-century church was replaced in 1225. The main Gothic addition (14th century) is the remarkable wooden ceiling *a carena di nave*. Among the intriguing jumble of works of art are a Byzantine column in green marble, a 13th-century baptismal font and a Lombard pulpit perched on a 6th-century column from Ravenna.

#### CASA DI GOLDONI Map pp84–5

041 275 93 25; [www.museiciviciveneziani.it](http://www.museiciviciveneziani.it); Calle dei Nomboli, San Polo 2794; adult/senior, student & child €2.50/1.50; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat

Apr–Oct, 10am–4pm Mon–Sat Nov–Mar;

San Tomà

Venice's greatest playwright, Carlo Goldoni, came kicking and screaming into the world here in 1707. The 15th-century Gothic-era house is worth a quick visit, and Goldoni fans will find a host of material on his life and works. The entrance is the most striking part of the house, with its quiet courtyard, private well and stairway in Istrian stone. For admission prices, see the boxed text on p61.

#### FONDACO DEI TURCHI Map pp84–5

041 275 02 06; [www.museiciviciveneziani.it](http://www.museiciviciveneziani.it); Salizada del Fontego dei Turchi, Santa Croce 1730; admission free; 9am–1pm Tue–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat–Sun; San Stae

This 12th-century mansion belonged to the dukes of Ferrara until it was handed over in 1621 for use as a warehouse and way station for Turkish merchants (who operated in Venice through all the ups and downs of relations between Muslim Turkey and the West). The building now houses the *Museo Civico di Storia Naturale* (Natural History Museum).

In Venice and across the Middle East and beyond, these warehouses were set up to house foreign merchants and to store their goods. The word *fondaco* (*fontego* in Venetian) spread, and places where Western merchants stayed and worked came to be known in Arabic as *funduq*, from Aleppo in Syria to Alexandria in Egypt. In Arab countries, *funduq* has come to mean hotel.

The Fondaco dei Turchi was rented out to the Turks until 1858. The place was restored in appalling taste in the mid-19th century, leaving few reminders of its medieval origins. It was like plastic surgery gone wrong. Original features in the façade were sacrificed to the architectural fancies of the time – the odd crenellations are, for example, an unhappy addition.

On the 2nd floor of the partially reopened museum is an imaginative display dedicated to a series of archaeological expeditions in the Sahara desert of Niger in the 1970s. What is now all rock and sand was, 100 million years ago, a verdant biosphere inhabited by dinosaurs, giant crocodiles and a host of animals and flora. The two most outstanding finds are an *Oursaurus* and remains of a 12m-long prehistoric crocodile skeleton. Look out also

for the 120-million-year-old *psittacosaurus mongoliensis*, a 0.5m-long skeleton of a baby dinosaur found in the Gobi Desert.

Downstairs you'll find a rather melancholy little aquarium dedicated to Venetian coastal sea specimens. There is also a butterfly collection.

#### CHIESA DI SAN GIOVANNI ELEMOSINARIO Map pp84–5

Ruga Vecchia San Giovanni, San Polo 477; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun; Rialto

You could easily stride right past this Renaissance church, built by Antonio Abbondi after a disastrous fire in 1514 destroyed much of the Rialto area. The church and its separate bell tower are camouflaged by surrounding houses, so their presence comes as a surprise. The frescoes inside the dome are by Pordenone, as is one of two altarpieces.

#### CHIESA DI SAN ROCCO Map pp84–5

041 523 48 64; Campo San Rocco, San Polo 3053; admission free; 8am–12.30pm & 3–5.30pm; San Tomà

You are likely to wander out of the *Scuola Grande di San Rocco* (p87) wondering what hit you. Maybe that's why there's no charge to enter this church across the way. Although built at about the same time as the *scuola*, the church was completely overhauled in the 18th century – hence the bold baroque façade. It has a neglected feel inside but contains several paintings of interest to those who have not overdosed, including some by Tintoretto on the main-entrance wall and around the altar.

#### CHIESA DI SAN STAE Map pp84–5

Campo San Stae, Santa Croce 1981; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun; San Stae

A simple house of worship dedicated to St Eustace (a probably fictitious Roman martyr who converted to Christianity, lost everything, was restored to his position and then condemned by Emperor Hadrian to being roasted alive with his family inside a bronze statue of a bull for refusing to carry out a pagan sacrifice), this church is deceptive. The elaborate exterior (finished in 1709 in Palladian style but with baroque touches) hides an austere interior. Among its art treasures are Giambattista Tiepolo's *Il*

*Martirio di San Bartolomeo* (The Martyrdom of St Bartholomew) and *Sebastiano Ricci's La Liberazione di San Pietro* (The Liberation of St Peter).

### CHIESA DI SAN GIOVANNI DECOLLATO Map pp84–5

041 97 25 83; Campo San Giovanni Decollato, Santa Croce; 10am–noon Mon–Sat; Riva de Biasio

This modest and long-abandoned church (San Zan Degolà, or St John the Headless, in Venetian, known in less blood-curdling fashion in English as St John the Baptist) has been reborn as a home for Russian Orthodox services. Inside, some 14th-century frescoes remain. On the south wall facing the *campo* is a small, sculpted medallion of a lopped-off head. Logic suggests it represents that of St John, but the popular tale in Venice suggests it represents that of Biasio, the horrible butcher of children (see the boxed text, p139).

### SCUOLA GRANDE DI SAN GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA Map pp84–5

041 71 82 34; Campiello della Scuola 2454; admission €3; Irregular; Ferrovia  
Hidden behind what is to all intents an open-air iconostasis, and thus set back from the street, is one of the six major Venetian *scuole*. The plan is typical of the big schools, with an assembly hall (divided in two by a line of columns) and a grand

staircase up to the 1st-floor hall, which contains an altar used for religious services. Codussi designed the original interior and Renaissance staircase, and Massari restyled the main hall in 1727. Many of the major works once housed here were moved to the Gallerie dell'Accademia, but you can still see five Tintoretto and a couple of works by Giandomenico Tiepolo. It opens occasionally to the public.

Opposite the *scuola* stands the deconsecrated *Chiesa di San Giovanni Evangelista*, sometimes open for temporary art exhibitions and home to a depiction of the Crucifixion by Tintoretto.

### PONTE DI CALATRAVA Map pp84–5

Ponte di Calatrava, Santa Croce/Cannaregio  
Piazzale Roma/Ferrovia

The Spanish architect's daring, luminous design for Venice's fourth pedestrian bridge, linking the train station with Piazzale Roma, is a fantasy of glass, stone and steel. It has also been an incredible cock-up. Subject of controversy from the beginning (why a bridge so close to the Ponte dei Scalzi?), the idea was born in 1996 and the bridge should have been in place by 2002. Costs spiralled from an original €2 million to more than €8 million. Engineering complications and the belated decision to create disabled access made matters worse. It was finally heaved into place in 2007.

## SESTIERE DI CANNAREGIO

Eating p178; Shopping p162; Sleeping p206

Long the swaggiest part of Venice and unpleasantly malarial to boot, the area owes its name to the *cane* (reeds) that grew in abundance here. Trains pull into Santa Lucia station and disgorged passengers into this corner of town. Covering the whole northwest sector of Venice, and bordering the *sestieri* of Castello to the east and San Marco to the south, Cannaregio is a curious mix.

The main drag to San Marco has a tacky feel to it, lined with shops and restaurants that in most cases have an eye on the quick euro and hope to attract new arrivals who haven't yet had a chance to learn better. The area near the train station is laden with quick-fix hotels – some good, but many dreary.

Hidden in the streets and canals away from the Grand Canal side of the *sestiere* are a mix of off-the-beaten-track churches and a low-key hive of nocturnal activity around Fondamenta della Misericordia. This is also where you'll find the city's one-time Jewish Ghetto.

Apart from the busy Ferrovia (train station) stop, there are only two Grand Canal stops – San Marcuola (lines 1 and 82 and N) and Ca' d'Oro (1 and N). Lines 41, 42, 51 and 52 wing around from Ferrovia into the Canale di Cannaregio and Fondamente Nuove. Ferries head from Fondamente Nuove to the northern islands, including San Michele, Murano, Burano, Le Vignole and Sant'Erasmo.

### CA' D'ORO Map pp92–3

041 522 23 49, bookings 041 520 03 45; www.cadoro.org, in Italian; Calle di Ca' d'Oro 3932; adult/EU under 18yr & EU over 65yr/EU student under 26yr €5/free/2.50; 8.15am–2pm Mon, 8.15am–7.15pm Tue–Sun; Ca' d'Oro

This magnificent 15th-century Gothic structure got its name (Golden House) from the gilding that originally decorated the external sculptural details. The façade, visible from the Grand Canal, stands out from the remainder, rather drab by comparison. See the boxed text on p61 for further information on admission prices.

Ca' d'Oro houses the *Galleria Franchetti*, an impressive collection of bronzes, tapestries and paintings. The 1st floor is devoted mainly to religious painting, sculpture and bronzes from the 15th and early 16th centuries. One of the first items you see is *San Bartolomeo*, a polyptych recounting the martyrdom of St Bartholomew. Take a closer look at the detail: the violence is remarkable, as is the saintly indifference with which Bartholomew seems to accept his torment!

On the 2nd floor are fresco fragments saved from the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi* (p73). All but one are by Titian. The other, a nude by Giorgione, is the most striking. Also on this floor is a collection including works by Tintoretto, Titian, Carpaccio, Mantegna, Vivarini, Signorelli and van Eyck.

A big incentive for visiting is the chance to lean out from the balconies over the Grand Canal on the 1st and 2nd floors.

### CHIESA DELLA MADONNA DELL'ORTO Map pp92–3

Campo della Madonna dell'Orto 3520; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun; Madonna dell'Orto

Architecture fans will find the exterior of this church intriguing. Elements of Romanesque remain (eg the inner arch over the main entrance) in what is largely a 14th-century Gothic structure in brick. It's clear changes were made a century later from the statues in niches above the two lower wings of the façade and the triangular finish at the top.

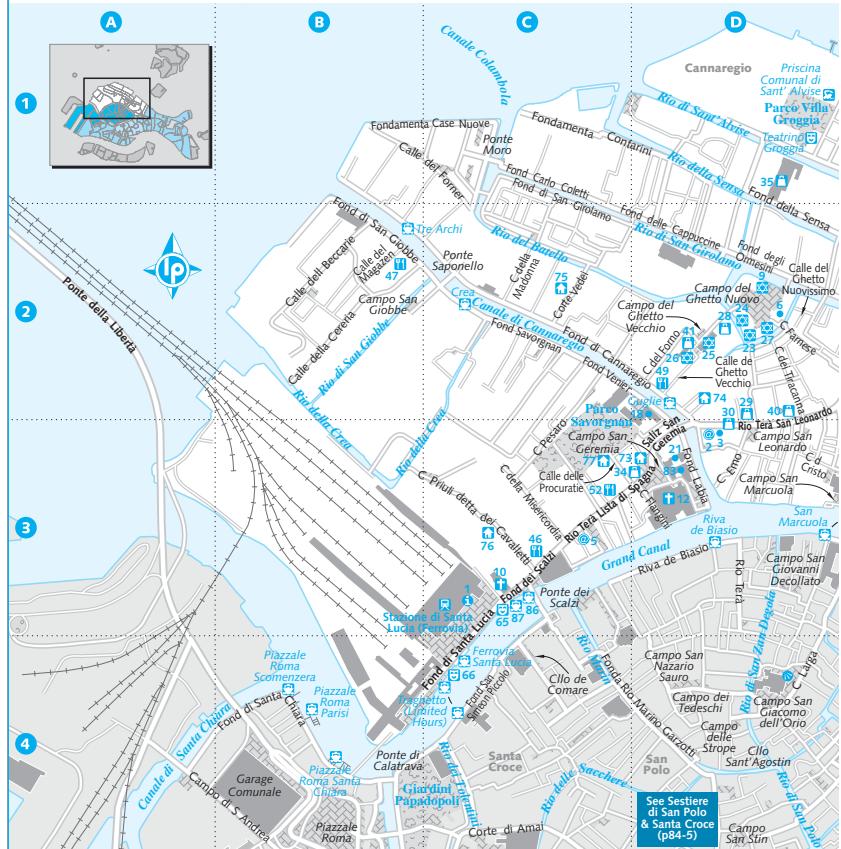
Tintoretto was a parishioner and, although he used much of his creative genius on paintings for the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, he found time for this church, too. Works here include the *Giudizio Finale* (Last Judgment), the *Adorazione del Vitello d'Oro* (Adoration of the Golden Calf) and the *Apparizione della Croce a San Pietro* (Vision of the Cross to St Peter). Tintoretto is buried with other family members in the church.

In the Cappella di San Mauro is the white-stone statue of the *Madonna col Bambino* after which the church is named. The statue was supposedly found in a nearby garden in 1377 and brought here amid considerable excitement.

### CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DEI MIRACOLI Map pp92–3

Campo dei Miracoli 6074; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun; Fondamente Nuove

## SESTIERE DI CANNAREGIO



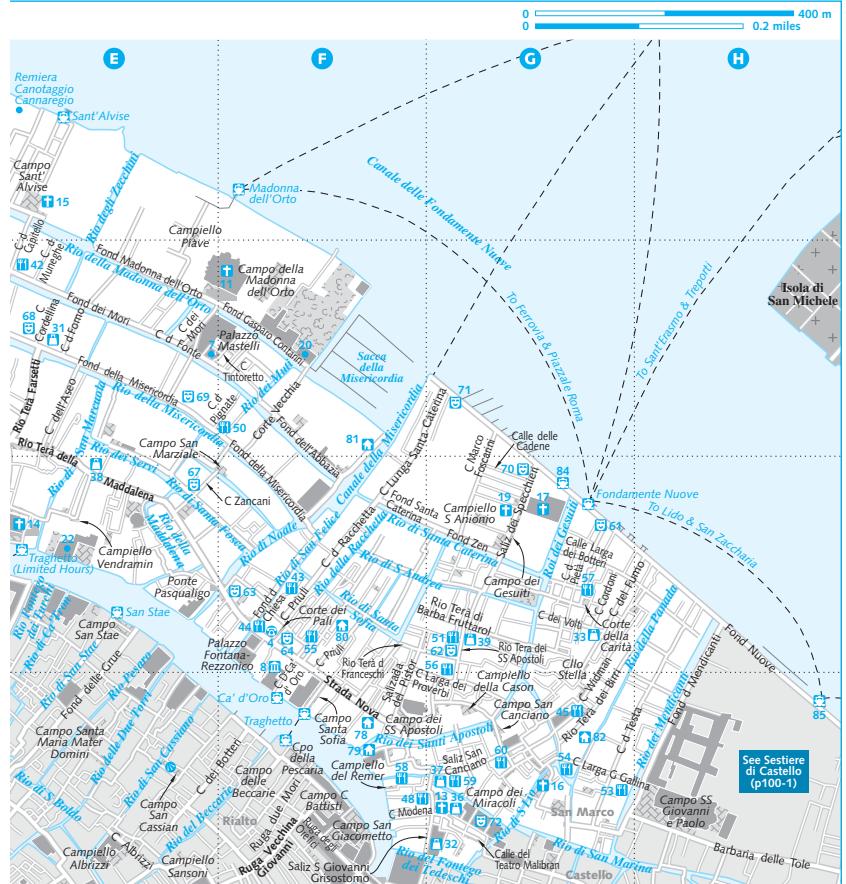
It looks like an elaborate box containing the most refined of chocolates. Pietro Lombardo was responsible for this Renaissance jewel, which is fully covered inside and out in marble, bas-reliefs and statues. The state and Church generally paid for the construction of churches, but this case was different. It was built to house an iconic image of the Virgin Mary, reputed to be miraculous. Local devotion to the icon was so great that donations from the people for the church exceeded all expectations. They say the marble came from leftovers originally destined for use in the Basilica di San Marco, but regardless of where it came from or was meant to go, the result is richly intense but without the flowery motifs that would come later with baroque. The timber ceiling is also eye-

catching. Pietro and Tullio Lombardo did the choir stalls.

### MUSEO EBRAICO & THE JEWISH GHETTO Map pp92-3

041 71 53 59; [www.museoebraico.it](http://www.museoebraico.it); Campo del Ghetto Nuovo 2902/b; adult/student €3/2, tours incl admission €8.50/7; 10am-7pm Sun-Fri except Jewish holidays Jun-Sep, 10am-4.30pm Sun-Fri Oct-May, tours of Ghetto & synagogues half-hourly to hourly from 10.30am Sun-Fri except Jewish holidays; Guglie

A modest collection of Jewish religious silverware can be found at the Jewish Museum. Opened in 1955, it has been enriched down the years with donations of material used in private prayer and to decorate synagogues. The guided tours (in Italian or English; other languages if booked



in advance) of the Ghetto and three of its synagogues (Schola Canton, Schola Italiana and then the Schola Levantina in summer or the Schola Spagnola – aka Ponentina – in winter) that leave from the museum are a must, allowing you to enter a unique world.

On top of three buildings in Campo del Ghetto Nuovo are three modest *schole* (literally, schools; synagogues). The *Schola Tedesca* (German Synagogue) is above the building that now houses the Museo Ebraico. Virtually next door is the *Schola Canton* (Corner Synagogue) and further around is the *Schola Italiana* (Italian Synagogue). The last, which is on the tour, is the simplest. The largely destitute Italian Jews concerned had come from then Spanish-controlled southern Italy. The synagogues can be distinguished from the residential housing

by the small domes that indicate the position of the pulpit (easily visible in the case of the *Schola Canton*). In the case of the German and Italian ones, the rows of five larger windows are another sign.

Jews from Portugal and Spain who arrived in the 16th century raised two more synagogues, renovated in the 17th century, it is thought, by Longhena and considered the most beautiful synagogues in northern Italy.

The *Schola Levantina* boasts a magnificent timber pulpit, also done in the 17th century. The *Schola Spagnola* is the biggest and most impressive of them all. You reach the main hall via a grand staircase.

They are still used for services, alternating in winter and summer, by the small Jewish community living in Venice today.

## SESTIERE DI CANNAREGIO

### INFORMATION

APT Office.....	<b>Caffè Costarica.....</b>	<b>29 D2</b>	Casinò di Venezia.....(see 22)
Planet Internet.....	<b>1 C3</b>	<b>Cannaregio Fish &amp; Produce Market.....</b>	<b>30 D3</b>
Speedy Wash.....	<b>2 D3</b>	<b>Cantina del Canton.....</b>	<b>31 E2</b>
Telecom Office.....	<b>3 D3</b>	<b>Coin.....</b>	<b>32 G4</b>
Venice Internet Point.....	<b>4 F3</b>	<b>Gianni Bassi.....</b>	<b>33 G3</b>
	<b>5 C3</b>	<b>Giunti al Punto.....</b>	<b>34 D2</b>
<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>(pp91-7)</b>	<b>Jesurum Outlet.....</b>	<b>35 D1</b>
Banco Rosso.....	<b>6 D2</b>	<b>Liberia Internazionale Marco</b>	<b>36 G4</b>
Banco Verde.....	(see 24)	Polo.....	<b>37 G4</b>
Bottega del Tintoretto.....	<b>7 E2</b>	Molin Giocattoli.....	<b>38 E3</b>
Ca' d'Oro.....	<b>8 F3</b>	Mori & Bozzi.....	<b>39 G3</b>
Casa Israëlitica di Riposo.....	<b>9 D2</b>	Nave de Oro.....	<b>40 D2</b>
Chiesa dei Scalzi.....	<b>10 C3</b>	Nave de Oro.....	<b>41 D2</b>
Chiesa della Madonna dell'Orto.....	<b>11 F2</b>	Studio in Venice.....	<b>42 E2</b>
Chiesa di San Geremia.....	<b>12 D3</b>	<b>EATING</b>	<b>(pp178-80)</b>
Chiesa di San Giovanni Grisostomo.....	<b>13 G4</b>	Anice Stellato.....	<b>43 F3</b>
Chiesa di San Marcuola.....	<b>14 E3</b>	Billa.....	<b>44 F3</b>
Chiesa di Sant'Alvise.....	<b>15 E1</b>	Boccadoro.....	<b>45 G4</b>
Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Miracoli.....	<b>16 G4</b>	Brek.....	<b>46 C3</b>
Galleria Franchetti.....	(see 8)	Fiaschetteria Toscana.....	<b>47 B2</b>
I Gesuiti.....	<b>17 G3</b>	Gam Gam.....	<b>48 F4</b>
Mansion.....	<b>18 D2</b>	Iguana.....	<b>49 D2</b>
Museo Ebraico.....	(see 27)	In-Coop.....	<b>50 F2</b>
Oratorio dei Crociferi.....	<b>19 G3</b>	Mirai.....	<b>51 G3</b>
Palazzo Contarini del Zaffo.....	<b>20 F2</b>	Osteria al Ponte.....	<b>52 C3</b>
Palazzo Labia.....	<b>21 D3</b>	Osteria da Alberto.....	<b>53 G4</b>
Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi.....	<b>22 E3</b>	Osteria dalla Vedova.....	<b>54 G4</b>
Schola Canton.....	<b>23 D2</b>	Osteria Giorgione.....	<b>55 F3</b>
Schola Italiana.....	<b>24 D2</b>	Osteria La Frasca.....	<b>56 G3</b>
Schola Levantina.....	<b>25 D2</b>	Taverna del Campiello Remer.....	<b>57 G3</b>
Schola Spagnola.....	<b>26 D2</b>	Tre Spiedini da Bes.....	<b>58 F4</b>
Schola Tedesca.....	<b>27 D2</b>	Un Mondo di Vino.....	<b>59 G4</b>
<b>SHOPPING</b>	<b>(pp162-3)</b>		<b>60 G4</b>
Arte Ebraica.....	<b>28 D2</b>		<b>61 G3</b>
		<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>	<b>(pp192-8)</b>

You can also enquire at the museum about guided tours to the **Antico Cimitero Israëlitico** (Old Jewish Cemetery; Map p116) on the Lido. For more on the synagogues and Jewish history in Venice, see also the boxed text, **opposite**.

### I GESUITI Map pp92-3

041 528 65 79; Salizada dei Specchieri 4880; admission free; 10am-noon & 4-6pm;

#### Fondamente Nuove

The Jesuits took over this church, aka the Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta, in 1657 and ordered its reconstruction in the Roman baroque style. The conversion was completed by 1730. The façade is impressive enough – in fact, as is often the case with such sights in Venice, it seems out of place, as though it's bursting for more space to allow a greater appreciation of its splendour.

No-one could accuse the Jesuits of sober tastes. Inside, the church is lavishly decorated with white-and-gold stucco, white-and-green

marble floors, and marble flourishes filling in any empty slots. Tintoretto's *Assunzione della Vergine* (Assumption of the Virgin), in the northern transept, is a remarkable exception to his usual style – think of the darkness of his images in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco and you wonder where all the lightness and joy came from in this painting. Maybe there was some role-swapping going on, as Titian's *Martirio di San Lorenzo* (Martyrdom of St Lawrence) is an uncharacteristically stormy and gloomy piece (it's the first painting on the left as you enter the church). Of course, the subjects of each painting make the respective results quite logical.

### PALAZZO VENDRAMIN-CALERGI

Map pp92-3

038 416 41 74; Campiello Vendramin 2040; admission €5 by donation; tours 10.30am Tue & Sat; San Marcuola

Behind the restrained canalside Renaissance façade of this mansion lurk the gambling

## THE JEWS OF VENICE

The first records of Jews in Venice go back to the 10th century. The early Jews were Ashkenazi of German and Eastern European origins. Even at this early point, acquiring Venetian citizenship was all but impossible, and so outsiders had to content themselves with regularly renewing residence permits. In 1382, the Maggior Consiglio decreed that Jews could operate as moneylenders. Indeed, it encouraged them, as finances were low after the murderous war with Genoa that ended in 1380.

As refugees of various nationalities crowded into Venice during the dark days of the League of Cambrai, the Republic decided on 29 March 1516 that all Jews residing in Venice (perhaps not more than 1000 at the time) should be moved to one area. Franciscan friars had insisted on their expulsion, but the city needed their commercial and banking talent, and this was the only effective compromise. As part of the deal, Jews got 10-year residence permits (virtually unheard of in most other European cities) under regulations that the city honoured. Renewal was usually not a problem.

The Getto Novo (in Venetian; Ghetto Nuovo in Italian; New Foundry) was considered ideal, being far from the city's power centres and surrounded by water – a natural prison. The Ashkenazis' harsh Germanic pronunciation gave us the word *ghetto*. Although Venice gave us the word, the concept was an old one, as Jews living in Spain in earlier centuries well knew.

Jews could move freely through the city only if they wore a yellow cap or badge. At midnight a curfew was imposed. Gates around the Ghetto Nuovo were shut by Christian guards (paid for by the Jewish community) and reopened at dawn.

Excluded from most professions, Jews had few career options. Most tried to get along as moneylenders or in the rag trade. Two of the 'banks' from which moneylenders used to operate remain in evidence on Campo del Ghetto Nuovo, the Banco Rosso and Banco Verde. A third option was medicine. Jews who had lived in Muslim Spain or in the Middle East had benefited from the advances in the Arab world on this front and were considered better doctors than their Christian counterparts. Jewish doctors were allowed, in emergencies, to leave the Ghetto during curfew. Jews who made it to Venice were not persecuted and were free to practise their religion. Compared with their brethren in much of the rest of Europe, Venice's Jews were doing OK.

A quick look around will show you how small the Ghetto was. And the population, already in its thousands, was growing. In 1541, waves of Jews from Spain and Portugal made their way to Venice. They came with money, as many were wealthy merchants with contacts in the Near East.

Extreme overcrowding combined with building height restrictions had already created 'skyscrapers' around the Campo del Ghetto Nuovo – some apartment blocks have as many as seven storeys, but with low ceilings. On top of three of them were built three modest *schole* (synagogues).

When the Levantine Jews arrived, the town authorities had to admit there was no more room and ceded another small area to the Jews – the Getto Vecio (or Ghetto Vecchio; Old Foundry). So of course it came to be known as the Old Ghetto, although the converse was true (the foundry was old but the Jewish community was new). Here the Portuguese and Spaniards built their two synagogues (Schola Levantina and Schola Spagnola).

A final small territorial concession was wrung from the town authorities when a street east of the Ghetto Nuovo, subsequently known as the Calle del Ghetto Nuovissimo (Very New Ghetto Street), was granted to the Jews.

From 1541 until 1553 especially, the Jewish community thrived. Their money and trade were welcome in Venice, and they also built a reputation for book printing – the first ever printed version of the Talmud was published in Venice. Then Pope Julian banned such activities. From then on, things started to go downhill. To top it off, the plague of 1630 left fewer than 3000 Jews alive.

In 1797, Napoleon abolished all restrictions on Jews and opened the Ghetto but its inhabitants were slow to move. Indeed, the rabbis opposed the opening, fearing that the community would become dispersed and religious observance relaxed (they were right). Later, under the Austrians, they enjoyed considerable liberty, if not complete freedom from prejudice. After Venice was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy in 1866, all minorities were guaranteed full equality before the law and freedom of religious expression.

Mussolini's rise to power spelt trying times for Jews in Italy. The 1938 race laws imposed restrictions, but the real torment only came in November 1943, when the puppet Fascist government of Salò declared Jews enemies of the state. Of Venice's 1670 remaining Jews, quite a few were rounded up and sent to the Italian concentration camp of Fossoli (outside Modena). They were even marched out of the *Casa Israëlitica di Riposo* rest home on Campo del Ghetto Nuovo. The next stop for about 200 of them was a death camp in Poland. Altogether, about 8000 Italian Jews were killed in the Holocaust.

Of the 420 or so Jews still registered in Venice, less than half actually live there. Only three families and a handful of elderly folk remain in the Ghetto. For more, see [www ghetto.it](http://www ghetto.it).

rooms of the city's casino (see p195). The composer Richard Wagner expired here in 1883. You can wander into the ground-floor area during casino hours but you'll have to pay to see the gaming rooms, where formal dress is obligatory. To tour the rooms Wagner took while in Venice, book a place on Friday between 10am and noon for the tour that takes place at 10.30am on Saturday.

Wagner and his family came to Venice (for the sixth time) to winter in 1882–83. As many travelling notables from northern climes did, he rented rooms in one of the *palazzi* on the Grand Canal. Indeed, his contract for an entire wing was made for several years on the trot. Today, three of the main rooms that he occupied, long used as offices, can be seen. The first room is dominated by a Bechstein piano not unlike what Wagner would have played on in what he set up as his study. Various bits of Wagneriana are on display, including early editions of his *Parsifal*. The second room he used as a mixed study and rest room. A copy of the sofa on which he had his fatal heart attack lies in one corner. Copies (made in the 1930s and themselves now worth some €700 a page) of original scores (held in Bayreuth) are on display. He wrote the second act of his opera *Tristan and Isolde* in Venice.

In the third room (his bedroom) you can see letters and other documents, including a request from his wife to the Hotel de l'Europe to deliver 12 *demi-bouteilles* (half-bottles) of Moet & Chandon to their gondolier.

#### ORATORIO DEI CROCIFERI Map pp92–3

041 532 29 20; Campo dei Gesuiti 4095; admission €2; 3.30–6.30pm Fri–Sat Apr–Oct;

Virtually across the road from the grand Gesuiti church is this tiny 12th-century oratory, once part of a medieval hospice that has long since ceased to exist. It appears the brothers of the Crociferi order who set up here came from Rome. The hospice had a dual role, as was common at the time: to give shelter to pilgrims and provide assistance to the sick. In the 16th century the whole complex was renovated and Palma il Giovane was hired to plaster the walls of the oratory with paintings and frescoes depicting events in the history of the hospice and of the order, along with more standard scenes from the Christian tradition.

#### PALAZZO LABIA Map pp92–3

041 78 11 11; Campo San Geremia 275; admission free; Now the Venice office of the RAI, Italy's national radio and TV organisation, this was once a grand 17th-century family residence. It boasts several frescoes by Giambattista Tiepolo, but you must phone to arrange a visit (when open).

The Labia family had arrived from Spain and planned to make a hit among the local aristocracy. The frescoes are said to represent Tiepolo's greatest secular commission.

The grand ballroom, a two-storey-high space characterised by a gamut of architectural trompe l'oeil trickery, is the framework for two giant frescoes depicting the meeting of Anthony and Cleopatra and Cleopatra's banquet. In the latter fresco, Tiepolo included a portrait of himself as one of the dignitaries invited along. The ceiling fresco represents the victory of Bellerophon over Time.

The Labia family quickly established a reputation in Venice for their lavish lifestyle. A story recounts that on one evening they hosted a grand dinner party. As the meal came to an end, the master of the house had all the gold cutlery thrown out the window into the canal, declaring: 'Le abbia o non le abbia, sarò sempre un Labia' (a nice word game, the gist of which is that, 'whether I have it' – the gold cutlery – 'or not I will always be a Labia'). The guests were impressed, but the story goes that Signor Labia had been careful to have nets laid out at the bottom of the canal earlier that day...

#### CHIESA DI SANT'ALVISE Map pp92–3

Campo Sant'Alvise 3025; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun;

Built in 1388, this church plays host to a noteworthy Tiepolo, the *Salita al Calvario* (Climb to Calvary), a distressingly human depiction of one of Christ's falls under the weight of the cross. The ceiling frescoes are a riot of colour.

#### CHIESA DEI SCALZI Map pp92–3

Fondamenta dei Scalzi 55–57; admission free; 7–11.45am & 4–6.45pm Mon–Sat, 7.45am–12.30pm & 4–7pm Sun & holidays;

Virtually next to the train station, this is a rare baroque extravagance. Longhena

designed the church, but the façade was done by Giuseppe Sardi. The abundance of columns and statues in niches is a deliberate echo of the particularly extravagant baroque style often employed in Rome. The Carmelites, who had moved here from Rome several years before, specifically requested that it be so. Damaged frescoes by Tiepolo appear in the vaults of two of the side chapels. The last doge, Ludovico Manin, who presided over the dissolution of the Republic in 1797 before the threat of Napoleon and died in ignominy five years later, is buried here before the main altar on the left.

#### CHIESA DI SAN GEREMIA Map pp92–3

041 71 61 81; Campo San Geremia 274; admission free; 8.30am–noon & 4–6.30pm Mon–Sat, 9.30am–12.15pm & 5.30–6.30pm Sun & holidays

This otherwise uninspiring 18th-century church contains the body of St Lucy (Santa Lucia), who was martyred in Syracuse in AD 304. Her body was stolen by Venetian merchants from Constantinople in 1204 and moved to San Geremia after the Palladian church of Santa Lucia was demolished in the 19th century to make way for the train station.

#### CHIESA DI SAN GIOVANNI GRISOSTOMO Map pp92–3

041 523 52 93; Salizada San Giovanni Grisostomo; admission free; 8.15am–12.15pm & 3–7pm;

This church was remodelled on a Greek-cross plan by Codussi in 1504. Since 1977 it has housed an icon of the Virgin Mary that attracts a lot of the local faithful. With all the burning incense and candles, to wander in here is to feel yourself transported to a mysterious church of the Orthodox East. Notable is Giovanni Bellini's *San Gerolamo e Due Santi* (St Jerome and Two Saints).

#### CHIESA DI SAN MARCUOLA Map pp92–3

041 71 38 72; Campo San Marcuola 1758; admission free; 3–6pm Mon–Sat;

Although a church has been here since the 9th century, what you see was cobbled together (and not quite completed) in the 18th century by Giorgio Massari and Antonio Gaspari. Inside is an *Ultima Cena* (Last Supper) by Tintoretto. His Christ and apostles are spotlighted against a black background, giving the meal an extraordinary air.

# SESTIERE DI CASTELLO

Eating p180; Shopping p163; Sleeping p207

Just behind the grand façades of the Basilica di San Marco and Palazzo Ducale runs a canal that marks the division between the Sestiere di San Marco and Sestiere di Castello. Walking away to the east or north, you quickly notice a thinning of the crowds. One of the last seriously packed walkways is Salizada San Lio. Already in Campo Santa Maria Formosa, you get the feeling that locals are still at least partly in control. To the very north, the single grandest monument of the district is the Chiesa dei SS Giovanni e Paolo, with the city hospital next door in the church's one-time convent complex. The next psychological marker, if you will, is the north-south Rio di San Lorenzo, beyond which the tourists are reduced to a trickle as you wind your way towards the Arsenale, the industrial powerhouse of medieval Venice.

The southern entrance to the Arsenale brings you close to the waterfront and from anywhere along it you have splendid views of the Canale di San Marco. Upmarket hotels lap up these views at the San Marco end of the esplanade, but as you walk further away towards the Giardini Pubblici, a peaceful air descends. Along Via Giuseppe Garibaldi and in its fishbone net of alleys, local folks go about their lives in about as undisturbed a fashion as they can manage. Overrun by interlopers during the Biennale art festival, the area is otherwise intriguing as a taste of the 'real' Venice, full of simple shops, local eateries, vociferous families and the sounds of the Venetian dialect. Beyond, the district trails out into leafy Sant'Elena and sleepy Isola de San Pietro.

Vaporetti 41 and 42 run clockwise and anticlockwise around the Castello district on their circular routes. Vaporetti 51 and 52 do the same thing but include the Lido. They call at San Zaccaria, the main Castello stop near Piazza San Marco (where many other lines also stop). Giardini is the main stop for the Biennale grounds (the Biennale stop operates only during the festival).

## ARSENALE Map pp100–1

041 270 95 46; [www.labbiennale.org](http://www.labbiennale.org); Campo Arsenale 2407; admission depends on exhibitions; depends on exhibitions; Arsenale

For centuries the crenellated walls of the Arsenale hid from view the feverish, infernal activity of the city's shipwrights, busy churning out galleys, merchant ships and other vessels at a pace unmatched anywhere in Europe. Thousands of *arsenaloti* (Arsenale workers), each specialising in certain trades, beavered away in assembly-line fashion hundreds of years before the industrial era.

The dockyards are said to have been founded in 1104 but it may have been later. What became known as the *Arsenale Vecchio* (Old Arsenal) is the core. Within it was a storage area for the *bucintoro*, the doge's ceremonial galley.

As the Republic's maritime needs grew, the Arsenale was enlarged. In 1303–04 came the first expansion, known as *La Tana*. Occupying almost the whole length of the southern side of the Arsenale, it was refashioned in 1579 by Antonio da Ponte. The *Arsenale Nuovo* (New Arsenal) was added in 1325, followed in 1473 by the *Arsenale Nuovissimo* (Very New Arsenal). When, in the 16th century, production of *galeazze* (much

larger war vessels with a deeper draught) began, further workshops and *construction sheds* were added, along with the Canale delle Galeazze. The whole was walled in and top secret. The *arsenaloti* were well paid and faithful to the doge and the state throughout the history of the Republic. This was proven on several occasions when they were called to arms in times of unrest or rebellion.

The Arsenale was as close as Venice (or anywhere, until the 18th century) came to industrial production. To late-medieval eyes it must have made an enormous impression, with its boiling black pitch, metalworking and timber cutting. Dante used it as a model scene for hell in his *Divina Commedia* (Divine Comedy; Canto XXI, lines 7–21).

As well as shipyards, the Arsenale served as a naval base. An emergency reserve fleet of at least 25 vessels was always kept ready to set sail from inside the Arsenale, either as a war or merchant fleet. As the centuries progressed, although the shortage of raw materials (especially timber) became a problem, more often than not the Republic's difficulty was finding crews. Eventually, it was obliged to employ slaves, prisoners and press gangs.

## THE INFAMY OF FAMAGUSTA

Keep an eye out for the monument to Marcantonio Bragadin in the Chiesa dei SS Giovanni e Paolo. It is on the wall of the southern aisle, virtually opposite the westernmost pillar. The monument is singular for its content, rather than for any artistic merit.

Venetian-born Bragadin was the commander of the Famagusta garrison in Cyprus, the last to fall to the Turks in 1570. Promised honourable terms of surrender after having endured a long siege, Bragadin decided to call on the Turkish commander Mustafa and present him with the keys of the city. Mustafa lost his head, as it were, and lopped off Bragadin's ears and nose. Several hundred Christians in the vicinity also lost their heads, rather more literally. The post-battle massacre that until now had been avoided suddenly swept like a storm across the city.

While the population of Famagusta was decimated, Bragadin rotted for a couple of weeks in prison. He was then hauled about the town under the crushing weight of sacks of stone and earth. After various other humiliations, he was tied to a stake in the execution square and skinned alive. According to one account, he passed out only when they reached his waist. The corpse was then beheaded and quartered, and the skin stuffed with straw and paraded about town. Mustafa then took it home as a trophy to present to the sultan. Some years later, a Venetian trader with considerable courage managed to steal it from the arsenal of Constantinople and return it to the Bragadin family in Venice. The remains have been in the Chiesa dei SS Giovanni e Paolo since 1596.

At its peak, the Arsenale covered 46 hectares, was home to 300 shipping companies and employed up to 16,000 people. In 1570, when requested to produce as many ships as possible for an emergency fleet, the Arsenale put out an astounding 100 galleys in just two months.

From then on, things went downhill. By the time La Serenissima fell in 1797, naval production had all but ceased. Today, part of the area remains in the Italian navy's hands.

The land gateway, surmounted by the lion of St Mark, is considered by many to be the earliest example of Renaissance architecture in Venice; it was probably executed in 1460. Later, a plaque was installed commemorating the victory at Lepanto in 1571. The fenced-in terrace was added in 1692. At the foot of the statues (each with allegorical meaning) is a row of carved lions of varying size and type. The biggest of them, in regally seated pose, was taken as booty by Francesco Morosini from the Greek port of Piraeus. This must have required quite an effort. On its right flank is a series of Viking runes. By one account, they are an 11th-century 'Bjørn was here'-style piece of graffiti left behind by Norwegian mercenaries.

Over the past few years, large (and for a long time largely neglected) parts of the Arsenale have been taken over and partly restored by the city's Biennale organisation for conversion into exhibition space. These areas include the former Corderia (where ships' cables were made), the Artiglierie (guns) and various wharfs as

well. Exhibitions therefore provide ample opportunity to get inside the Arsenale. In coming years, work to transform the entire Arsenale will see the creation of modern ship maintenance areas, shops, restaurants, exhibition space, a study centre and even more.

## CHIESA DEI SS GIOVANNI E PAOLO

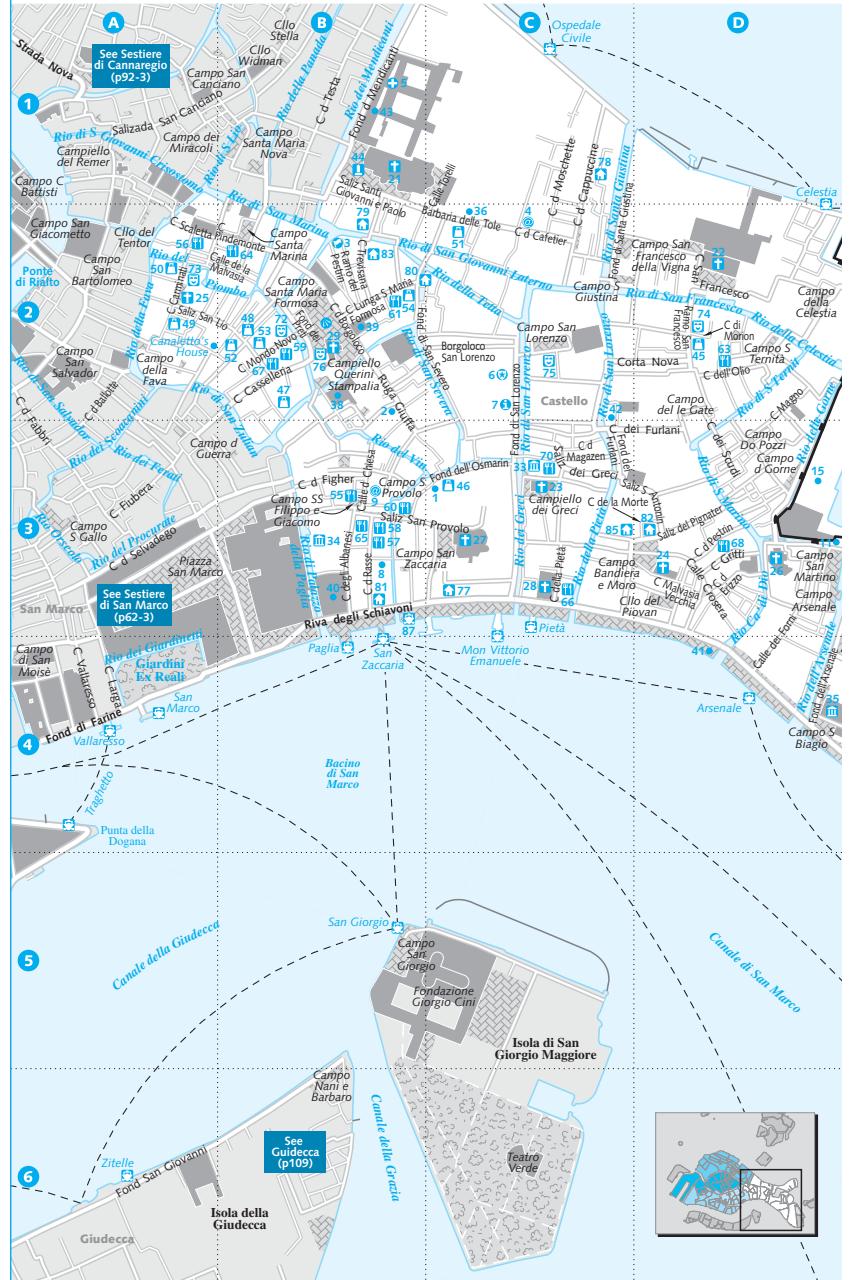
Map pp100–1

041 523 59 13; Campo SS Giovanni e Paolo; admission €2.50; 9.30am–6pm Mon–Sat, 1–6pm Sun; Ospedale

This huge Gothic church (also known as San Zanipolo in Venetian), founded by the Dominicans, rivals the Franciscans' *Frari* (p87) in size and grandeur. Work started on it in 1333, but it was not consecrated until 1430. The similarities between the two are all too evident. The use of brick and modest white stone refinements around windows and doorways is a clear point they have in common. A particular departure at Chiesa dei SS Giovanni e Paolo, however, is the way in which three chapels, each of different dimensions, have been tacked – it seems almost willy-nilly – onto the church's southern flank. Ruskin would have approved of this architectural wilfulness!

The vast interior, like that of the Frari, is divided simply into an enormous central nave and two aisles, separated by graceful, soaring arches. The red-and-white chessboard floor is a further demonstration of the contemporaneity of the two buildings.

# SESTIERE DI CASTELLO



NEIGHBOURHOODS SESTIERE DI CASTELLO



## SESTIERE DI CASTELLO

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A beautiful stained-glass window made in Murano in the 15th century fills the southern arm of the transept with light. A host of artists contributed to its design, including Bartolomeo Vivarini, Cima da Conegliano and Girolamo Mocetto. It owes some of its brilliance to restoration carried out in the 1980s. Below the window and just to the right is a fine *pala* (altarpiece) by Lorenzo Lotto. Noteworthy, too, are the five late-Gothic apses, graced by long and slender windows. Look out for Giovanni Bellini's polyptych of *San Vincenzo Ferreri* (St Vincent Ferrer) over the second altar of the right aisle.

In the Cappella del Rosario (Rosary Chapel), off the northern arm of the transept, is a series of paintings by Veronese, including ceiling panels and an *Adorazione dei Pastori* (Adoration of the Shepherds) on the western wall.

The church is a veritable ducal pantheon. Around the walls, many of the 25 tombs of dogi were sculpted by prominent Gothic and Renaissance artists, in particular Pietro and Tullio Lombardo and Nino Pisano.

The enormous monastery, with its three cloisters, that was part of the church project is now swallowed up by the Ospedale Civile.

Behind the church runs the narrow Calle Torelli, also known as Calle Cavallerizza, after stables that once stood here. There was a time when nobles got around town on horseback, and these stables could house about 70 of the beasts. It was in a house on this street that, in 1755, Giacomo Casanova was arrested and led off to the Piombi, the rooftop prisons of the Palazzo Ducale, where he would languish for five years (see the boxed text, p69).

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## OF FLOORS & WALLS

As you wander about the Palazzo Querini Stampalia (below), observe the floor. The smooth, speckled surface, a classic *terrazzo alla Veneziana*, could almost be a mottled carpet if it weren't a little more solid than pile. It's the result of combining finely fragmented marble chips with plaster and then laying this mixture down.

Why not straight marble floors? Virtually the entire city is built on foundations of timber pylons and has all the resulting problems of subsidence you would expect. Movement is often greater than in more stable mainland environments. Great slabs of marble have no give – they would just crack open. This mixture, when hardened, has all the feel and solidity of marble, but greater elasticity. And when cracks do appear, all you need to do is mix up a batch of the marble-plaster goo, smooth it over and allow it to dry. You don't want it to dry out completely, though. Treatment with linseed oil at least once a year is needed to keep it in good shape and to allow it to be polished.

You will have noticed this type of floor in the Palazzo Ducale, Museo Correr and some other sites – you may well have it in your hotel room! It is not so apparent in the Palazzo Querini Stampalia, but if you see inside other houses or manage to stay in a hotel or mansion of sufficient history, you will often see how much these floors undulate with time – a lot better than breaking up altogether.

While on the subject of home-maintenance issues, you may also have noticed that the classic Venetian colour is a burnt reddish-orange. Innumerable houses are 'painted' this way. Only it isn't really paint. A straight coat of red paint quickly fades and streaks with all the rain and humidity inevitable in the lagoon. Traditionally, the outside walls of houses were coated in a mixture of paint and crushed red bricks. Once applied and dry, it lasts much longer than standard wall paint.

## SCUOLA GRANDE DI SAN MARCO

Map pp100-1

041 529 43 23; Fondamente dei Mendicanti 6776; admission free; 8.30am-2pm;

Ospedale

Standing at right angles to the Chiesa dei SS Giovanni e Paolo you'll find the eye-catching marble frontage of this *scuola*. Pietro Lombardo and his sons all worked on what was once one of the most important of Venice's religious confraternities. Codussi put the finishing touches on this Renaissance gem. Have a closer look and, apart from the predictably magnificent lions, you will notice the sculpted trompe l'oeil perspectives covering much of the lower half of the façade. Inside, the timber beams of the ceiling are held up by two ranks of five columns.

Nowadays the *scuola* is the main entrance to the Ospedale Civile. Beyond, in what were the Convento dei Domenicani and the Chiesa di San Lazzaro dei Mendicanti, is the hospital proper. You can wander just inside the entrance of the former *scuola* itself, although technically you're not really supposed to if you're not here on the business of ill health.

## STATUE OF BARTOLOMEO COLLEONI

Map pp100-1

Campo SS Giovanni e Paolo; Ospedale

Presiding over the grand canalside square is the proud equestrian statue of Bar-

tolomeo Colleoni, a self-indulgent mercenary who from 1448 commanded armies for the Republic. It's one of only two such works in the city, a magnificent piece by Verrocchio (1435–88). Although Colleoni was of the military school that preferred to live to fight another day, he remained faithful to La Serenissima. On his death in 1474, he bequeathed 216,000 gold and silver ducats and even more in property to Venice, on one condition – that the city erect a commemorative statue to him in Piazza San Marco. The Senato took the money but cheated, placing the grand statue here instead. After all, the wise rulers of Venice reasoned after Colleoni's death, the name San Marco appears in the *scuola grande* on the square. Still, Colleoni can rest easy that the Republic didn't scrimp on the statue itself.

## PALAZZO QUERINI STAMPALIA

Map pp100-1

041 271 14 11; www.querinistampalia.it, in Italian; Campiello Querini Stampalia 5252; adult/ student & senior €8/6; 10am-6pm Tue-Thu & Sun, 10am-10pm Fri & Sat; San Zaccaria

The last of this branch of the Querini family ordained that its mansion should become home to a foundation of the same name, which it has been since the 1860s.

Never judge a book by its cover. The outer shell of this building dates from the first half of the 16th century, but the inside could not be more surprising. In the 1940s,

Carlo Scarpa redesigned the entrance and garden. He then did the 1st floor (which houses the foundation's library) in 1959. Scarpa decided to have some disciplined fun with shape, and, in the garden in particular, took inspiration from the Arab emphasis on geometric patterns. It may or may not appeal, but it does make a refreshing change. After all, there is little that is 'modern' in Venice.

On the 2nd floor is the **Museo della Fondazione Querini Stampalia**. The core of the collection is made up of period furniture that mostly belonged to the Querinis, portraits of more illustrious family members and various papers. Among the some 400 paintings, mostly minor works, is an interesting *Presentazione di Gesù al Tempio* (Presentation of Jesus at the Temple) by Giovanni Bellini. The poor child looks like a long-suffering mummy, standing up improbably in his tightly wrapped swaddling clothes. And what's the guy on the right looking at? Well you, actually.

Just before you get to the Bellini is a small annexe off a large hall. It contains a long series (around 70 paintings in all) by Gabriele Bella (1730–99) depicting *Scene di Vita Veneziana* (Scenes of Venetian Life). The style is rather naive, if not downright childlike, but the series provides an intriguing set of snapshots of life in Venice's last century under the dogi.

On Friday and Saturday, small concerts are held at 5pm and 8.30pm for museum visitors.

#### CHIESA DI SAN ZACCARIA Map pp100–1

041 522 12 57; Campo San Zaccaria 4693; admission free, Cappella di Sant'Anastasia €1; 10am–noon & 4–6pm Mon–Sat, 4–6pm Sun; San Zaccaria

If the Basilica di San Marco was the doge's private chapel, this was his parish church (eight dogi are buried here). The Renaissance façade is the handiwork of Antonio Gambello and Codussi. Gambello started off in a Gothic vein but was already influenced by Renaissance thinking. The lower part of the façade in marble is his work. When Codussi took over he favoured white Istrian stone, and the clean curves at the top mark his take on the Renaissance.

Inside, the mix of styles could not be clearer. Against a backdrop of classic Gothic apses, the high cross vaulting of the main body of the church is a leap of faith into

the Renaissance. The church's earliest version dates to the 9th century.

On the second altar to the left after you enter the church is Giovanni Bellini's *La Vergine in Trono col Bambino, un Angelo Suonatore e Santi* (The Virgin Enthroned with Jesus, an Angel Musician and Saints). You cannot miss it. It exudes a light and freshness that the surrounding paintings seem deliberately to lack.

The **Cappella di Sant'Anastasia**, off to the right, holds works by Tintoretto and Tiepolo, and magnificently crafted choir stalls. After walking through it, you pass through another chapel to reach the **Cappella di San Tarasio** (also called Cappella d'Oro) in the apse. Its vaults are covered in frescoes and the walls are decorated with Gothic polyptychs. Twelfth-century mosaics also survive, and you can wander downstairs to the 10th-century Romanesque crypt, left over from an earlier church on the site.

#### SCUOLA DI SAN GIORGIO DEGLI SCHIAVONI Map pp100–1

041 522 88 28; Calle dei Furlani 3259a; admission €3; 9am–1pm & 2.45–6pm Tue–Sat, 9am–1pm Sun, 2.45–6pm Mon; San Zaccaria Venice's Dalmatian community established this religious school in the 15th century and the building was erected in the 16th century. The main attraction is on the ground floor, where the walls are graced by a series of superb paintings by Vittore Carpaccio depicting events in the lives of the three patron saints of Dalmatia: George, Tryphon and Jerome. The image of St George dispatching the dragon to the next life is a particularly graphic scene. Scattered about before the dragon are remnants of its victims – various limbs, the half-eaten corpse of a young woman and an assortment of bones.

#### CATTEDRALE DI SAN PIETRO DI CASTELLO Map pp100–1

Campo San Pietro; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun; San Pietro Although overshadowed by the Basilica di San Marco, this church, sitting in easy somnolence on the far-removed island of San Pietro, was Venice's cathedral from 1451 to 1807. Indeed the island of San Pietro, originally known as Olivolo, was among the first to be inhabited.

In 775, the original church was the seat of a bishopric. Its present appearance is basically a post-Palladian job, taking its cue in part from Giudecca's Chiesa del Redentore, with a monumental façade dating to the end of the 16th century. Palladio had been awarded the contract in the 1550s, but the death of the patriarch when the architect was two years into the project led to a halt in work that lasted beyond the genius's own demise. His successors largely respected his initial ideas.

Inside, Longhena was responsible for the baroque main altar. Legend says that the strange *Trono di San Pietro* (St Peter's Throne) was used by the Apostle Peter in Antioch and that later the Holy Grail was hidden in it. This is all rather unlikely, as the seat back of the throne is made up of a Muslim tombstone, postdating the Apostle's death by some centuries. But hey, never let the facts get in the way of a good story. The throne is located between the second and third altars on the right side of the church.

San Pietro rests in easy retirement, with its blinding white *campanile* of Istrian stone by Codussi (finished in 1490) leaning at an odd angle, and the former *patriarchate* dozily crumbling away next door. The latter was used as a barracks for a while and is now partly occupied by, strictly speaking, illegal apartments.

#### CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA FORMOSA

Map pp100–1

Campo Santa Maria Formosa 5267; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun; San Zaccaria

Rebuilt in 1492 by Mauro Codussi on the site of a 7th-century church, this house of worship bears a curious name stemming from the legend behind its initial foundation. San Magno, bishop of Oderzo, is said to have had a vision of the Virgin Mary on this spot. Not just any old vision, however: in this instance she was *formosa* (beautiful, curvy), which hardly seems in keeping with standard views of Our Lady. The inside of the church was damaged when an Austrian bomb went off in 1916. Among the works of art to survive is an altarpiece by Palma il Vecchio depicting St Barbara, among other saints, and the body of Christ in his mother's arms. Just to the right of the main door (as you face it from the inside) is a 16th-century Byzantine icon, *Santa Maria*

*di Lepanto* (St Mary of Lepanto). Next to the first chapel on the same side of the church is displayed an 8th-century Egyptian Coptic garment, claimed to be the veil of St Marina.

#### CHIESA DI SAN FRANCESCO DELLA VIGNA

Map pp100–1

041 520 61 02; Campo San Francesco della Vigna 2787; admission free; 8am–12.30pm & 3–7pm; Celestia

Palladio was responsible for the high-and-mighty façade of this Franciscan church, which takes its name from the vineyard that once thrived on the site. The remainder was designed by Sansovino. The bell tower at the back seems to all intents and purposes the twin of the Campanile di San Marco. Inside, just to the left of the main door, is a triptych of saints by Antonio Vivarini. The Cappella dei Giustiniani, to the left of the main altar, is decorated with splendid reliefs by Pietro Lombardo and his school. Off the left (northern) arm of the transept you can enter the Cappella Santa, which houses a *Madonna col Bambino e Santi* (Madonna and Child with Saints) by Giovanni Bellini. From here you can admire Chiesa di San Francesco della Vigna's leafy cloisters, too.

#### OSPEDALETTO

Map pp100–1

041 270 90 12, 041 532 29 20; Barbaria delle Tole 6691; guided visit to Sala da Musica €2; 3.30–6.30pm Thu–Sat Apr–Oct, 3–6pm Thu–Sat Nov–Mar; Ospedale

Longhena's baroque Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Derelitti (aka the Ospedaletto, or Little Hospital) is the focal point of a one-time orphanage. The façade is one of the most exuberant bursts of baroque in the city, with giant figures leaning out over the narrow street below. Inside are some fine works by Giambattista Tiepolo and Palma il Giovane.

In an annexe is the elegantly frescoed *Sala da Musica* (Music Room). Most of the frescoes, which celebrate in allegorical form the importance of music, were done by Jacopo Guarana. Inside the Sala da Musica, young female orphans learned to sing and play musical instruments, in many cases becoming virtuosi performers. The *putte* or *figlie del coro* (choir girls) were a peculiarly Venetian phenomenon. From around the early 17th century, the

state not only took in orphan girls (as well as illegitimate girls and daughters of families fallen on hard times) but also paid for their education here and in three other religious institutions around the city, including the **Chiesa di Santa Maria della Visitazione** (opposite), where Vivaldi was concert master. The bulk of that education served a purpose. Dedicating their time to music, the girls came to form an important part of the city's musical repertory, much admired by locals and foreign visitors to the city alike.

## GIARDINI PUBBLICI & BIENNALE

Map pp100–1

### Giardini & Biennale

Creation of the Giardini Pubblici, the most extensive (if now slightly tatty) public gardens in the city, was ordered by Napoleon in 1807. They were officially opened in 1811, just three years before his demise. To create them, he had an entire residential district (including four churches) razed. In the gardens you'll find shaded benches, a few *giostre* (swings and other kids' rides) and a snack bar/restaurant. You may have noticed during your Venetian strolls that there is a surprising amount of greenery in this city, mostly in the form of private gardens (so much so in fact that there is a coffee-table book entitled *Secret Gardens in Venice*, by Cristiana Moldi-Ravenna, Gianni Berengo Gardin and Tudy Sammartini).

Also here are the national pavilions of the **Biennale Internazionale d'Arte**, Venice's contemporary-arts fest held from June to November every two years (see p18). Together the pavilions form a kind of minicompendium of 20th-century architectural thinking. Standing well away from the historic centre and thus uninhibited by concerns about clashing with it, the site's pavilions are the work of a legion of architects. Carlo Scarpa contributed in one way or another from 1948 to 1972, continually updating the labyrinthine Italian Pavilion and building the Venezuelan one (1954). He also did the Biglietteria (Ticket Office) and entrance courtyard. Other interesting contributions are James Stirling's 1991 Padiglione del Libro (Book Pavilion), Gerrit Rietveld's Dutch Pavilion (1954), Josef Hoffmann's Austrian Pavilion (1934) and Peter Cox's Australian Pavilion (1988), which backs onto a canal.

## MUSEO STORICO NAVALE

Map pp100–1  
041 244 13 99; Riva San Biagio 2148; admission €1.55; 8.45am–1.30pm Mon–Fri, 8.45am–1pm Sat; Arsenale

Lovers of model boats, from ancient war vessels to modern battleships, should call in here. Spread over four floors in a former grain silo, the museum traces the maritime history of the city and Italy. There are some wonderfully complex models of all sorts of Venetian vessels, but also ancient triremes, Asian men o' war, WWII warships and ocean liners. The ground floor is devoted mainly to weaponry (cannons, blunderbusses, swords and sabres). Most curious are the 17th-century diorama maps of Venetian ports and forts across the city's one-time Adriatic and Mediterranean possessions.

On the 1st floor is a model of the sumptuous *bucintoro*, the doge's ceremonial barge, in among the many large-scale model sailing vessels. Napoleon's French troops destroyed the real thing in 1798. The 2nd floor is mostly given over to Italian naval history and memorabilia, from unification to the present day. Up on the 3rd floor is a room containing a few gondolas, including Peggy Guggenheim's. A small room set above the 3rd floor is dedicated to – wait for it – Swedish naval history.

The ticket also gets you entrance to the **Padiglione delle Navi** (Ships Pavilion, Fondamenta della Madonna), near the entrance to the Arsenale. Of the various boats on display, the most eye-catching is the *Scalé Reale*, an early-19th-century ceremonial vessel last used in 1959 to bring the body of the Venetian Pope Pius X to rest at the Basilica di San Marco. It was also used to ferry King Vittorio Emanuele to Piazza San Marco in 1866 when Venice joined the nascent Kingdom of Italy.

## MUSEO DELLE ICONE

Map pp100–1  
041 522 65 81; www.istitutoellenico.org, in Italian; Ponte dei Greci 3412; adult/student €4/2; 9am–12.30pm & 1.30–4.30pm Mon–Sat, 10am–5pm Sun; San Zaccaria

Also known as the Museo dei Dipinti Sacri Bizantini (Museum of Holy Byzantine Paintings) and attached to the **Chiesa di San Giorgio dei Greci** (opposite), this museum is housed in the Istituto Ellenico (Hellenic Institute). The building was for more than two centuries a hospice for poor and ailing Greeks. Here you can explore the curiosities of Orthodox religious art. On display are some 80 works

of art. Foremost among the artworks are two 14th-century Byzantine icons, one representing Christ in glory and the other the Virgin Mary with the baby Jesus and Apostles.

## MUSEO DIOCESANO D'ARTE SACRA

Map pp100–1  
041 522 91 66; www.museodiocesanovenetia.it; Fondamenta di Sant'Apollonia 4312; admission depends on temporary exhibitions; 10.30am–12.30pm Mon–Sat; San Zaccaria

Housed in a former Benedictine monastery dedicated to Sant'Apollonia, this museum has a fairly predictable collection of religious art. More interesting is the exquisite Romanesque cloister you cross in order to get to the museum. It is a rare example of the genre in Venice. The cloister is often open much longer hours than the museum. The building next door was a church until 1906, and now houses exhibition spaces.

## CHIESA DI SAN GIORGIO DEI GRECI

Map pp100–1  
041 522 65 81; Campiello dei Greci 3412; admission free; 9am–12.30pm & 2.30–4.30pm Wed–Sat & Mon, 9am–1pm Sun; San Zaccaria

Greek Orthodox refugees who fled to Venice from the Ottoman Turks were allowed to raise a church, 'St George of the Greeks', here in 1536. It is intriguing above all for the richness of its Byzantine icons, iconostasis and other artworks. The separate, slender bell tower, completed in 1603, began to lean right from the start.

## CHIESA DI SAN GIOVANNI IN BRAGORA

Map pp100–1  
041 520 59 06; Campo Bandiera e Moro 3790; admission free; 9–11am & 3.30–5.30pm Mon–Sat; Arsenale

Antonio Vivaldi was baptised in this church. Among the works of art inside is a restored triptych by Bartolomeo Vivarini, the *Madonna in Trono tra i Santi Andrea e Giovanni Battista* (Enthroned Madonna with St Andrew and John the Baptist). In the peaceful square just south of the church, Campiello del Piovan, the architect Giorgio Massari was born at No 3752.

## CHIESA DI SAN LIO

Map pp100–1  
Campo San Lio; admission free; 3–6pm Mon–Sat; Rialto

Worth a peep in this 11th-century church, if you find it open, is the magnificent

ceiling fresco by Giandomenico Tiepolo, the *Gloria della Croce e di San Leone IX* (The Glory of the Cross and St Leon IX). On the left as you enter by the main door is a work by Titian, the *Apostolo Giacomo il Maggiore* (Apostle James the Great). Many years later, Canaletto was baptised and, eventually, buried in this, his parish church.

## CHIESA DI SAN MARTINO

Map pp100–1  
041 523 04 87; Campo San Martino 2298; admission free; 9am–noon & 4.30–7.30pm; Arsenale

The ceiling fresco depicting the *Gloria di San Martino* (Glory of St Martin) attracts the eye in here. A further treasure are the canvases by Palma il Giovane showing Jesus being flogged and on the way to Calvary. The only problem is that these are in the small choir stalls behind the altar and are generally unreachable. You can glimpse them from in front of the altar. Sansovino designed the present church, completed in 1654. Well, almost. The façade in Istrian marble was added in 1897. The church is named after St Martin of Tours (AD 316–97), a Hungarian who wound up as a priest after a stint in the Roman army in Gaul (France). He was the first Christian saint to die a natural death and not as a martyr.

## CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA VISITAZIONE

Map pp100–1  
041 523 10 96; Riva degli Schiavoni 4149; admission free; closed for restoration; San Zaccaria

More simply dubbed La Pietà, this church is best known for its association with the composer Vivaldi, who was concertmaster here in the early 18th century. Look for the ceiling fresco by Tiepolo. The original church was located next door, and a few fragments of it are visible in the Hotel Metropole. For many years the church was the scene of regular concerts of Vivaldi's music, but the church and instruments are off limits while renovations take place.

## RIVA DEGLI SCHIAVONI

Map pp100–1  
 San Zaccaria  
The waterside walkway west from Rio Ca' di Dio to the Palazzo Ducale in San Marco is known as the Riva degli Schiavoni. Schiavoni, meaning Slavs, refers to fishermen

from Dalmatia (in the former Yugoslavia) who, from medieval times, used to cast their nets off this waterfront.

For centuries, vessels would dock here amid all the chaos you might expect from a busy harbour. Boat crews, waterfront merchants, nobles, gendarmes and crooks, dressed in all manner of garb reflecting the passing parade of Greeks, Turks, Slavs, Arabs, Africans and Europeans, all jostled about these docks. It is perhaps hard to imagine the seemingly chaotic rows of galleys, galleons and, later on, sailing vessels competing for dock space or moored further out in the Canale di San Marco. Or the confusion of rigging and containers of all sorts, the babble of languages, and the clang and clatter of arms and cooking pots

as locals or seafarers prepared impromptu meals for those just arrived. The assault on the senses must have been something.

Today it remains busy, but the actors have changed. The galleons of yore have been replaced by ferries and a growing armada of megayachts, the exotic crews and merchants by gondoliers and not-so-exotic tourists. Instead of impromptu food stalls and the smell of cooking meat, there are ice-cream stands and tourist tat. The linguistic babble remains as confusing as ever, though. Some of the grand old mansions now function as pricey hotels for the well-heeled out-of-towner. Petrarch, one of Italy's greatest writers and a friend of Venice, found lodgings for a time at No 4175, east of Rio della Pietà.

## AROUND THE LAGOON

Eating p183; Shopping p164; Sleeping p209

The island of Giudecca is virtually a part of Venice, forming a banana-shaped basin to its south. Long a modest residential and former industrial district, it boasts a couple of five-star luxury hotels. Next door is Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore, dominated by the church of the same name. A few kilometres east floats the long protective strip of the Lido, the Venetians' local beach and sea wall. It is followed by another similarly sleek island, Pellestrina, which reaches like a bony finger down to mainland Chioggia. North of Venice lie three of the lagoon's most visited islands. Murano, of glass-making fame, is first up, while further off lie the joyfully pastel-coloured Burano, known for fishing and lace-making, and the now nearly abandoned Torcello, important for its impressive cathedral and mosaics. Several other islands around Venice merit, as Michelin would say, a detour, from the rural Sant'Erasmo to the former insane asylum of San Servolo and Armenian monastery isle of San Lazzaro degli Armeni.

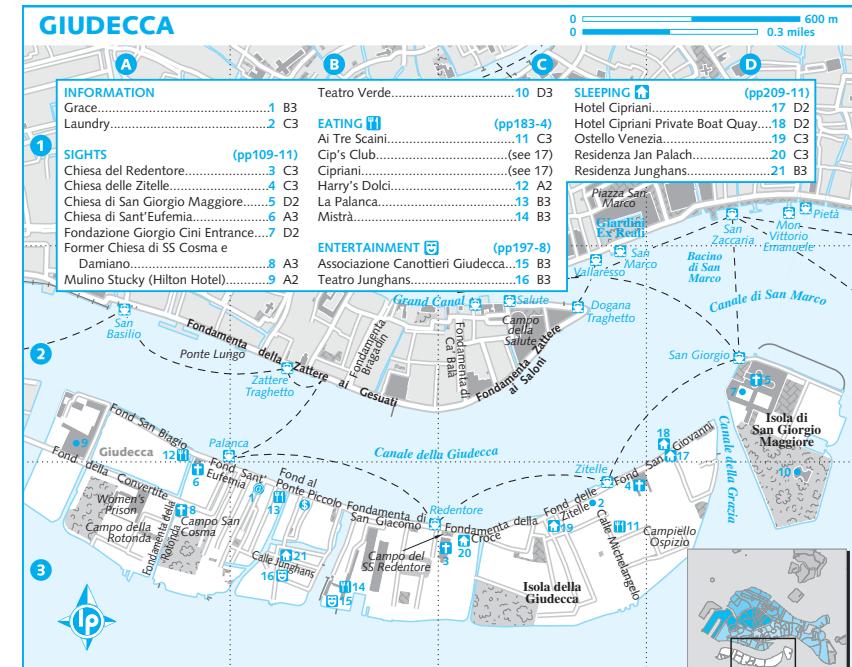
Lines 41, 42, 82 and N serve Giudecca regularly, the easiest approaches being from Ferrovia, Piazzale Roma and San Zaccaria. You can reach the Lido by vaporetti 1, 51, 52, 61, 62, 82 and N from various stops.

To Murano, the most regular services are the 41 and 42. For Burano, take the LN from Fondamente Nuove via Murano and Mazzorbo. From Burano, the T vaporetto runs every half-hour to Torcello. Line 13 serves Le Vignole and Sant'Erasmo, while line 20 tootles to San Servolo and San Lazzaro.

### GIUDECCA

Originally known as Spina Longa (Long Fishbone) because of its shape, Giudecca's name probably derives from the word *Zudega* (from *giudicato* – the judged), applied to rebellious

nobles banished from Venice proper. There are variations on this story – the most likely seems to be that as early as the 9th century, families who had been exiled earlier (and, one assumes, unjustly) were given land on



Giudecca by way of compensation. Until that time, the only inhabitants had been a handful of fisher families.

By the 16th century, the island had been extended through land reclamation to reach something approaching its present form. Merchants set up warehouses, and a flourishing local commercial life made Giudecca a prime piece of real estate. Elite families (such as the Dandolos, Mocenigos and Vendramins) bought up land to build their homes away from home, facing Venice to the north and ending in luxuriant gardens looking south to the open lagoon. Several religious orders established convents and monasteries here.

When the Republic fell in 1797, everything changed. The noble families slipped away as their fortunes declined. The religious orders were suppressed. Through the 19th century, replacing the pleasure domes and religious retreats, came prisons, barracks, factories and, with the latter, working-class housing grids. Descendants of the workers who powered the factories remain in the modest low-level housing, but the factories are gone.

Giudecca today is an island of contrasts. Flanked on either side by five-star luxury hotels (Cipriani, p209, and the Hilton Mulino Stucky, right), it is a quiet residential place. Some of the temporary residents (Elton John has a spread at the Cipriani end of the island, where he and his civil partner, David Furnish, celebrated their honeymoon in 2006) add extra glam, although Venetian homebuyers don't appreciate it much as its main effect has been to push up housing prices in one of the only affordable districts left in the city. Much of the west end has been renovated but, amid all the low-level development, the women's prison (a convent for reformed prostitutes until 1857) still operates. Nearby, boatyards keep busy with repair work. Wander down from Fondamenta di San Giacomo to see them and enjoy the views south into the lagoon.

#### CHIESA DEL REDENTORE Map p109

Campo del SS Redentore 194; admission €2.50 or Chorus ticket; 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun; Redentore

With the passing of a bout of plague in 1577, the Senato commissioned Palladio to design a church of thanksgiving. The following year, the doge, members of the Senato and a host of citizens made the first pilgrimage of thanksgiving, crossing from Zattere on a pontoon bridge of boats and rafts.

Work on this magnificent edifice was completed under Antonio da Ponte (known for his Ponte di Rialto) in 1592. The long church was designed to accommodate the large numbers of pilgrims who, from 1578 onwards, made the annual excursion. The pilgrimage still takes place on the third Saturday in July, and it remains one of the most important events on Venice's calendar (see p18).

Inside the church are a few works by Tintoretto, Veronese and Vivarini, but it is the powerful façade that most impresses. The site's open position makes the church easy to admire from just about anywhere on the Fondamenta Zattere across the Canale della Giudecca.

#### MULINO STUCKY Map p109

041 522 12 67; www.hilton.com; Fondamenta San Biagio 753; Palanca

The striking neo-Gothic hulk of the best-known factory complex on the island, the Mulino Stucky, was built in the late 19th century and employed 1500 people. Now it is a star of the Hilton Hotel chain, with 380 rooms, a conference centre and several restaurants and bars. The original façade has been preserved and it is hard to miss when looking across from the western end of the Zattere. The factory was shut in 1954 and sat long in dignified silence. The Hilton chain saved it from the wrecking ball in 2000 and opened in mid-2007. The views from the main tower (if you manage to wander in) are breathtaking.

#### CHIESA DELLE ZITELLE Map p109

041 260 19 74; Fondamenta delle Zitelle; Zitelle

Designed by Palladio in the late 16th century, the Chiesa di Santa Maria della Presentazione, known as the Zitelle, was a church and hospice for poor young women (zitelle means 'old maids', which is presumably what many of them remained). It is now used for conferences and is only sporadically open.

#### CHIESA DI SANT'EUFEMIA Map p109

041 522 58 48; Fondamenta Sant'Eufemia 680; Palanca

A simple Veneto-Byzantine structure of the 11th century, this church's main portico was actually added in the 18th and

19th centuries. Down Fondamenta Rio di Sant'Eufemia are the one-time church and convent of SS Cosma e Damiano. They were turned into a factory and the bell tower into a smokestack, but have now been beautifully restored and turned into offices, experimental theatre space, conference centre and, in the cloisters, a series of 12 artisan-in-residence workshops. You can see them working on paper, glass and perfumes, and buy too.

## ISOLA DI SAN GIORGIO MAGGIORE

Like the detached head of a plump serpent, the Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore lies just east of Giudecca, utterly dominated by the stern Renaissance frontage and soaring tower of Palladio's eponymous church.

#### CHIESA DI SAN GIORGIO MAGGIORE

Map p109

041 522 78 27; admission to church free, bell-tower lift €3; 9.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-6.30pm May-Sep, 9.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-4.30pm Oct-Apr; San Giorgio

Palladio's grand church occupies one of the most prominent positions in Venice and, although it inspired mixed reactions among the architect's contemporaries (not everyone was fond of the classical tones and indeed Palladio was denied many major commissions in Venice), it had a significant influence on late Renaissance architecture. Built between 1565 and 1580, it is his most imposing structure in the city. The façade, although not erected until the following century, is believed to conform to Palladio's wishes. The massive columns on high plinths, the crowning tympanum and the statues all contain an element of sculptural chiaroscuro, casting deep shadows and reinforcing the impression of strength. Indeed, facing the Bacino di San Marco and the heart of Venice, its effect is deliberately theatrical. Inside, the sculptural decoration is sparse, the open space regimented by powerful clusters of columns and covered by luminous vaults.

San Giorgio Maggiore's art treasures include works by Tintoretto: an *Ultima Cena* (Last Supper) and the *Raccolta della Manna* (Shower of Manna) on the walls of the high altar, and a *Deposizione* (Deposition) in the Cappella dei Morti. Take the lift to the top

of the 60m-high bell tower for an extraordinary view.

#### FONDAZIONE GIORGIO CINI Map p109

041 528 99 00; www.cini.it; adult/under 7yr/child 7-12yr/senior & student €12/free/8/10; 10am-5pm Sat & Sun by one-hour guided visit only; San Giorgio

Behind Palladio's grand church extend the grounds of the former monastery. Established as long ago as the 10th century by the Benedictines, it was rebuilt in the 13th century and then expanded in a series of projects that spanned the 16th century, finishing with the library built by Longhena in the 1640s.

The Cini clan (with interests in the Porto Marghera industrial complex, Adriatic shipping and more) set up the Fondazione Giorgio Cini and bought the island in 1951 (saving the monastic complex from a slow death by neglect) and by 1960 had largely restored the site. The foundation runs various scholarly centres.

Visits take you first to the Chiostro dei Cipressi (named after the four cypress trees in the cloister), the oldest extant part of the complex, completed in 1526 in an early Renaissance style. One side is flanked by the cells of 56 Benedictine monks who long lived here. The Chiostro del Palladio (designed by the Renaissance star) is on the site of the grand Medici library that had been destroyed by fire.

The library had been a donation from Cosimo de' Medici, exiled from Florence in 1433 and head of the dynasty that would preside over that city's destiny for centuries. The Benedictines of the Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore were long the traditional hosts of prestigious foreign dignitaries. The exiled Cosimo was one of the most prestigious, and proved to be one of the most generous to his benefactors during and after his one-year sojourn in La Serenissima.

Palladio also designed the monumental refectory, in which a grand painting by Veronese depicting the *Nozze di Cana* (Wedding at Cana) once took pride of place. It now hangs in the Louvre. It fell into the greedy hands of Napoleon, was cut in two, rolled up and packed off to Paris. In 2007, it was announced that a facsimile of Veronese's original work, done by carrying out hi-tech studies with cameras and scanners, will eventually be placed where Veronese's work once hung. It was

even claimed that it would be truer to the original work than the original itself, which has been restored several times down the centuries.

After the refectory, a grand staircase in restrained baroque by Longhena leads to his magnificent library.

A stroll through the gardens leads to the outdoor **Teatro Verde**, built in the 1950s and sometimes used for summer performances.

## ISOLA DI SAN MICHELE

This tranquil cemetery island features a charming Renaissance church and is the final resting place to many illustrious figures, local and foreign.

### CIMITERO

041 72 98 11; admission free; 7.30am-6pm Apr-Sep, 7.30am-4pm Oct-Mar; Cimitero

The city's cemetery was established on San Michele under Napoleon and is maintained by the Franciscans. The **Chiesa di San Michele in Isola**, begun by Codussi in 1469, was among the city's first Renaissance buildings, built in sober style of white Istrian stone. Inspired by local and Tuscan ideas in the body of the church, Codussi dedicated most effort to the façade, crowned by a semicircle that mixes the classical with an Eastern touch. In the curved tympanums are placed sculpted shells representing the birth of Venus. The quiet cloister is attractive and worth a peek. Among those pushing up daisies here are Ezra Pound, Sergei Diaghilev and Igor Stravinsky. Look for their graves in the northeast sector of the (signposted) island; they are in the 'acatholic' (read Protestant and Orthodox) sections. Nowadays most Venetians are buried at Mestre, although some space here remains available. Vaporetti 41 and 42 from Fondamente Nuove stop here.

## MURANO

The people of Venice have been making crystal and glass since the 10th century. The bulk of the industry was moved to the island of Murano in 1291 because of the danger of fire posed by the glass-working kilns.

Venice had a virtual monopoly on the production of what is now known as Murano glass, and the methods of the craft were such a well-guarded secret that it was considered

treason for a glass-worker to leave the city; see the boxed text, p165.

The incredibly elaborate pieces produced by the artisans can range from the beautiful to the grotesque – but, as the Italians would say, *i gusti son gusti* (each to his own). Watching the glass-workers in action in island factories is spell-binding. You can see them in several outlets along and off Fondamenta dei Vetrai. Look for the sign 'Fornace' (Furnace).

**Palazzo da Mula** (Map p113), near the Ponte Vivarini, the only bridge to span the Canal Grande di Murano, sometimes plays host to exhibitions. More often than not the subject is...glass.

Across Canale di San Donato is one of the few private mansions of any note on the island, the 16th-century **Palazzo Trevisan**.

### CHIESA DEI SS MARIA E DONATO

Map p113

041 73 90 56; Campo San Donato; admission free; 9am-noon & 3.30-7pm Mon-Sat, 3.30-7pm Sun; Museo

This is a fascinating example of Veneto-Byzantine architecture. Looking at the apse, however, it is impossible not to see Romanesque influences too. Founded in the 7th century and rebuilt 500 years later, the church was originally dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It was rededicated to San Donato after his bones were brought here from the Greek island of Cephalonia, along with those of a dragon he had supposedly killed (four of the 'dragon' bones hang behind the altar). The church's magnificent mosaic pavement (a very Byzantine touch) was laid in the 12th century, and the impressive mosaic of the Virgin Mary in the apse dates from the same period.

### MUSEO DEL VETRO

Map p113  
041 73 95 86; www.museiciviciveneziani.it; Fondamenta Giustinian 8; adult/child under 5yr/EU senior, student & child €5.50/free/3; 10am-6pm Thu-Tue Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Thu-Tue Nov-Mar; Museo

The Glass Museum has some exquisite pieces. The building, set in a peaceful garden, is a grand 15th-century affair that from 1659 until the early 19th century was the seat of the Torcello bishopric (until its dissolution) and then became Murano town hall. The museum was installed here in 1861, mostly on the 1st floor. On the ground floor is a display of ancient glass

## MURANO

SIGHTS	
Chiesa dei SS Maria e Donato.....	1 C2
Museo del Vetro.....	2 C2
Palazzo da Mula.....	3 B2
Palazzo Trevisan.....	4 C2

SHOPPING	
Berengo.....	5 C3
Marco Polo.....	6 B3
Murano Collezioni.....	7 B3

EATING	
Busa alla Torre.....	8 C2

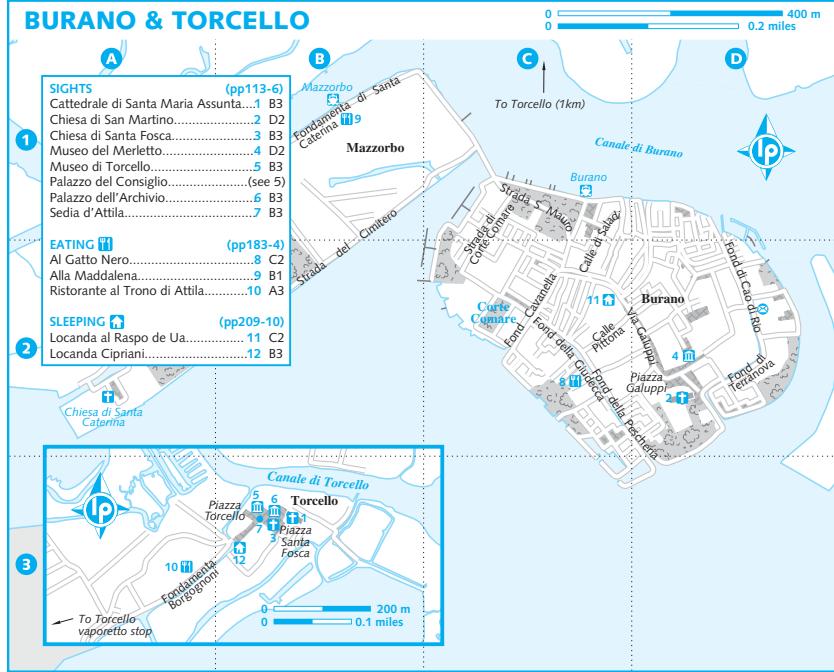
SLEEPING	
Hotel al Sofiador.....	9 C3
Locanda Conterie.....	10 C2

(pp165-6)

(p183)

(p210)

(p165-6)



remarkable. In the last room hang sundry diplomas and prizes awarded at international exhibitions from the 19th century on. Recognition for the quality of the islanders' work came from as far off as Paris and Boston. For info on specials and combined tickets, see the boxed text on p61.

#### CHIESA DI SAN MARTINO Map p114

041 73 00 96; Piazza Galuppi; admission free; 8am-noon & 3-7pm Mon-Sat; Burano

This 16th-century church is worth a quick look, in particular for the *Crocifissione* by Giambattista Tiepolo.

#### TORCELLO

This delightful island, with its overgrown main square and sparse, scruffy-looking buildings and monuments, was at its peak from the mid-7th century to the 13th century, when it was the seat of the bishop of mainland Altinum (modern Altino) and home to 20,000 people. Rivalry with Venice and a succession of malaria epidemics systematically reduced its splendour and population. Today, some 20 souls call Torcello home. In its now nearly abandoned state, the island gives us some idea

of how things might have looked at the outset of settlement in the lagoon.

When you get off the ferry, follow Fondamenta Borgognoni, the path along the canal that leads to the heart of the island. Around the central square is huddled all that remains of old Torcello – the lasting homes of the clergy and the island's secular rulers.

A combined ticket for the Cattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta and Museo di Torcello costs €6 and can be purchased at either.

#### CATTEDRALE DI SANTA MARIA ASSUNTA Map p114

041 296 06 30; Piazza Torcello; cathedral €3, bell tower €2, or combined ticket; 10.30am-6pm Mar-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Feb;

The island's ancient Veneto-Byzantine cathedral, Venice's first, was founded in the 7th century. What you see today dates from the first expansion of the church in 824 and rebuilding in 1008, making it about the oldest Venetian monument to have remained relatively untargeted with.

The three apses (the central one dates back to the original 7th-century structure) are Romanesque in inspiration and underline its intermarriage of building styles. A

#### GENTLY AROUND THE LAGOON

Mauro Stoppa (52) has turned full circle. He grew up in a small village near the southern end of Venice's lagoon. Long in charge of a successful farm-tool business, he chuckle it all in to return to what he calls 'the forgotten dimension' of Venice: the lagoon he used to play in as a small boy.

Since 2006 he has lived aboard his stout *bragozzo*, the Eolo, a hefty, shallow-hulled fishing vessel built in Chioggia in 1946 and now tied up at La Certosa when not plying the lagoon. Beautifully restored, this ponderous two-mast pootles about the lagoon with tourists anxious to discover a peaceful world away from the tight lanes of the city.

'No-one seems to have time to get to know this internal sea. At best, people rush about the three islands of Murano, Burano and Torcello, and that's it,' muses Stoppa. He loves the lagoon and has seen it suffer. 'I remember going swimming here in the '60s and coming out of the water with rashes. After a while we realised where it was coming from and stopped swimming.' The petro-chemical plant at Porto Marghera was spewing contaminants into the water. 'They destroyed the lagoon, but nature has struck back! Industrial output is down 60% since a high point in the 1980s and fish have returned to the lagoon! And a wonderful thing is happening at the south of the lagoon on land once earmarked for expansion of the petro-chemical plant. A marvellous wood has grown back without any human help. Or rather, in spite of us!'

The introduction of Philippine clams and subsequent dragnet fishing all but destroyed the lagoon's flora and fauna. To such a point that even the introduced clams weren't reproducing. Increasingly, controlled clam farming in designated areas is taking place, so there is hope there too.'

For Stoppa, the greatest threat comes from works that have altered the ebb and flow of seawater. The creation of the petrol tanker canal in the 1960s and work connected with the Mose tidal barriers (see the boxed text, p32) has upset the balance of sea and freshwater. 'For 500 years, the Venetians carried out work that did no harm, and in a 10th of the time we have managed to destroy what they created. Well done!' But Stoppa remains optimistic: 'After all, if we can find the money to build the Mose system, we can find more to pull it all down again when people realise it doesn't work!'

jewel of simple, early-medieval architecture, the interior is still more fascinating for its magnificent Byzantine mosaics.

On the western wall of the cathedral is a vast mosaic depicting the Last Judgment. Hell (lower right side) doesn't look any fun at all. Sceptics in the 21st century may grin knowingly, but such images inspired sheer terror in the average resident of Torcello back in the 12th and 13th centuries, when the mosaics were put together.

The greatest treasure is the mosaic of the *Madonna col Bambino* in the half-dome of the central apse. Starkly set on a pure gold background, the figure is one of the most stunning works of Byzantine art in Italy. And if you need more confirmation of the church's Eastern influences, have a look at the iconostasis set well before the altar.

Climb the bell tower for fine lagoon views (the tower closes half an hour before the church does from March to October).

In front of the cathedral entrance are the excavated remains of the 7th-century circular **baptistry**. Steps lead down into a small pool, a standard early-Christian model for baptistries. It was later demolished and replaced several times until in the 19th century these remains were uncovered. Fragments of construction on the site

of the baptistery go back to the 4th century, indicating that the island was already inhabited under the Roman Empire.

Adjacent to the cathedral, the **Chiesa di Santa Fosca** (10am-4.30pm) was founded in the 11th century to house the body of St Fosca.

#### MUSEO DI TORCELLO Map p114

041 270 24 64; Piazza Torcello; admission €2, or combined ticket; 10.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb;

Across the square from the cathedral in the 13th-century **Palazzo del Consiglio** is this museum dedicated to the island. On the ground floor are some sculptural fragments from the cathedral, a 6th-century holy-water font and a curious display of Byzantine objects from Constantinople. Upstairs, among a series of rather dark religious paintings, many from the workshops of Veronese, are all sorts of odds and ends, including a 7th-century lead seal. The museum's ancient artefacts are held in the **Palazzo dell'Archivio**, just opposite the Palazzo del Consiglio. They include Roman bronze implements and figurines, some funerary stelae (inscribed, upright stone columns) and statuary, and other bits and pieces. The

Roman items were mostly unearthed at the now-vanished Altino.

The rough-hewn stone chair outside is known as the *Sedia d'Attila* (Attila's Seat). Why is anyone's guess, and even the use to which the seat was put is a mystery. It is surmised that magistrates sat here to pass judgment.

## LIDO DI VENEZIA

Laid-back for most of the year, the Lido is crowded on summer weekends with local and foreign sun-seekers. The beaches are its main draw, but frankly the water ain't that great and the public areas of the waterfront can be less than attractive. You'll find better beaches on the north coast of the mainland (Cavallino, Jesolo and further along the coast as far as Bibione), but the Lido is easier to reach. You pay a small fortune to rent a chair, umbrella and changing cabin in the more easily accessible and cleaner areas of the beach (up to €10 for a sun lounger and €60 for a basic changing room per day).

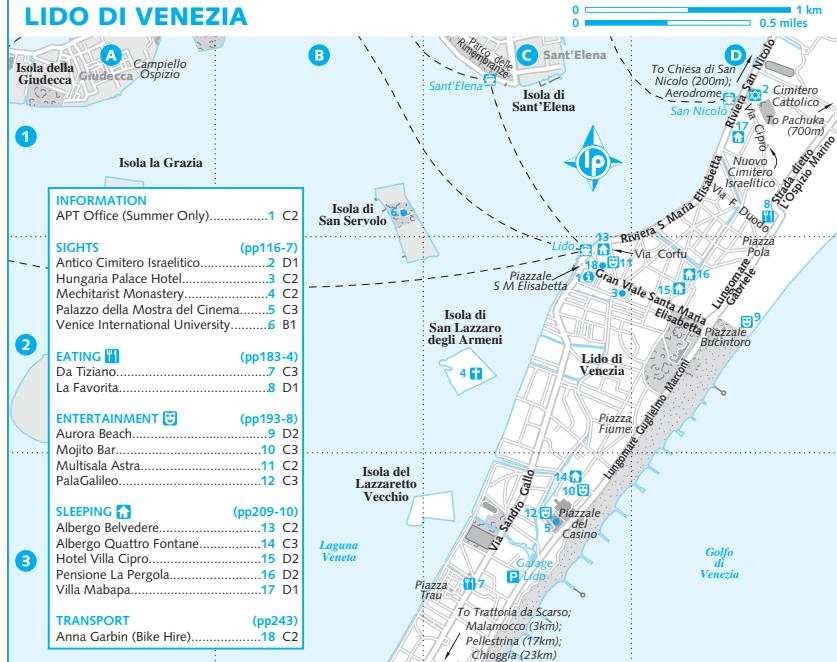
The Lido forms a land barrier between the lagoon and the Adriatic Sea. On the lagoon side, you can see the nearby Isola di San Lazzaro degli Armeni (see p118), while closer to

the shore is the former leper colony of Isola del Lazzaretto Vecchio.

The Lido's more glorious days are depicted in melancholy style in Thomas Mann's novel *Der Tod in Venedig* (Death in Venice). A wander around the streets between the Adriatic and the Santa Maria Elisabetta vaporetto stop will turn up occasional Art Nouveau (what the Italians call Liberty style) and even Art Deco villas, of which some 200 have been catalogued, built by rich Venetians at the turn of the 20th century. One of the most extravagant is the *Hungaria Palace Hotel* (Map p116; Gran Viale Santa Maria Elisabetta 28). That architectural freedom, the traffic and pine trees give the Lido the air of many an Adriatic seaside town along the Italian coast – a world away from Venice.

For centuries, the dogi made an annual pilgrimage to the *Chiesa di San Nicolò* (off Map p116), at the north end of the Lido, to fulfil Venice's traditional Sposalizio del Mar (Wedding with the Sea; see *Festa della Sensa*, p17). The church is a relatively uninteresting 17th-century structure. One of the city's defensive forts was nearby.

The Lido fills up for the Mostra del Cinema di Venezia (Venice International Film Festival), which takes place from late August to September (see p18). The cinema fest is hosted



in the snappy *Palazzo della Mostra del Cinema* (Map p116) and many of the stars choose to stay in the five-star hotels on the island. Getting a room anywhere on the Lido at this time of year takes a lot of forward planning.

Bus B from Gran Viale Santa Maria Elisabetta, or your bicycle, will take you to Malamocco (off Map p116), in the south of the island. Arranged across a chain of squares and some canals, the old heart of this town is far more reminiscent of Venice than the late-19th-century seaside conceits to the north. The original settlement of Malamocco, besieged by the Frankish ruler Pepin in the early years of the Republic, is believed to have been an island off the Lido and has long since disappeared – a kind of Venetian mini-Atlantis.

Hire a bike at *Anna Garbin* (Map p116; Piazzale Santa Maria Elisabetta 2a; hire per day €10), a couple of minutes from the main vaporetto stop. This will allow you to explore the island, as well as (for the energetic) Pellestrina and even Chioggia to the south.

## ANTICO CIMITERO ISRAELITICO

Map p116

Admission adult/student €8.50/7; 1hr Italian & English tours 10.30am & 2.30pm Sun Apr-Sep;

Lido

A few hundred metres south of the *Chiesa di San Nicolò* is what remains of the Antico Cimitero Israelitico (Old Jewish Cemetery). In 1386, Venice's Jews acquired the right to bury their dead on a strip of the Lido that started near the *Chiesa di San Nicolò* and extended down here. It fell into disuse in the 18th century (when the Nuovo Cimitero Israelitico opened nearby). The bulk of the tombstones were discovered by construction workers in the late 19th century, and it was decided to set them up in some sort of orderly fashion as a visitors' attraction at a time when the Lido was taking off as a luxury tourist destination. Turn up at the gates or buy tickets in advance at the Museo Ebraico (see p92) to tour the burial ground, said to be the second-oldest Jewish cemetery in Europe after that in Worms (Germany). The cemetery is open only on Sunday for these organised visits (check which language is on at which time, as it changes).

## PELESTRINA

Separated from the southern tip of the Lido by the Porto di Malamocco, one of the three sea gates between the Adriatic and the lagoon,

Pellestrina (off Map p60) is like an 11km-long razor blade. Small villages of farming and fishing families (population about 2900) are strung out along the island, protected on the seaward side by the Murazzi, a remarkable feat of 18th-century engineering, although they don't look much to the modern eye. These sea walls, designed to keep the power of the sea over the lagoon in check, once extended without interruption some 20km from the southern tip of Pellestrina to a point halfway up the coast of the Lido. The Pellestrina stretch and part of the Lido wall remain. They were heavily damaged during the 1966 floods and partially restored in the 1970s. Long stretches of sparsely populated grey-sand beaches separate the Murazzi from the sea on calm days. A handful of small family restaurants are known for their excellent seafood.

This is about as out of the way as you can get for a true taste of Venetian lagoon life.

## MINOR ISLANDS

### Isola di San Francesco del Deserto

The Franciscans built themselves a *monastery* (041 528 68 63; www.isola-sanfrancescodedeserto.it; admission free, donations appreciated; 9-11am & 3-5pm Tue-Sun) on this island, about 1km south of Burano, to get away from it all. The island (Map p60), on which evidence of an earlier Roman presence has also been found, makes an enchanting detour. Legend has it that Francis of Assisi landed here, seeking shelter after a journey to Palestine in 1220. The Franciscans deserted the island (hence the name) in 1420, as conditions had become difficult and malaria was rampant.

Another branch of the order reoccupied the island later that century, and in the 18th century they were succeeded by yet another reforming branch of the Franciscans. Pope Leo XIII united these groups in the 19th century, creating the order of the Frati Minori, and, except for an interruption under Napoleon, they have remained there ever since. The monastery retains some of its 13th-century elements, including the first cloister. Call before heading out, especially if you are in a group. If you turn up within the hours outlined a tour *should* take place, but it depends on whether or not a brother is free.

The only way there is to hire a private boat or taxi from Burano, or row your own! Ask around at the vaporetto stop on Burano. You will be looking at about €80 for up to four

passengers for the return trip and a 40-minute wait time.

## Le Vignole & Sant'Erasmo

Welcome to the Venetian countryside! Together these two islands almost equal Venice in size, but any comparison ends there. Sparsely inhabited, these largely rural landscapes are covered in fields, groves and vineyards rather than endless monuments.

The southwestern part of Le Vignole (Map p60) is owned by the military and contains the best preserved of a scattering of old forts, the 16th-century **Forte Sant'Andrea**, built by Michele Sanmicheli and also known as the Castello da Mar (Sea Castle). Generally, you have to content yourself with a distant view of the fort from the lagoon, but it may become possible to visit, as the Venice municipality is looking at taking it over from the state. In the meantime, you can sometimes organise **private visits** (✉ 368 320 68 46). The low-level cannons pointing out to sea, combined with a chain across to the (now gone) Forte di San Nicolò on the Lido, rendered entry into the heart of the lagoon by enemy warships virtually impossible. The last time the guns were fired in anger, they managed to dissuade one of Napoleon's warships in 1797.

The island long produced most of the doge's wine, and its 50 inhabitants still live mainly from agriculture.

Together with Le Vignole, Sant'Erasmo (Map p60) was long known as the *orto di Venezia* (Venice's garden). About 750 people live on the island, many around the Chiesa ferry stop. The island has long had an agricultural vocation, although the Roman chronicler Martial records the presence of holiday villas belonging to the well-to-do of the now-disappeared mainland centre of Altinum (Altino). Until the 1800s, the island bore the direct brunt of Adriatic rollers, but subsequent construction of dikes at the Porto del Lido lagoon entrance favoured the build-up of sediment that created Punta Sabbioni and largely closed the island off from the sea.

It is about a half-hour walk from the Chiesa stop to the more southern Capannone stop, and another 15 minutes east to what remains of the round **Torre Massimiliana**, a 19th-century Austrian defensive fort used for temporary exhibitions. The small beach and restaurant nearby become a summer weekend focal point for young and restless Venetians, who parade around in speedboats

with music blaring, much as some of their young landlubber *confrères* do in wide-wheeled cars.

Vaporetto 13 runs to Le Vignole and Sant'Erasmo from Fondamente Nuove via Murano (Faro stop).

## Isola La Certosa

Once home to Carthusian monks (hence the island's name) and then military land from about the time Napoleon waltzed into Venice until after WWII, this then long-abandoned island (Map p60) is being imaginatively resurrected as a much-needed marina. **Vento di Venezia** (✉ 041 520 85 88; [www.ventodivevenezia.it](http://www.ventodivevenezia.it)) offers moorings for 100 visiting yachts (to be expanded to 400 in coming years), fully equipped repair shops, a hotel (with 18 spacious rooms) and restaurant-bar, sailing classes for all levels, boat charter and more. They also build and restore timber boats here. In May 2007, the **Istituto Europeo di Design** ([www.ied.it](http://www.ied.it)) opened its doors here to students of yacht design and other design-related courses. The rest of the island (which has a bit of a rabbit problem) is being modelled as urban parkland. The marina runs a boat to the San Pietro vaporetto stop and/or a jetty on the north flank of the Stadio Penzo in Sant'Elena every half-hour on the hour. You need to call (✉ 320 658 34 54) to make sure it is running and to find out where it's headed. Eventually, vaporetto 41 and 42 will call here.

## Isola di San Lazzaro degli Armeni

In 1717, the Armenian order of the Mechitarist Fathers (named after the founding father, Mechitar) was granted use of this island, which centuries before had been a leper colony and earlier still the site of a Benedictine hospice for pilgrims. The **Mechitarist monastery** (Map p116; ✉ 041 526 01 04; adult/student & child €6/3; ☎ tours 3.25-5pm) became an important centre of learning and repository of Armenian culture, which it remains to this day.

Access is by tour only. After wandering around the cloister you are taken to the church, sparkling with mosaics and stuffed with paintings (the Armenian monastery was the only one in Venice spared Napoleon's pillaging). From there you are led to the 18th-century refectory and upstairs to the library. The latter is divided into several

## A RIVAL FOR CASANOVA?

Lord Byron spent a good deal of time seeking spiritual solace with the Mechitarist Fathers on the island of San Lazzaro, but even more time seeking earthly ecstasy in Venice. One night, he was in such an exultant mood after a night with a mistress that he leapt into the Grand Canal and swam home. The only problem was the danger of gondoliers bumping into him. So, it is said, he repeated the exploit the following night, but carried a flaming torch in one hand so that he could be seen! He found the city (struggling under Austrian occupation) an inexhaustible source of carnal amusement. Of Venetian women (and it appears he knew quite a few) he said: 'Some are countesses, and some are cobblers' wives, some noble, some middling, some low – and all whores.' A real charmer, what?

rooms with cabinets containing all sorts of odds and ends, including antiquities from Ancient Egypt, Sumeria and India, precious book collections and a room dominated by Armenian art and artefacts.

An Egyptian mummy and a 15th-century Indian throne dominate a room dedicated to the memory of Lord Byron, who stayed on the island in search of (much needed) inner peace. True to his eccentric nature, he could often be seen swimming from the island to the Grand Canal (see the boxed text, *above*). Lastly, a circular room contains precious manuscripts, many of them Armenian and one dating to the 6th century.

For San Lazzaro, take vaporetto 20 from San Zaccaria.

## San Clemente & San Servolo

The island of San Clemente (Map p60) was once the site of a hospice for pilgrims returning from the Middle East. Later, a convent was built and from 1522 it was a quarantine station. The plague that devastated Venice in 1630 was blamed by some on a carpenter who worked on San Clemente, and who became infected and brought the disease to the city. The Austrians turned the building into a mental hospital for women (the first in Europe), and until 1992 it still operated in part as a

psychiatric hospital. The entire island is now a luxury hotel (see San Clemente Palace, p209), but to Venetians 'going to San Clemente' still means only one thing.

San Servolo (Map p60) shared these hospital functions from the 18th century until 1978. From the 7th to the 17th centuries Benedictine monks had a monastery here, bits of which still remain in the former hospital. This has been partly opened as the **Museo della Folia** (Museum of Madness; ✉ 041 524 01 19; admission free; ☎ phone bookings 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9.30am-3.30pm Fri). Two intriguing rooms are full of paraphernalia and explanations of the days when being sent to San Servolo was undesirable. In the first room is a series of before/after photos of 19th-century inmates, many of whom were little more than extremely poor folk slightly deranged through bad nutrition and vitamin deficiency. In the main room are instruments used for electro-shock therapy, while in an annex are other 'therapeutic' instruments, including chains and straight jackets. Of particular interest is the ancient pharmacy, where for centuries many of Venice's medicines were concocted. The guided tour of the island, which must be booked in advance, also takes in the park and modest church.

For San Servolo, take vaporetto 20 from San Zaccaria. The hotel on San Clemente operates a shuttle service (see p209).

# THE MAINLAND

Eating p184; Sleeping p211

Chioggia, on the southern mainland rim of the Venetian lagoon, is a curious outpost of Venice. Fishing remains the main activity here, and with its handful of canals the historic centre feels very much an outpost of the Serenissima. It is well worth a stroll and if you feel like some beach time, local buses shuttle to Sottomarina.

Mestre is Venice's relatively charmless mainland alter ego. Still, there are a couple of things to see and, in a sense, the place gives a more realistic insight into the average Venetian's day-to-day life – given that many of them live here.

Any train from Venice Santa Lucia stops in Mestre. Otherwise, most local buses run from Piazale Roma. For Chioggia, bus 11 leaves from Gran Viale Santa Maria Elisabetta, outside the tourist office on the Lido; it boards the car ferry at Alberoni, then connects with a steamer at Pellestrina that will take you to Chioggia. The trip costs €5 if you haven't got a day ticket. Alternatively, you can adopt a more prosaic approach and catch a bus from Piazzale Roma (€4, one hour). In summer the Linea Clodia ferry runs directly from in front of the Pietà church. Once you're in the town, city buses 1, 2, 6 and 7 connect Chioggia with Sottomarina (a 15-minute walk), the town's beach.

## CHIOGGIA

Chioggia (off Map p60) marks the southern mainland boundary of the Venetian municipality. Invaded and destroyed by the Republic's maritime rival, Genoa, in the late 14th century, the medieval core of modern Chioggia is a crumbly but not uninteresting counterpoint to its more illustrious patron to the north. In no way cute like Murano or Burano, Chioggia is a firmly practical town, its big sea-fishing fleet everywhere in evidence.

If you arrive by way of the Lido and Pellestrina – the most enchanting way to get here – you'll find yourself at the northern end of Main St, Chioggia (Corso del Popolo). Head left down Calle della Santa Croce to the **Chiesa di San Domenico**, built in 1745 on the site of a Dominican church. The site is a little island unto itself and the church's main claim to fame is *San Paolo* (St Paul), said to be Vittore Carpaccio's last known painting. The bell tower, raised in 1200, is the sole remnant of the original structure.

After visiting the church, return to Corso del Popolo. A brisk walk down this cobbled-stoned and largely pedestrianised thoroughfare takes you to the heart of the old town. Along the way, you reach the **cathedral**. Rebuilt in the 17th century to a design by Longhena, about all that is left of the earlier structure is the bell tower, raised in 1350.

The historic centre of Chioggia is on an island, transferred here from its original position in what is today Sottomarina, on the coast, after the Genoese siege of 1379–80. The reasoning was simple enough: just as water was Venice's best defence, so it would be for Chioggia. People began to repopulate Sottomarina three centuries later.

Through the middle of the island runs the utterly Venetian Canale della Vena, complete with little bridges. On either side it is protected by the Canale Lombardo and Canale di San Domenico. Beyond the latter (after crossing another narrow islet), the Ponte Translagunare bridges the lagoon to link Chioggia with Sottomarina and its Adriatic beaches.

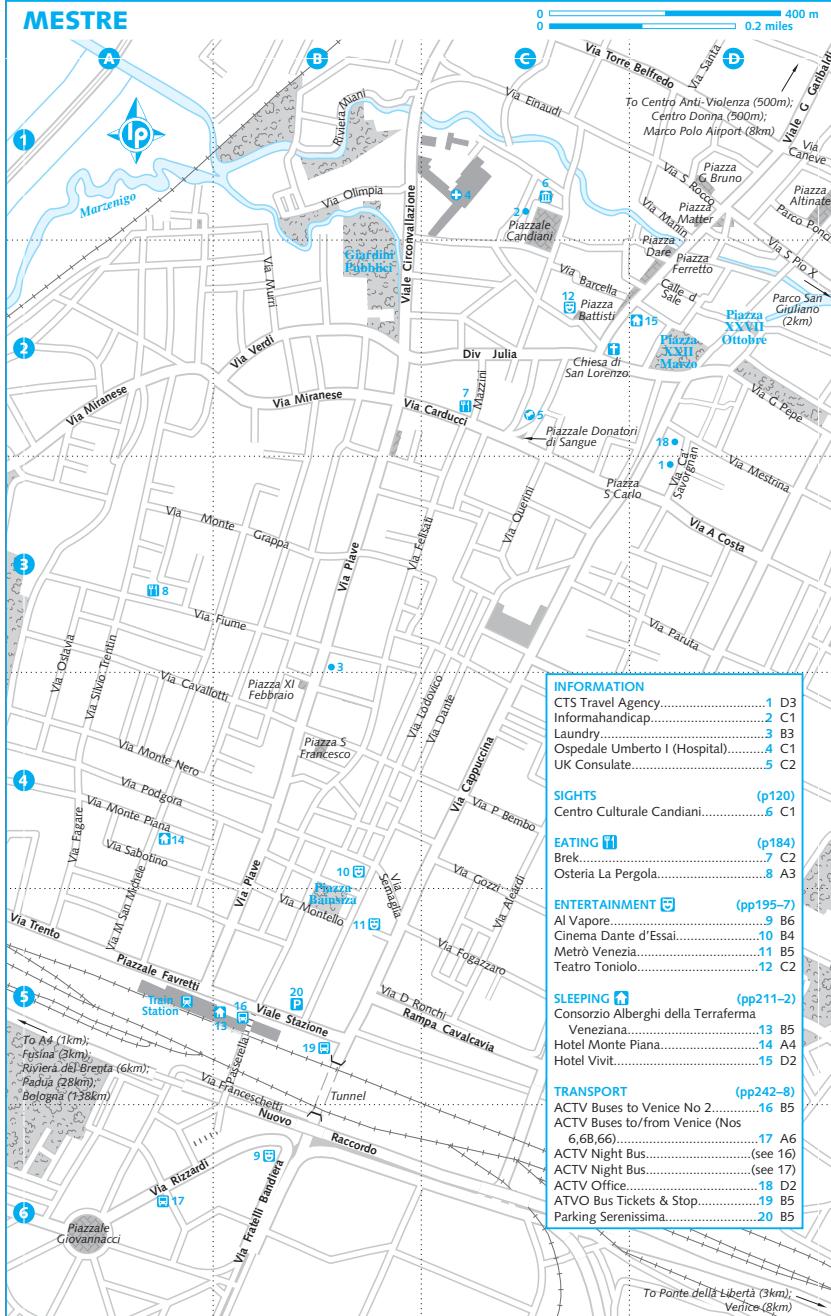
More interesting than the monuments is simply pottering about, ducking down the alleys that branch off like ribs to the east and west from the spine of Corso del Popolo. The **mercato ittico** (fish market; ☎ Tue-Sat), alongside Canale di San Domenico where the Ponte Translagunare reaches into Chioggia, is an eye-opener if you can get there at about 6am.

The beaches at **Sottomarina** are OK. It's a typical seaside scene, with cheap hotels, bouncy castles for kids, snack bars, tat and even the odd tacky disco.

## MESTRE

There's not much to come to Mestre for, though a stroll around the central Piazza Ferretto is pleasant enough. The **Centro Culturale Candiani** (Map p21; ☎ 041 238 61 11; [www.comune.venezia.it/candiani](http://www.comune.venezia.it/candiani), in Italian; Piazzale Candiani 7; varied admission prices; ☎ 9am–10pm Tue-Sun), a modern multimedia and exhibition centre, often hosts first-class exhibitions.

Away from the centre and backing on to the lagoon, **Parco Giuliano** is a modern park area with restaurants, a skating rink, a playground, bicycle hire and the like. It is aimed above all at locals (otherwise largely starved of green areas) but can make an interesting day out among the folks of Mestre and certainly far away from other tourists!



## WALKING TOURS

Perhaps more than any other city, Venice is best discovered on foot. The following walks cover the *sestieri* that make up the city: San Marco, Dorsoduro, San Polo, Santa Croce, Cannaregio and Castello. The suggested routes provide possible links from one *sestiere* to the next. The routes should be viewed as suggestions. The suggested walking times allow for a leisurely pace but not for visiting sights. Let your imagination do the work and wander off wherever your nose leads you.

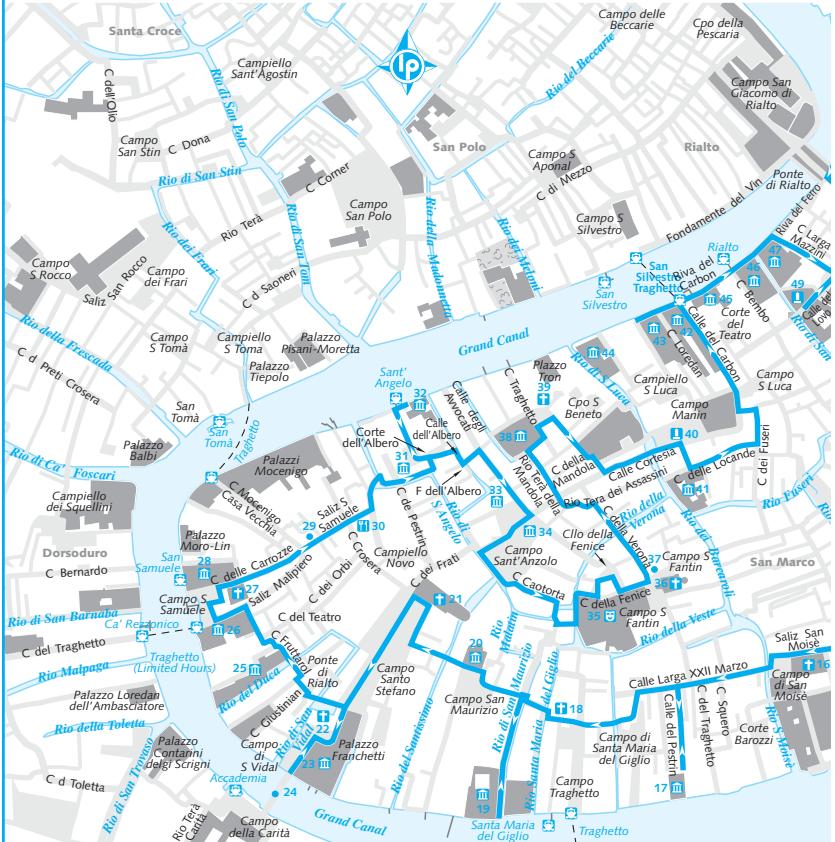
### SESTIERE DI SAN MARCO

Ever since the rail link with the mainland opened in the 19th century, the magical symbolism of Piazzetta San Marco, the theatrical waterside gateway to the Most Serene Republic, has been largely lost to the city's visitors.

Stand between the two 12th-century red and grey granite columns 1 bearing the emblems of Venice's patron saints – the winged

lion of St Mark and the figure of the demoted St Theodore. The lion faces east, perhaps to signify Venice's domination of the sea, while St Theodore (placed here in 1329) stands calmly on top of a crocodile-like dragon. The tip of his spear is pointed skywards, so perhaps he has killed his prey (some say the statue represents St George). He also holds a shield, as if to say that Venice defends itself but does not seek to attack.

### SESTIERE DI SAN MARCO



Imagine yourself on a galley after months at sea, making your way to La Serenissima. To some observers, the lion's and dragon's tails face each other to form the crossbeam of a perennially open gate – suggesting that Venice is open to whoever visits. It must have been a reassuring sight to Venetians returning home.

The columns were erected in 1172. In succeeding centuries the area around them was

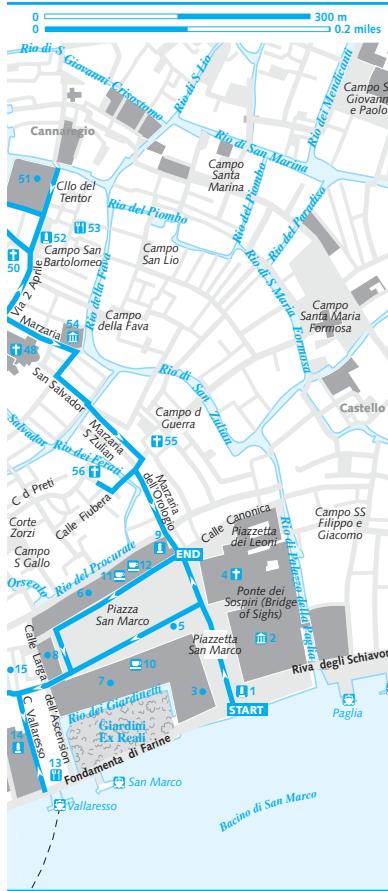
### WALK FACTS

**Start** Piazzetta San Marco (vaporetto San Marco)

**End** Piazza San Marco

**Distance** 4km

**Duration** One to 1½ hours



a hive of activity, with shops selling all manner of goods and food. On a more sinister note, public executions took place between the two columns. After the killings, culprits were usually quartered and the various chunks displayed at four points around the city.

Until the 12th century there was nothing but water here. Like so much of Venice, this area is the result of landfill and its level has since been raised several times (again in the 2000s) in response to flooding. The square is bordered on one side by the Palazzo Ducale 2 (p67), long the seat of power in the lagoon city, and on the other by the 16th-century Libreria Nazionale Marciana 3 (p70).

Linked to Piazzetta San Marco is Piazza San Marco, dominated by the Basilica di San Marco 4 (p61). In front of it rises its proud Campanile 5 (p66). Back in 1162 the local authorities used Piazza San Marco as the stage for the city's first *caccia al toro* (bull hunt), a mad jape that would have made Pamplona's running of the bulls look orderly. Stretching west away from the basilica on the north and south sides of the square are the elegant arcades of, respectively, the Procuratie Vecchie 6 and the Procuratie Nuove 7. The former, designed by Mauro Codussi, were once the residence and offices of the Procurators of St Mark, responsible for the basilica's upkeep and the administration of sizable properties belonging to the basilica around the square and beyond. Even today it is considered a mighty honour to be named a Procurator of St Mark, although their financial clout has waned. The Procuratie Nuove were designed by Jacopo Sansovino and completed by Vincenzo Scamozzi and Baldassare Longhena.

The square is closed off by the Ala Napoleonica 8 which houses the Museo Correr (p70). When Napoleon waltzed into Venice in 1797, he was so taken with the square he dubbed it 'the finest drawing room in Europe'. Not content to admire, he proceeded to demolish the church of San Geminiano to make way for a new wing that would connect the Procuratie Nuove (which he had decided to make his Venetian residence) and the Procuratie Vecchie, and house his ballroom. At first glance it seems to blend in perfectly, but the row of statues depicting Roman emperors was a typically Napoleonic touch.

Nowadays, the square plays host to competing flocks of pigeons and tourists. Stand and wait for the bronze Mori (Moors) to strike the bell of the 15th-century Torre dell'Orologio 9 (p71), which rises above the entrance to Le

## OF WELLS & RAINWATER PRIESTS

So what are all those squat stone cylinders with the metal lids firmly clamped on top that you find in most of the city's *campi*?

Every neighbourhood needed its own source of drinking water in the good old days. With bridges few and far between throughout much of the history of the city, it was easier to provide each of the many *insulae* (blocks or small districts) with its own well than transport water.

Most wells are surrounded by up to four perforated depressions around 4m from them. Rainwater drained into these and seeped into a cistern below. Sand and/or gravel inside the cistern acted as a filter. In the middle of the cistern, a brick cylinder extends to the bottom. The cistern was sealed off with impenetrable clay to keep salty water out.

The parish priest long held the keys to the local well cover, something that gave rise to a Venetian linguistic oddity. The water collected was *acqua piovana* (rainwater), and so a priest was referred to as a *piovan*. The term stuck and is now a Venetian word for priest.

The wells have been closed up since the introduction of direct running water to Venice's buildings.

Marzarie (or Mercerie), the streets that form the thoroughfare from San Marco to the Rialto. Or savour a coffee at **Caffè Florian 10** (p188), **Caffè Quadri 11** (p188) or **Lavena 12** (p188), the 18th-century cafés facing each other on the piazza. On occasion, you may witness a minor military ceremony to hoist or haul in the three flags of Venice, Italy and the EU. The flagpoles have been around a lot longer than the EU, so you might at first wonder what the third flag used to be. You'll find the answer in Gentile Bellini's painting *Processione in Piazza San Marco*, housed in Sala (Room) 21 of the Gallerie dell'Accademia (p75). All three poles carried the ensign of the Republic in the days of La Serenissima.

## West of Piazza San Marco

West of the Ala Napoleonica, you'll find a gaggle of fashion stores and **Harry's Bar 13** (p187) on Calle Vallarezzo.

At No 1332 is the former **Teatro al Ridotto 14**, part of the Hotel Monaco & Grand Canal complex. In the 17th century, the Ridotto gained a name as the city's premier gaming house. During the twilight years of La Serenissima, Venetian nobles were wiping out their fortunes at the gaming tables. The state took a cut, but this was insufficient compensation for the ruin wrought on an already shaky local economy. In November 1774, the Ridotto was shut *per tutti i tempi ed anni avvenire* (for all time and years to come). 'All time' was a relative term – less than 20 years later it was back in business. It remained so until the more purposeful Austrians shut it for good in the early 19th century. You might be able to get a glimpse if you wander into the hotel's first entrance as you wander down Calle Vallarezzo from the Frezzaria. A staircase sweeps away to

the right towards the richly decorated theatre, used for conferences and banquets.

Back on Salizada San Moisè, as you approach Campo di San Moisè you pass a busy shopping street on your right, **Frezzaria 15**. In medieval days, the product on sale was not fashion but *frecce* (arrows): all males above a certain age had to do regular archery practice and be ready to sail to war. Campo San Moisè is dominated by the church **16** (p73) of the same name.

From here, the street widens into Calle Larga XXII Marzo, which was opened in 1881 and commemorates the Austrian surrender to Venetian rebels on 22 March 1848. The victory was short-lived, however, and it would be another 18 years before the Austrians received their definitive marching orders. One Italian guide rather hopefully describes this as 'the City' (an allusion to London's business district) of Venice, given the presence of the local *borsa* (stock exchange) and several banks. Down Calle del Pestrin, south off Calle Larga XXII Marzo, is the unprepossessing façade of **Palazzo Contarini-Fasan 17**, where legend has it that Desdemona, the wife of Othello and victim of his jealousy in Shakespeare's play, lived here.

Calle Larga XXII Marzo then contracts into Calle delle Ostreghe and brings you to Campo di Santa Maria del Giglio, where the church **18** of the same name (p73) will charm you into halting your westward march.

After crossing two bridges in quick succession, you could wander south towards the Grand Canal and sidle up next to **Palazzo Corner 19**, aka Ca' Grande (Big House), Sansovino's 16th-century masterpiece of residential building. He built it for Jacopo Corner, a nephew of the ill-fated Caterina, the queen of Cyprus (see A Queen Cornered, p239). It's claimed to

(Continued on page 133)

(Continued from page 124)

be the biggest mansion in the city; it is also said that the Corner clan managed to prevent the rival Venier family from completing their house (today home to the Peggy Guggenheim Collection) because it would have blocked the Corners' view. During the latter stages of WWII the building was the German headquarters in Venice, and a partisan bomb attack ripped out much of the ground floor. Today it houses Venice's provincial administration. Groups can join guided tours (041 296 07 26; admission free; 3pm & 4.30pm Sat, students 10am & noon Wed & Thu) by appointment only.

Back on the westward route, you emerge in Campo San Maurizio, occasional scene of an antiques market and surrounded by elegant 14th- and 15th-century mansions, along with the church of the same name and its curious **Museo della Musica 20** (p74). Just off this square, sneak around to Campiello Drio la Chiesa and get a close-up look at the leaning 15th-century bell tower of the **Chiesa di Santo Stefano 21** (p73). The lean is in the order of two metres to the perpendicular, and the tower is under constant observation (every six hours the slightest movement is measured). Engineers declared in 2007 that there was no foreseeable danger of the tower tumbling. You enter the church from Campo Santo Stefano (aka Campo Francesco Morosini, after the 17th-century doge). It is a brief stroll south across the grand expanse (a rare thing in Venice) of the *campo* past the **Chiesa di San Vidal 22** (p73) and the magnificent **Palazzo Franchetti 23** (p72) to the **Ponte dell'Accademia 24** (p74) and Grand Canal.

## Santo Stefano to Ponte di Rialto

You could cross the bridge into Dorsoduro (see p135) or turn back a little to the southwest end of Campo Santo Stefano, where Calle Fruttarol swings northwest on a winding route towards the Ponte di Rialto.

You immediately cross a narrow canal and then another, the Rio del Duca. The building on the northwest bank, with a fine façade on the Grand Canal, is the **Ca' del Duca 25** (Duke's House), so called because the Duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza, bought it from the Corner family in 1461. Apart from the 14th-century ground floor, the mansion was rebuilt in the 19th century. At the next street, Calle del Teatro, turn left. The street name is all that remains of

the Teatro San Samuele, where playwright Carlo Goldoni (see p53) first hit the limelight.

Turn right and follow the rear side of **Palazzo Malipiero 26**, in the wall of which is a plaque just before you enter Salizada Malipiero. It reminds you that in a house along this lane, Giacomo Casanova was born in 1725.

**Palazzo Malipiero** forms the southern limit of quiet Campo San Samuele. On the east side is the unobtrusive outline of the former **Chiesa di San Samuele 27**, and to the north, the stately **Palazzo Grassi 28** (p71). The museum restaurant makes a good lunch stop.

Wheeling around the church, head more or less east along Calle delle Carrozze and into Salizada San Samuele. Shops flogging everything from glass to wooden sculptures of unironed shirts line these streets. You can only wonder what Paolo Veronese, who lived at **No 3337 29**, would have thought of it all. If you don't fancy eating at **Palazzo Grassi**, **Osteria al Bacaretto 30** (p171) is not a bad option.

Although this itinerary barrels towards Fondamenta dell'Albero, unhurried strollers might like to wander down any of the several lanes that end at the Grand Canal. Just off Calle dell'Albero is a neat little square, the Corte dell'Albero, walled on two sides by **Casa Nardi 31** at No 3884–3887, built in 1913 and incorporating Veneto-Byzantine architectural themes. It has a hint of the Barcelona Modernista style (calling to mind architect Lluís Domènech i Montaner) in its use of brick and the attempt to recycle a proud and distant design tradition. Facing the Grand Canal at No 3877 is Codussi's **Palazzo Corner-Spinelli 32**, later reworked by Sanmicheli.

From Calle dell'Albero, head southeast down Calle degli Avvocati, which leads into Campo Sant'Anzolo. A good deal of the square is raised. The two wells clue you in that directly below is a large cistern. A 15th-century *palazzo*, **Palazzo Griffi 33**, dominates the square's north corner. In 1801, the Italian musician Domenico Cimarosa died in **Palazzo Duodo 34** (No 3584), which in those days was the Albergo Tre Stelle and dates to the same period as Palazzo Griffi.

The *campo* was no stranger to crime, according to city chronicles. In 1476, a launderer by the name of Giacomo was sent to jail after having taken a certain Bernardino degli Orsi under the portico of the Chiesa di Sant'Anzolo Michiel (now disappeared) and raped him. In 1716, the body of a violently murdered woman was discovered in one of the wells. A Florentine was accused of assaulting, robbing

and killing the poor wretch. There's more where that came from, but enough. It's time to move on.

Take Calle Caotorta and cross the first bridge you see. Turn immediately left, left again and then right and you end up in Calle della Fenice, on the northern flank of the re-born **Teatro La Fenice** 35 (p71). A few steps along this street turn left again. The hotel on tiny Campiello della Fenice is covered in cannon-balls used by the Austrians in their campaign to retake control of the city in 1849. Follow this little arc around and you are again in Calle della Fenice.

Opposite the Teatro La Fenice on Campo San Fantin is the **Chiesa di San Fantin** 36, whose final incarnation was wrought by either Sansovino or Pietro Lombardo. The other main building on this square is the **Ateneo Veneto** 37, home to a learned society founded in Napoleon's time. It had been the headquarters of the confraternity of San Girolamo and Santa Maria della Giustizia. Confraternity members would accompany death-row criminals in their last moments prior to execution. The confraternity's building was known as the Scuola di San Fantin or 'dei Pical' (the Venetian version of 'dead men walking').

To proceed, take Calle della Verona north. Just before you hit the T-junction with Calle della Mandola, you cross Rio Terà dei Assassini. In medieval times murder was a common nocturnal activity around here. Street crime got so bad that, in 1128, the government banned the wearing of certain 'Greek-style' beards that, it was said, were in vogue among wrongdoers to prevent their identification. It was then too that the first all-night lamps were set burning in dodgier parts of town – the devotional niches you still see around were created for this purpose – and the Signori di Notte (literally 'Night Lords', meaning 'night watchmen') started patrolling.

At Calle della Mandola, turn left then right into Rio Terà della Mandola. This street bumps right into the side of the splendid **Palazzo Fortuny** 38 (p72). The closed **Chiesa di San Beneto** 39, also in the square, was rebuilt in the early 17th century.

From Campo San Beneto, drop south along Calle del Teatro Goldoni and turn left at the junction into Calle della Cortesia, which leads over a bridge and into Campo Manin. At the square's centre stands the proud **statue of Daniele Manin** 40, a lion at his feet. He lived in a house just on the other side of Rio di San Luca and is known for leading the anti-Austrian revolt

of 1848–49. Duck down Calle della Vida for **Palazzo Contarini del Bovolo** 41 (p72) with its grand Renaissance open spiral staircase.

The route proceeds east along Calle delle Locande to Calle dei Fuseri, which, heading north across Campo San Luca, brings you to the Grand Canal along Calle del Carbon (Coal St). Not surprisingly, Coal St leads to Riva del Carbon (Coal Quay), which until well into the 19th century was the main unloading point for the city's coal supply. Calle del Carbon was also something of a red-light district.

To the left of Calle del Carbon are **Palazzo Loredan** 42 and, one street southwest, **Ca' Farsetti** 43. Both started life in the 12th century as *fondachi* (or *fonteghi*). These were family houses where the ground floor, with a grand entrance on the canal, was used for the loading, unloading and storage of the merchandise upon which the wealth and standing of most of the great patrician families of Venice long depended. In some cases (as in the nearby Fondaco dei Tedesch), a *fondaco* was more a trading house and hotel for foreign communities.

In 1826, the town hall moved its offices to Ca' Farsetti from the Palazzo Ducale. Forty-two years later it also acquired Palazzo Loredan. You can wander into the foyer of the latter. On the corner of Calle del Carbon is a plaque announcing that Eleonora Lucrezia Corner Piscopia (of the family that once owned Palazzo Corner) was the first woman to receive a university degree – she was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy at the university of Padua in 1678.

Just west of Ca' Farsetti, the Renaissance **Palazzo Grimani** 44 was completed by Sanmicheli, although the 2nd floor was done later. It houses law courts.

Northeast towards the Ponte di Rialto from Calle del Carbon, you may notice the narrow, Gothic, 14th-century **Palazzo Dandolo** 45. It's just left of Bar Omnibus, a restaurant that started life as a café in the 19th century. The house belonged to blind doge Enrico Dandolo, who led the Fourth Crusade to a famous victory over Constantinople in 1204. Never mind that the Crusaders were actually supposed to be toughing it out against the infidels in the sands of the Middle East rather than bludgeoning their fellow (albeit Orthodox) Christians in Byzantium (see p23)!

Wedged in between Calle Bembo and Rio di San Salvador is the magnificent red façade of **Palazzo Bembo** 46. What you see is the result

of 17th-century restoration of a 15th-century Gothic structure. It is almost certain that Pietro Bembo – cardinal, poet, historian and founding father of the grammar of standard Italian – was born here. On the other side of Rio di San Salvador, **Palazzo Dolfin-Manin** 47, easily identified by its portico, was designed by Sansovino and completed in 1573.

Proceed inland a block along Calle Larga Mazzini. In front of you is the main entrance to the **Chiesa di San Salvador** 48 (p72), among the city's oldest churches. Diagonally across from the church to the west is the **Scuola Grande di San Teodoro** 49, one of the many confraternity headquarters in Venice, now used for music recitals and exhibitions.

Heading northeast along Via 2 Aprile, you pass the small and much interfered-with **Chiesa di San Bartolomeo** 50 (p73), which served as parish church for the local German merchant community based at the **Fondaco dei Tedeschi** 51 (p73). When the Republic meekly surrendered to Napoleon in 1797, an angry mob set about looting the houses of those they held responsible for such ignominy around Campo San Bartolomeo. The Venetian militia set up cannons on the Ponte di Rialto to control the unrest – the last time the guns of San Marco were fired in anger, they spilled the blood of their own people. The **statue** 52 in the middle of the square is of Carlo Goldoni, Venice's greatest playwright. Nearby, **Osteria alla Botte** 53 (p171) is perfect for a glass of wine, *cicheti* (bar snacks) or a modest meal.

## Back to Piazza San Marco

At this point you could head north into Cannaregio, duck across the Ponte di Rialto into San Polo or continue this itinerary back to Piazza San Marco.

From the Chiesa di San Salvador, follow the narrow shopping street around its northern flank, the Marzaria San Salvador. Where the street runs into a canal, you can see the late-Gothic **Palazzo Giustinian-Faccanon** 54, which for a long time housed the editorial team of the city's main newspaper, *Il Gazzettino*.

The lanes that lead from San Salvador to the Torre dell'Orologio and into Piazza San Marco are all called *marzaria* (*merceria* in Italian), referring to the merchants who traditionally lined this route. For a millennium this was one of the busiest thoroughfares in the city, directly linking Piazza San Marco with Rialto (in other words, the political with the financial lungs of La Serenissima).

The arrival of the railway in the 19th century and a new axis through Cannaregio did little to change this. The influx of *foresti* (non-Venetians) along this narrow commercial trail remains a constant. Whether you're coming from the train station or from Rialto, Le Marzarie are to this day one of the most direct routes to Piazza San Marco. It was also thus for the conspirators in the 1310 plot to overthrow Doge Pietro Gradenigo, who came a cropper in the Marzaria dell'Orologio just before the Torre dell'Orologio. A simple stone with the date of the incident in Roman numerals (XVLMCCCX) marks the place on the ground where the rebel standard-bearer fell. Above Sotoportego e Calle del Cappello is a bas-relief of the woman who supposedly scuppered the revolt by dropping a mortar on the poor blighter's head. For more on the event, see the boxed text, p25.

Where Marzaria dell'Orologio begins, you can see off to the left (east) the **Chiesa di San Julian** 55 (041 523 53 83; 9am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-7.30pm Sun), founded in 829, although its present form, covered in a layer of Istrian stone, was designed by Sansovino. Inside are a few works by Palma il Giovane and Paolo Veronese's *Cristo Morto e i Santi* (The Dead Christ and Saints), on the right as you enter. Mass in English is held here daily at 9.30am.

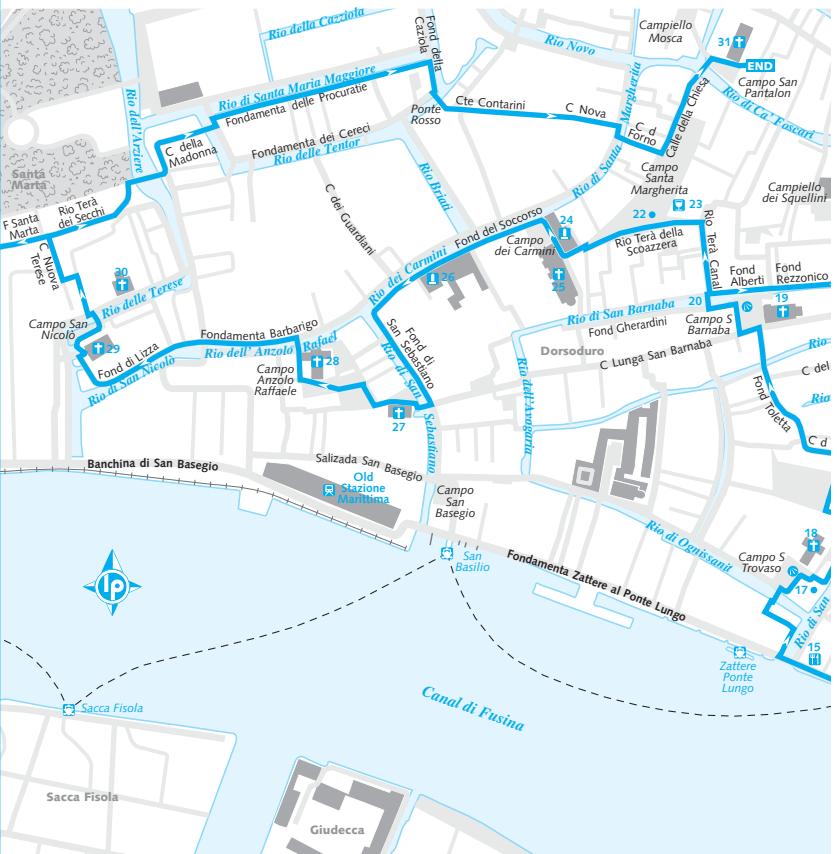
Heading right (west) from the top of Marzaria dell'Orologio over the bridge, duck right into the first little lane. In the *sotoportego* (street continuing under a building, like an extended archway) just before the T-junction, you will see on your right, at No 95/b, the entrance to the **Chiesa della Santa Croce degli Armeni** 56. On Sundays only, Armenian priests from the Isola di San Lazzaro celebrate a service here. The church has been active since at least the 14th century.

Return to Marzaria dell'Orologio, proceed south towards the Torre dell'Orologio and pass below it. You are back in Piazza San Marco.

## SESTIERE DI DORSODURO

The first buildings you bump into on crossing the Ponte dell'Accademia from the Sestiere Di San Marco constitute the **Gallerie dell'Accademia** 1 (p75), the city's single most important art collection. Indeed, this corner of town is a bit of an art haven. If you follow the signs for the Peggy Guggenheim Collection east from the Gallerie dell'Accademia, you soon arrive

## SESTIERE DI DORSODURO



### WALK FACTS

- Start** Ponte dell'Accademia (vaporetto Accademia)  
**End** Campo San Pantalon  
**Distance** 4.8km  
**Duration** one to 1½ hours

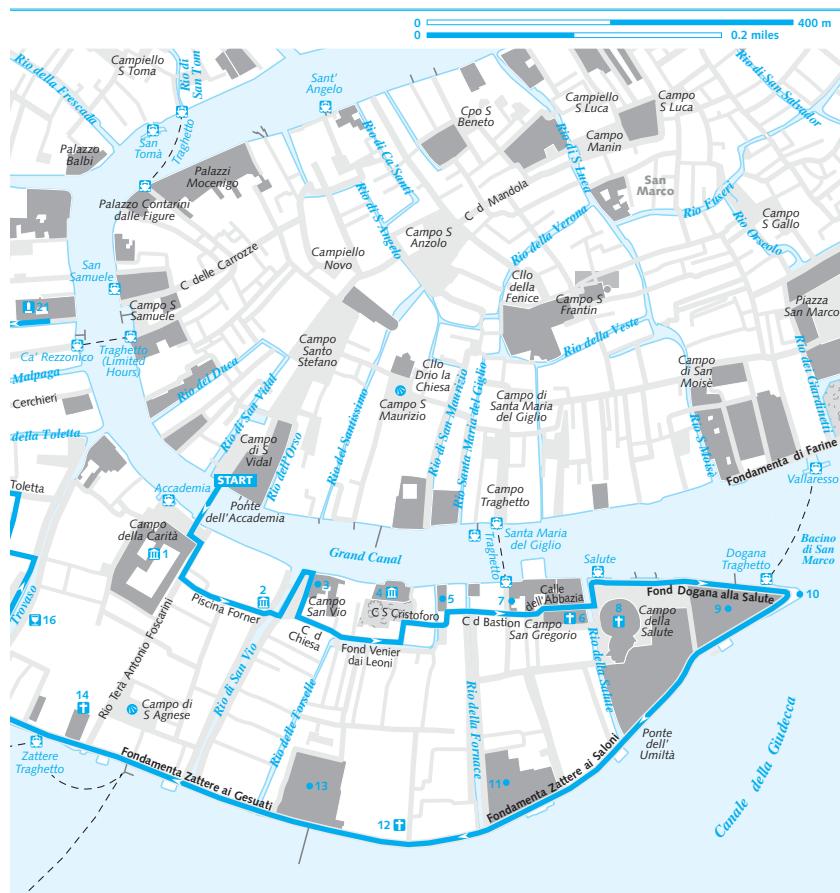
at the relatively minor collection of the [Galleria di Palazzo Cini 2](#) (p82).

Cross the bridge into cute Campo San Vio, one of a handful of squares that back onto the Grand Canal. Its eastern flank is occupied by [Palazzo Barbarigo 3](#), whose façade is strikingly decorated with mosaics on a base of gold. They were carried out at the behest of the Compagnia Venezia e Murano, a glass and

mosaics manufacturer that moved in here towards the end of the 19th century. You can't really see it from the square, but keep an eye out when you chug down the Grand Canal. Calle della Chiesa and then Fondamenta Venier dai Leoni lead you to Venice's premier excursion into the world of modern art, the [Peggy Guggenheim Collection 4](#) (p79). Have a cuppa and cake at the gallery's pleasant café-restaurant.

Back on the street, keep moving east. The next bridge brings you into a shady square. The exuberant gardens dripping over the walls along Rio delle Toreselle belong to the cursed [Palazzo Dario 5](#) (p81).

After the bustle of the art galleries, it is a pleasure to arrive in tranquil Campo San Gregorio. The Gothic façade of the deconsecrated [church 6](#) of the same name boasts a



graceful doorway with a pointed Venetian arch. A straggly garden on the square's northern flank belongs to the [Palazzo Genovese 7](#), built over part of what was once the abbey to which the church belonged.

As you wander under the rough-hewn portico of Calle dell'Abbazia, Longhena's dazzling white monolith, the [Chiesa di Santa Maria della Salute 8](#) (p80), fills your field of vision. Beyond, the customs offices that long occupied the low-slung [Dogana da Mar 9](#) are empty and awaiting a new role as a sparkling new contemporary art gallery. The job of creating this new contemporary art centre was awarded to François Pinault in April 2007.

To stand at dawn on the [Punta della Dogana 10](#), which marks the split between the Grand Canal and the Canale della Giudecca, is to feel oneself on the prow of a noble fighting

vessel. Waxing lyrical? Not really. Giuseppe Benoni, who designed it in 1677, was hoping for just that effect. On top of the little tower behind you, two bronze Atlases bend beneath the weight of the world. Above them twists and turns capricious Fortune, an elaborate weather vane.

## Fondamenta Zattere to Campo Santa Margherita

Fondamenta Zattere runs the length of the south side of Dorsoduro along the Canale della Giudecca, from Punta della Dogana to the old Stazione Marittima. It is a popular spot for a lingering *passeggiata* (the afternoon or Sunday stroll that is something of an institution in Italian life) or a summertime sunbake and it came to be known as the

Zattere because of the giant rafts (*zattere*) that used to unload timber here from the mainland.

The first buildings of note as you walk west are the city's **Saloni Ex-Magazzini del Sale** **11** (the one-time salt warehouses). Although the façade is a neoclassical job from the 1830s, the nine warehouses were built in the 14th century. A monopoly on the all-important salt trade was one of the foundations of medieval Venice's wealth. Why salt? In the days before fridges and electricity, the only way to preserve foodstuffs was to bury them in salt. Salt was thus crucial to commerce. Of the nine warehouses, two are used by the Bucintoro rowing club (see p198), for storage and as temporary exhibition space. One of the warehouses is in private hands and the other five belong to the city. Three of these were restored in 2007 and in the coming years, one of them will be converted into a museum dedicated to the art of Emilio Vedova (see p49), who lived nearby. One of the others will be used by the Accademia delle Belle Arti as lab space.

A few paces further on is the unremarkable Renaissance façade of the small **Chiesa di Santo Spirito** **12**. From here a pontoon bridge is thrown across the Canale della Giudecca for the Festa del Redentore in July (see p18). About 100m separate the church from the **Ospedale degli Incurabili** **13**. Put up in the 16th century to park incurable syphilis sufferers (the so-called 'French sickness' had taken particular hold across Europe at the time), who had a tendency to end up quite potty, the building was later used as an orphanage. It now houses the Accademia delle Belle Arti (Fine Arts School), which until 2003 lived in the Gallerie dell'Accademia building. After crossing a couple of bridges, you end up in front of the imposing 18th-century **Chiesa dei Gesuiti** **14** (p82). A few metres further on is a classic gelato stop, **Gelateria Nico** **15** (p172). If you're looking for something more grown up, scoot around the corner to **Al Bottegon** **16** (p189) for an *ombra* (small glass of wine).

At the next bridge you hit one of the most attractive of Venice's waterways, the Rio di San Trovaso, home to one of the few remaining *squeri* (gondola workshops) – the **Squero di San Trovaso** **17**. The leafy square behind the *squero* is backed by the **Chiesa di San Trovaso** **18** (8-11am & 3-6pm Mon-Sat, 3-6pm Sun & holidays), rebuilt in the 16th century on the site of its 9th-century predecessor. The associated *scuola* housed the confraternity of *squerarioli* (gon-

dola-builders). Inside the church are a couple of Tintoretto.

A few hundred metres north, the unprepossessing 18th-century **Chiesa di San Barnaba** **19** (9.30am-12.30pm Mon-Sat) hosts a handful of paintings, including one by Veronese and a couple by Palma il Giovane. Opening times are extended during temporary exhibitions. From Campo San Barnaba, wander west along Fondamenta Gherardini and cross the bridge by the permanently moored greengrocer's barge. **Ponte dei Pugni** **20** is one of several bridges where local factions, known as the Nicolotti (who wore black berets) and Castellani (who wore red berets), would regularly encounter each other for a bout of fisticuffs, sometimes good-natured, sometimes less so. The object of these *guerre dei pugni* (fist wars) was to throw opponents into the canal, and the marks showing where to place one's feet are still in evidence. The practice was outlawed in 1705 when one such 'war' turned nasty – knives were drawn and lives lost.

Once over the bridge, head towards the Grand Canal for the 18th-century residence of **Ca' Rezzonico** **21** (p80). When you're done admiring how the other half lived in Venice's glory days, turn back towards Rio Terà Canal, which leads north to Campo Santa Margherita. This is a real people's *platz*. Sure, any number of tourists or foreign students can be heard at the tables of the many restaurants and bars, but in the afternoon, when all the local kids come out to play, it takes on a special, living air. Henry James' words spring to mind, when he speaks of

'...that queer air of sociability, of cousinship and family life, which makes up half the expression of Venice. Without streets and vehicles, the uproar of wheels, the brutality of horses, and with its little winding ways where people crowd together, where voices sound as in the corridors of a house...the place has the character of an immense collective apartment'.

*The Aspern Papers*, 1888

The square is headed at its northern end by what little is left of a former church, long ago swallowed up by residential buildings. The squat object at its south end was one of the city's many *scuole* (religious confraternities), the **Scuola Varoteri** **22**. The square is perfect for taking a weight off over a *spritz* (sparkling

wine-based drink) at, say, **Margaret Duchamp** **23** (p190). The more important **Scuola Grande dei Carmini** **24** (p81) caps the campo's southwest corner, along with the **church** **25** (p82) of the same name. Stride across Campo dei Carmini and head southwest along Fondamenta del Soccorso. The dominating mansion on your left is **Palazzo Zenobio** **26** (p81), the Armenian college. Continuing along and round the corner to the left, cross the second bridge and you stand before the **Chiesa di San Sebastian** **27** (p81), Veronese's parish church.

## Santa Marta to Campo San Pantalon

When you leave the Chiesa di San Sebastian, head into the unknown and wander around the back through the interlinked squares that take you to the Chiesa di San Basilio, better known as **Chiesa dell'Arcangelo Raffaele** **28** (p82). The uneven squares, with clumps of grass pressing up between the flagstones, are intriguingly quiet during the day, and eerily so at night, save for the meek buzz of activity emanating from the sole trattoria.

As you cross the bridge to the north of Campo Anzolo Rafael and look left (west), you'll esp the bell tower of the **Chiesa di San Nicolò dei Mendicoli** **29** (p82). Across the Rio delle Terese are the former **Chiesa di Santa Teresa** **30** and its attached former convent (now used occasionally as theatre space during the Biennale). A stroll up to Fondamenta Santa Marta and west into the quarter of the same name reveals a curious contrast to the Venice of monuments. It's a working-class district with orderly housing blocks and broad walkways. Just beyond, across the Canale Scomenzera, you can watch the desultory activity of Venice's commercial port, now much overshadowed by the monster of Marghera on the mainland.

You could then follow the suggested route back towards Campo Santa Margherita via Fondamenta delle Procuratie. Along here and the parallel Fondamenta dei Cereri, rental housing was built as early as the 16th century by the Procurators of St Mark for the less well off. It has remained largely unchanged since.

A short walk north from Campo Santa Margherita along Calle della Chiesa and over the bridge leads into Campo San Pantalon. The **Chiesa di San Pantalon** **31** (p81) is worth a peek for the remarkable cycle of ceiling canvases on the life and martyrdom of St Pantaleone.

## SESTIERI DI SAN POLO & SANTA CROCE (SANTA CROSE)

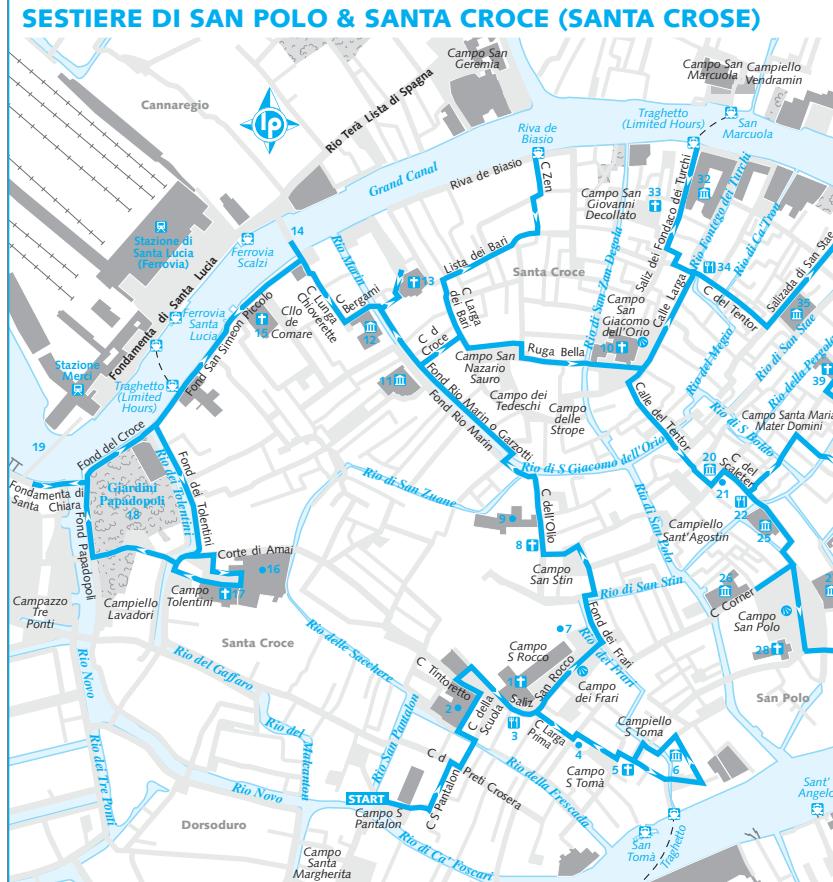
From Campo San Pantalon, follow Calle San Pantalon around to the right of the church and head north over the next bridge into Campo San Rocco. In front of you rises the brooding Gothic apse of the **Chiesa di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari** **1** (p87), which you enter from the side. On your left, the **Scuola Grande di San Rocco** **2** (p87) and the church of the same name face each other at an angle. Between them they contain a formidable concentration of Venetian art. A good ice-cream stop is **Gelateria Millefoglie da Tarcisio** **3** (p172).

A brief detour towards the Grand Canal from Campo San Rocco along Calle Larga Prima brings you to the charming Campo San Tomà, marked at its west end by the **Scuola dei Calegheri** **4**, the shoemakers' confraternity, and closed off at the far end by the **Chiesa di San Tomà** **5**, whose façade dates from 1742. Across Rio di San Tomà is Palazzo Centani, better known as the **Casa di Goldoni** **6** (p88), the house of Venice's Shakespeare. You could then head to Campo San Polo, to the northeast over the Rio di San Polo, but this route returns to the Frari. Next door to

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

From Calle della Croce, you can make a detour to one of the rare strips of footpath actually on the Grand Canal. Turn left (north) up Calle Larga dei Bari, right along Lista dei Bari and left (north) along Ramo Zen then Calle Zen to the Riva de Biasio. A couple of the mansions here are interesting enough to behold and the views to the other side of the canal are more impressive still.

But the prize goes to a tale we all hope is taller than true. A sausage-maker by the name of Biagio (Biasio) Cagnio had a shop here in the 16th century. They say he was sent to the next world (beheaded and then quartered) on charges of having sausages made of – wait for it – children. The celebrated case was immortalised for all time, with what is claimed to be a sculpted effigy of Biasio's removed head decorating the right flank of the Chiesa di San Giovanni Decollato (p90).



## WALK FACTS

- Start** Campo San Pantalon (vaporetto San Tomà)  
**End** Ponte di Rialto  
**Distance** 5.5km (including detours)  
**Duration** two hours

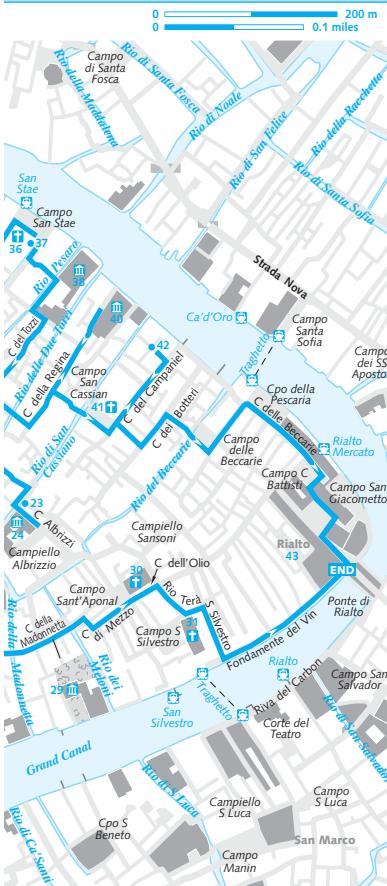
the great church spread the buildings and peaceful cloisters of the former Convento dei Frari, suppressed in 1810 by Napoleon. Since 1815 it has housed the **Archivio di Stato** 7, the city's archives and treasure-trove of some 15 million documents covering the breadth of Venice's history from the 9th century on.

Cross the Rio dei Frari, turn left and cross the next bridge. Turn right and veer

left around the block, and you end up in the nondescript Campo San Stin. Take the western exit off the *campo* and turn right. Almost immediately on the left you will be struck by what seems like an iconostasis. Behind it, two impressive façades give onto a courtyard.

On the south side is the **Chiesa di San Giovanni Evangelista** 8. The heavy-pillared building next door was once used as the church cemetery. Opposite is one of the six major Venetian *scuole*, the **Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista** 9 (p90).

Back on Calle dell'Olio, proceed north to the canal and turn left. Cross the first bridge over Rio Marin and head along the bank to Calle della Croce. Head east down this lane, turn right then left into Campo San Nazario Sauro, and keep heading east down Ruga Bella, which takes you into Campo San Giacomo dell'Orio and the **church** 10 (p88) of the same name.



## Detour from Rio Marin to Piazzale Roma

Before you head northeast of Rio Marin to Campo San Giacomo dell'Orio, a few words on a possible detour and some minor but noteworthy items between Calle della Croce and the western end of the Sestiere di Santa Croce. Just across Rio Marin you are facing the **Palazzo Soranzo-Cappello** 11, a 16th-century mansion graced with what must once have been a beautiful (but is now an unruly) garden. From the same period is the **Palazzo Gradenigo** 12, further northwest, by the last bridge over the canal. Were you to walk up to that bridge and look to your right, you'd see the tiny **Chiesa di San Simeon Grande** 13 (⌚ 8.30am-noon & 5-7pm). Of ancient origins, it was heavily restored in the 18th century. Inside you

can see an *Ultima Cena* (Last Supper) by Tintoretto.

Across the bridge, you end up on Calle Bergami. Turn right at its end and head for the high-arched **Ponte dei Scalzi** 14. Built in 1934, it replaced an iron bridge raised by the Austrians in 1858. Crossing over this bridge puts you onto the route through the Sestiere di Cannaregio (see p143).

If you turn left before the Ponte dei Scalzi and follow Fondamenta San Simeon Piccolo southwest, you'll pass the **church** 15 of the same name. The present version was completed in 1738, and its outstanding feature is the bronze dome. Just before the next bridge, turn left down Fondamenta dei Tolentini. The modern façade on the bend is the entrance to the **Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia** 16, designed by Carlo Scarpa. The institute is one of the country's most prestigious architecture schools. Beside it, the late-16th-century **Chiesa di San Nicolò dei Tolentini** 17 houses works by Palma il Giovane.

The **Giardini Papadopoli** 18 (⌚ 8am-dusk) across the canal seems almost an afterthought. The park was a deal more impressive until the Rio Novo was slammed through in 1932. Beyond the park lies Piazzale Roma with its unlovely bus station and car parks. A wander around it and along Rio di Santa Chiara is a sobering reminder of how even the most beautiful of cities contain pockets of ugliness and neglect. From here you can admire the rather sad concrete points of what was billed as a dazzling new bridge for the city, the problem-plagued **Ponte di Calatrava** 19 (p90).

Beyond the canal lies the new shipping passenger terminal (Stazione Marittima) and fair space and, beyond, the Isola del Tronchetto – a giant car park that will one day be home to new office and shopping space.

## San Giacomo dell'Orio to Rialto via Campo San Polo

From Campo San Giacomo dell'Orio, two separate routes suggest themselves to get you to the Ponte di Rialto. This first one follows a trail largely ignored by tourists. The other, via Campo San Stae (see p142), is busier but still loaded with interest. You can also join them together into a circular route that would bring you right back into this square. From here you could then backtrack to Rio Marin and go on to the Ponte dei Scalzi to pick up the next route through Cannaregio (see p143).

From Campo San Giacomo dell'Orio, follow Calle del Tentor southeast, cross the bridge and continue until you hit a T-junction. As you turn left into Rio Terà Secondo, note on the right-hand side, opposite the Gothic **Palazzo Soranzo-Pisani 20**, the building in which Aldo Manuzio got his **Aldine Press 21** started and so revolutionised the world of European letters. His was an address much frequented by learned fellows from across the Continent.

Head northeast and turn right into Calle del Scaleter. At **Da Fiore 22** (p173), Venice's only Michelin-star restaurant, turn left into Calle del Cristo, cross the bridge and take the second right (Ramo Agnello). Follow it straight over the bridge and stop at the second bridge.

It's hard to tell now, but this was long the centre of Venice's main red-light zone. The bridge is known as **Ponte delle Tette 23** ( Tits Bridge), because a city ordinance stipulated that whores who worked here should hang about in windows and doorways bare-breasted to encourage business. Pardon? Back in the 14th century the city fathers had in fact tried to clamp down on prostitution (see the boxed text, **opposite**), but by the late 15th century found it the only hope of reviving the ardour of Venetian men, who were apparently more keen on sodomising each other. La Serenissima took a far dimmer view of this than prostitution, so much so that anyone successfully prosecuted for sodomy under a law of 1482 found themselves executed and incinerated between the columns on Piazzetta San Marco.

Beyond the bridge is Rio Terà delle Campane. The name originally came from a noble family's house in the area (Ca' Rampani), and at some point the ladies of the night working here came to be known as *carampane*. The word is now a colourful part of standard Italian and denotes the mutton-dressed-as-lamb kind of lady.

From Ponte delle Tette, look south down Rio di San Cassiano and you will notice a high, wrought-iron walkway linking **Palazzo Albrizzi 24** to private gardens. Inside the 16th-century mansion, Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi held her literary salon around the end of the 18th century, with sculptor Antonio Canova and writer Ugo Foscolo among her guests.

Backtrack to Da Fiore. From here turn left (southeast) across the bridge and along Calle Bernardo (the fine Gothic **mansion 25** of the same name is best seen from the bridge),

which brings you into the leafy expanse of Campo San Polo. Among the several mansions facing the square are **Palazzo Corner 26**, designed by Michele Sanmicheli in the 16th century, and the Gothic **Palazzi Soranzo 27**. Well worth visiting if you are a Tiepolo fan is the **Chiesa di San Polo 28** (p88).

A glance at the map will show that you have almost completed a circuit to the Frari. You could head down that way and beyond into Dorsoduro (see p135). Or otherwise, stroll eastwards towards Rialto and the Grand Canal.

From Campo San Polo, take Calle della Madonnetta and follow it to Campo Sant'Aponal. On the way, duck down Calle Malvasia to peer enviously through the gates at the gardens of the **Palazzo Papadopoli 29**. It seems almost unfair that such luxuriant greenery should be the preserve of the Istituto per lo Studio della Dinamica delle Grandi Masse (Institute for the Study of the Dynamics of Large Masses)!

The former **Chiesa di Sant'Aponal 30** has a simple Gothic façade topped by five statues, and its freestanding bell tower is Romanesque. From here, Calle dell'Olio takes you around the right side of the church. Turn right down Rio Terà San Silvestro and pass the unremarkable early-20th-century façade of the **Chiesa di San Silvestro 31**. Turn onto the former wine docks on the Grand Canal, the Fondamenta del Vin, and you'll see that the Ponte di Rialto is clearly in view ahead. The restaurants along here make a tempting spot for a break, but the food is ordinary and the drinks priced to match the privileged views.

## San Giacomo dell'Orio to Rialto via Campo San Stae

Follow the signs north from the *campo* along Calle Larga (turning off at the canal) to reach the **Fondaco dei Turchi 32** (p89), which houses a natural-history museum. From the *fondaco*, backtrack a little and duck into Campo San Giovanni Decollato for a look at the **church 33** (p90) of the same name. Return then to the Rio Fontego dei Turchi, cross it and take Calle del Tentor east. A great lunch stop with vegetarian options is **Osteria La Zucca 34** (p176).

At Salizada di San Stae, turn left (northeast). On the right is the **Palazzo Mocenigo 35** (p88), a patrician mansion containing 18th-century period furnishings. At the end of the street is the tiny canalside Campo San Stae, named after the baroque **church 36** (p89). Next

## THE OLDEST PROFESSION

Although prostitution in Venice was generally tolerated, and in some periods encouraged, attitudes towards the practice and its practitioners were always ambiguous.

In 1358 local authorities selected an area of Rialto to set aside for prostitution. Prostitutes and their matrons, who took care of the till and paid their workers a monthly wage, soon occupied a group of houses that came to be known as Il Castelletto (Little Castle), which was kept under surveillance by six guardians. Prostitutes were not allowed on the streets after a certain hour and were forbidden to work on religious holidays. The atmosphere must have been oppressive, for prostitutes began to spread out across the city, especially to the nearby area around Rio Terà delle Campane. At first, attempts were made to force them back into Il Castelletto, but in the end the authorities gave in to the situation and even proclaimed laws obliging the girls to display their wares to attract business.

By the 1640s, however, various regulations were in place to put a brake on prostitution. Prostitutes could not enter churches or potter around in two-oared boats (only 'ladies' could be taken about in such a manner). They were not to adorn themselves with gold or other jewellery. They could not testify in criminal court cases, nor could they prosecute when services rendered were not paid for (which was generally where pimps came in). Your average street whore was made to feel very much like a second-class citizen.

Different strokes for different folks – there was a whole other class of prostitution. In the 16th century the myth of the *cortigiane* (courtesans) began to take shape. These were women of distinction, not simply better-paid, better-looking bimbos. Schooled in the arts, fluent in Latin, handy with a harpsichord, they were women of keen intellect and talent not fortunate enough to have been born into nobility. For such daughters of middle-class families, working for a high-class escort service seemed the only way to acquire independence and wellbeing.

In 1535, when the Venetian populace totalled about 120,000 and some 11,000 prostitutes were registered, a handy tourist guide was published: *Questo si è il Catalogo de tutte le principal, et più honorate Cortigiane di Venetia* (This is the Catalogue of the main and most honoured Courtesans of Venice). It contained names, rates and useful addresses. No wonder the city had such a lascivious reputation.

door to the left (No 1980) is the **Scuola dei Tiraoro e Battioro 37**, the former seat of the goldsmith confraternity.

From Campo San Stae, cross the bridge, turn right then left, cross another bridge and you reach the land entrance to **Ca' Pesaro 38** (p83), a fine, restored baroque mansion with important collections of modern art and Japanese Edo-period objects.

Walking southwest away from Ca' Pesaro, you could be forgiven for missing the **Chiesa di Santa Maria Mater Domini 39** (p83) 3.30–5.30pm Mon, 10am–12.30pm Tue, 10am–12.30pm & 3.30–5.30pm Wed, 10am–noon Thu, 10am–12.30pm & 3.30–5.30pm Fri). Sansovino supposedly had a hand in it, and inside (if you happen to find it open) is an early work by Tintoretto, *Invenzione della Croce* (Invention of the Cross).

Campo Santa Maria Mater Domini is an intriguing square, with well-preserved late-Byzantine and Gothic buildings. No 2174 dates from the 13th century. Cross the square and turn left (north) into Calle della Regina (Queen St). At the end of the street, looking onto the Grand Canal, is **Palazzo Corner della Regina 40**. The Corners, a powerful trading family, had mansions all over town. On this site lived Caterina Corner, who ended up on the throne of Venetian-controlled Cyprus in the late 15th century,

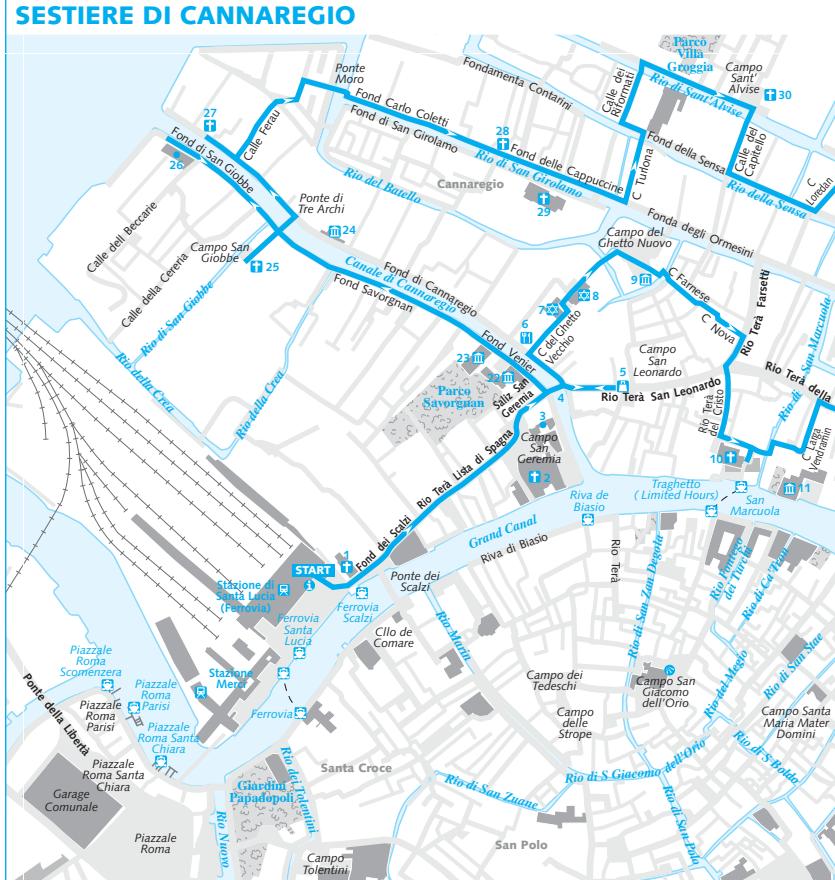
only to be obliged later by the schemers of San Marco to abdicate and accept a galling if golden exile in Asolo (see p239). The building was remodelled in the early 18th century.

Tintoretto fans may want to stop at the **Chiesa di San Cassian 41** (p83) 9am–noon Tue–Sat) in the *campo* of the same name. The sanctuary is decorated with three of his paintings, *Crociifissione* (Crucifixion), *Risurrezione* (Resurrection) and *Discesa al Limbo* (Descent into Limbo). Make a quick detour towards the Grand Canal along Calle del Campanile and duck into **Corte de Ca' Michiel 42**. This was once known as Calle del Teatro, reputedly the site of one of the city's first theatres in 1580. It didn't last too long, as the Inquisition (not an overly popular institution in Venice) shut it down for what it claimed were lewd goings-on.

A couple of streets east of Chiesa di San Cassian, you arrive at Campo delle Beccarie. Welcome to the nerve centre of Venice – **Rialto 43** (p84).

## SESTIERE DI CANNAREGIO

Assume you have just stumbled over Ponte dei Scalzi after following the routes around Santa Croce and San Polo. Or you might have arrived at the train station. Either way, you are ready for an exploratory stroll through Cannaregio.



# WALK FACTS

**Start Ponte dei Scalzi/Ferrovia (vaporetto Ferrovia)**

**End** Fondaco dei Tedeschi or Campo SS Giovanni e Paolo

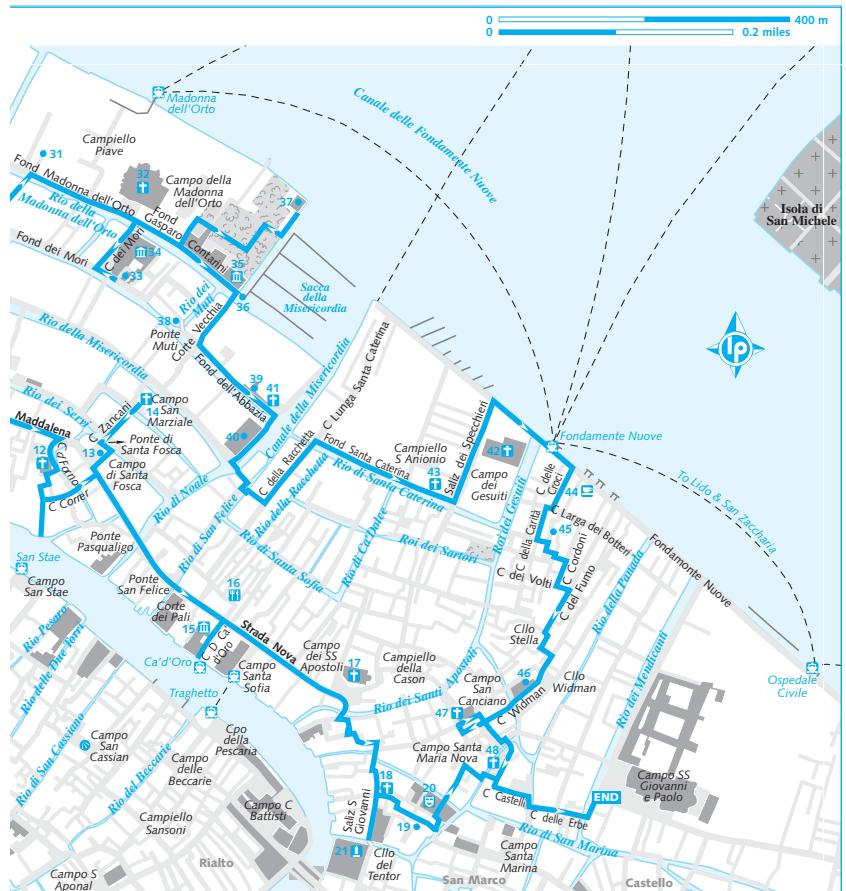
**Distance** 2.5km to Fondaco dei Tedeschi or 4.8km to Campo SS Giovanni e Paolo

**Duration** 45 minutes or one to 1½ hours

The long thoroughfare connecting the train station and Piazza San Marco crawls with tourists heading from one to the other – few venture off it into the peaceful back lanes.

The first sight of any significance you lay eyes on is the Carmelite **Chiesa dei Scalzi** 1 (p96). At the northeastern end of bustling Rio Terà

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Turn off the Fondamenta di Cannaregio at Calle del Ghetto Vecchio. You'll recognise it by the kosher restaurant **Gam Gam 6** (p179). A few steps down this lane look up at the wall to your left, at house No 1131. Carved in stone is a decree from the Republic dated 20 September 1704, forbidding Jews converted to Christianity entry into the Ghetto or into the private houses of Jews, on pain of punishment that, depending on the gravity of the 'crime', might include 'the rope [hanging], prison, galleys, flogging...and other greater punishments, depending on the judgement of their excellencies (the Executors Against Blasphemy). To enquire into transgressions, Inquisitorial processes will be established, and secret denunciations may be deposited in the usual receptacles. The accusers will be entitled to a bounty of 100 ducats, to be taken from the property of the accused...' On emerging into the small square, you will see two of the Ghetto's five synagogues, also known as *schole* (schools) because they were used for scripture studies. The existence of five places of worship within the Ghetto reflected in part the density of the Jewish population, and also liturgical variations between the different communities. The **Schola Spagnola 7** (p93) is at the square's southern end (look for the plaque commemorating Italian Jewish victims of the Holocaust). It and the **Schola Levantina 8** (p93), opposite, were erected by Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. The interior of the latter betrays a hefty rococo influence, best seen in the décor of the pulpit. The Schola Levantina is used for Saturday prayers in winter (it has heating), while the Schola Spagnola is used in summer.

Calle del Ghetto Vecchio proceeds northeast over a bridge into the heart of Venice's Jewish

Calle del Ghetto Vecchio proceeds northeast over a bridge into the heart of Venice's Jewish

community, Campo del Ghetto Nuovo, where you will find the [Museo Ebraico 9 \(p92\)](#).

Leave the Ghetto by the portico that leads across the canal to Calle Farnese. This was one of the Ghetto gates that used to be locked at midnight. Proceed straight to Rio Terà Farsetti and turn right, then duck down Rio Terà del Cristo to look at the [Chiesa di San Marcuola 10 \(p97\)](#). Heading east across Rio di San Marcuola, you will come up against the [Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi 11 \(p94\)](#), where Wagner died and gamblers lose fortunes.

From here, return to the main drag (at this point called Rio Terà della Maddalena – you'll know you've hit it when you are sucked up into the crowds again). Proceed a couple of blocks eastwards, then head off to the right (south). In a quiet little *campo* is the unique, circular [Chiesa della Maddalena 12](#), the only round building in the city and a rare neoclassical presence that was completed in the 1780s and reminds one of the Pantheon in Rome. Should you find it open, you will find several works by Giandomenico Tiepolo, including a fresco behind the altar rediscovered in 2005. The pretty square around the church is flanked by houses with their upper parts poking over heavy timber barbicans. Notice anything yet? Like you are about the only one with sufficient curiosity to get off the strip and have a look here? Try jumping back into the flood of passers-by and then jumping out again. Amazing, isn't it?

You could go around the back of the church and follow Calle del Forno around to a dead end right on the Grand Canal. It's a little mucky but it is always interesting to get another view of the canal. By backtracking and then taking Calle Correr, you end up back on the strip. The bronze statue on the square opposite you is of [Paolo Sarpi 13](#), La Serenissima's greatest (some might suggest only) philosopher. You could make a detour at this point and scurry northeast across a couple of bridges to the [Chiesa di San Marziale 14](#). If it's open, have a peek inside at the baroque baubles. Stop on the first bridge you cross, Ponte di Santa Fosca, where *guerre dei pugni* once took place (see p138).

Otherwise skip it and head southeast along the main street. It's called Strada Nova here and was bulldozed through the area some years after the rail link was opened in the 19th century. On your right you pass a veritable parade of Venetian mansions, but you'd never know it – they present their photogenic profiles only to the Grand Canal. The sec-

ond of them after you cross Rio di San Felice (named after the church you pass on the left just before the bridge) is [Ca' d'Oro 15 \(p91\)](#). One of Venice's classic eateries, [Osteria dalla Vedova 16 \(p179\)](#) lurks nearby.

Strada Nova then leads into the pleasing Campo dei SS Apostoli. The [church 17 \(⌚ 7.30-11.30am & 5-7pm Mon-Sat, 8.30am-noon & 4-6.30pm Sun\)](#) of the same name is worth visiting for the 15th-century Cappella Corner by Mauro Codussi, which features a Tiepolo painting of St Lucy.

Keep following the crowd over the next two bridges; on the left is the curious [Chiesa di San Giovanni Grisostomo 18 \(p97\)](#). Around the back, Corte Prima del Milion leads into a chain of brief streets, *sotoporteghi* and squares. At No 5845 in Corte Seconda del Milion, you are supposedly looking at [Marco Polo's house 19](#). That's one theory. Another suggests the Polo family house disappeared to make way for the [Teatro Malibran 20 \(p197\)](#) in 1677. During restoration work on the theatre, traces of what might have been the Polo residence were unearthed in 2001.

Return to the Chiesa di San Giovanni Grisostomo and head south along Salizada San Giovanni. The next canal marks the boundary between the *sestieri* of Cannaregio and San Marco. The building you are looking at on the right is the [Fondaco dei Tedeschi 21 \(p73\)](#).

## Ponte delle Guglie to Castello

For this second ramble, you don't cross Ponte delle Guglie, but instead head northwest along Fondamenta Venier, named after the late-18th-century neoclassical [mansion 22](#) of the same name. Further up, [Palazzo Savorgnan's 23](#) big draw is its garden, now a [public park \(⌚ 8am-5.30pm Oct-Mar, 8am-7.30pm Apr-Sep\)](#) with slides and other amusements for the kiddies.

Beyond the palace, the character of the area changes quickly – it's clearly a working-class district. It was perhaps not always thus. Across the canal, just before you reach the last bridge (Ponte di Tre Archi), the 17th-century [Palazzo Surian 24](#) stands out. During the last century of the Republic, the French moved their embassy in here and Jean Jacques Rousseau managed to blag his way into a job as secretary to the ambassador.

To the left, down along Rio di San Giobbe, the rather ordinary [church 25](#) of the same name boasts a remarkable ceiling faced with multi-coloured glazed terracotta.

Before crossing Ponte di Tre Archi, stroll to the end of Fondamenta di San Giobbe. The enormous complex at the end here was the [Macello Comunale 26](#), the city's abattoir. Le Corbusier designed a hospital for the site, but (much to the annoyance of many citizens) it got the thumbs down in 1964. The Università Ca' Foscari now has its economics faculty here.

Across the bridge, towards the end of Fondamenta di Cannaregio, the former [Chiesa di Santa Maria delle Penitenti 27](#) was one of the seemingly abundant religious institutions set up to take in wayward women anxious to put their wicked past behind them.

The winding walk along Calle Ferau and through the Saccà di San Girolamo area, an unpretentious residential district, takes you past the barely noticeable [Chiesa delle Cappuccine 28](#) on the left and the ugly hulk of the [Chiesa di San Girolamo 29](#) on the right across the canal. Apart from soaking up the peace and quiet, your objective is the [Chiesa di Sant'Alvise 30 \(p96\)](#).

From here there is no choice but to make a detour across Rio di Sant'Alvise and then a little way east along Fondamenta della Sensa and back up Calle Loredan to Fondamenta Madonna dell'Orto. The long courtyard on the left as you head east is called [Corte del Cavallo 31](#) (Horse Court), because here the bronze was melted down for the great equestrian statue to Colleoni in Campo SS Giovanni e Paolo (see p103). A little way along to the east is the striking [Chiesa della Madonna dell'Orto 32 \(p91\)](#).

If you cross the first bridge to the east of the church and head south, you will end up in Calle dei Mori. Follow it to the next canal and turn left down Fondamenta dei Mori. Almost immediately you will see on your left a plaque noting that [Tintoretto's house 33](#) was at No 3399. The strange statue of a man with a huge turban that sticks out of the wall next door is one of four spread out along the buildings' façades here, and in particular on that of [Palazzo Mastelli 34](#). The street names here (dei Mori) mean 'of the Moors' and refer to these statues, traditionally said to represent members of the Mastelli family (the one on the corner is known as Sior Rioba), 12th-century merchants from the Morea, one of La Serenissima's most important Greek possessions.

The building on which they appear is also known as Palazzo del Cammello because of the distinctive bas-relief depicting this animal on the façade overlooking Rio della Madonna dell'Orto. The Mastelli family were said to be

an unpleasant lot, forever on the lookout for a fast ducat and impoverishing local families. A tall tale says that one day they went too far and were turned to stone, later to be installed in their present positions.

Backtrack to the Chiesa della Madonna dell'Orto and continue east along Fondamenta Gasparo Contarini, named after [Palazzo Contarini del Zaffo 35](#), which extends to the end of the street. A narrow [wooden quay 36](#) protrudes out into the small protected bay off the lagoon. Locals use it for sunbathing and from here you enjoy good views across to the islands of San Michele and Murano. Behind the *palazzo* spread luxuriant private gardens leading to an isolated building on the lagoon, the so-called [Casinò degli Spiriti 37](#), where in the 16th century students, literati and glitterati with the right contacts would gather for learned chitchat and a few drinks.

There is little choice here but to cross Rio della Madonna dell'Orto and follow Corte Vecchia southwest to Rio della Sensa. Before turning left to continue southeast, turn around to the right and you'll see what remains of a former [squiero 38](#), complete with slipways into Rio dei Muti.

The next important stop is I Gesuiti, the massive hulk erected by the Jesuits. To get there, pass down Fondamenta dell'Abbazia under the portico of the [Scuola Vecchia della Misericordia 39](#), once the seat of one of the city's grand religious confraternities and now home to a complex of state-run restoration laboratories and workshops. The confraternity later moved into the immense [Scuola Nuova della Misericordia 40](#), designed by Sansovino in the 1530s, on the southern side of Rio della Sensa.

Next to the Scuola Vecchia, on the *campo* that overlooks the busy Canale della Misericordia, is the [Chiesa di Santa Maria della Misericordia 41](#), established in the 10th century and altered in the 13th. The dead-end bridge leading to a private house, Ponte del Chiodo, is notable for the absence of any kind of railing; it's about the only one of its kind in Venice now. Once most of the city's bridges were like this – not good for stumbling home tipsy late at night! Indeed, in the early centuries of the life of Venice bridges were often little more than a couple of rough planks.

A series of bridges takes you into Calle della Racchetta. To get to [I Gesuiti 42 \(p94\)](#), follow this street northeast to Fondamenta Santa Caterina and head east until you reach Campo dei Gesuiti. Virtually across the *campo* from the grand Jesuit church is the tiny [Oratorio dei Crociferi](#)

**43** (p96). Right on the Grand Canal, along the Fondamente Nuove, is a fine spot for a drink and long wistful gazing north across the lagoon – **Algiubagio** **44** (p192).

Titian fans can find his **house** **45** by walking up to the Fondamente Nuove, heading southeast as far as Calle delle Croci and penetrating the web of lanes in search of Corte della Carità. North of this square, a narrow, dead-end lane is your objective – at the end of it on the right is Titian's place.

From Corte della Carità you can trace a path down along Calle del Fumo, past the 17th-century **Palazzo Widman** **46** and down the narrow *calle* of the same name. You emerge on Campo Santa Maria Nova. Off to the right (northwest) is the **Chiesa di San Canciano** **47**. Although here since the 9th century, what you see is the result of intervention by Massari and Gaspari. The real stunner is off to the left (southeast), the Renaissance **Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Miracoli** **48** (p91). From the church, you can turn left (east) along Calle Castelli (which continues over the canal as Calle delle Erbe). Once over the next bridge, you are obliged to swing left and arrive in Campo SS Giovanni e Paolo. You are now in the city's easternmost *sestiere*, Castello.

## SESTIERE DI CASTELLO

Presiding over Campo SS Giovanni e Paolo is the proud figure of the *condottiero* (professional mercenary commander) **Bartolomeo Colleoni** **1** (p103).

Around the mercenary commander rise the imposing edifice of the **Chiesa dei SS Giovanni e Paolo** **2** (p99) and, next to it, the marble trompe l'oeil frontage of the **Scuola Grande di San Marco** **3** (p103), now part of the city hospital. Just east of the church is the extraordinary baroque façade of the **Ospedaletto** **4** (p105), with its Übermensch statuary bulging out at you in the street. After a quiet stroll east along residential streets, you emerge in Campo San Francesco della Vigna, where the sudden appearance of the massive Palladian façade of the **church** **5** (p105) of the same name comes as a shock.

Proceeding east around the south flank of Chiesa di San Francesco della Vigna, you'll end up in Campo della Celestia. Follow the only lane exiting off it across the canal and into Campo San Ternità. Calle Dona veers to the left (east) off this square. After the canal, turn right (southwest) and almost immediately on your left is **Casa Magno** **6**, a unique example of Gothic housing. Now head straight

down to and across Campo Do Pozzi. You'll end up on Calle degli Scudi, at which point you turn right (northwest) and cross the canal into Campo de le Gate. A quick dogleg and you will run into Rio di San Lorenzo. Just before the bridge, on the right, is the **Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni** **7** (p104), the Dalmatian community's religious school.

After admiring Carpaccio's contributions to the school, proceed south along the canal and at the **Chiesa di Sant'Antonin** **8** follow the main street south into Campo Bandiera e Moro. This quiet square is named after the Venetian brothers Bandiera, who lived in **Palazzo Soderini** **9**, at No 3611, and their companion Domenico Moro (who lived nearby), all of whom were executed by troops of the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies after a failed pro-unity insurrection in Cosenza (Calabria) in 1844. All three are buried in the Chiesa di SS Giovanni e Paolo. The square is fronted in the southeast corner by the **Chiesa di San Giovanni in Bragora** **10** (p107).

From that church follow Calle Crosera east. You will stumble across a good restaurant near here, the **Trattoria Corte Sconta** **11** (p181). About the shortest route to what was once the military powerhouse of the Republic takes you up Calle Erizzo past the Renaissance **palazzo** **12** of the same name and across the bridge to the **Chiesa di San Martino** **13** (p107). Across the canal are the walls of the **Arsenale** **14** (p98). To reach its entrance, walk along Fondamenta di Fronte until you reach the Rio dell'Arsenale. Continuing on a seafaring theme, the **Museo Storico Navale** **15** (p106) is a short hop south of the Arsenale.

Heading east, you enter very-few-tourists territory. Following the walls of the Arsenale past its entrances on Campo della Tana, cross the bridge and take Fondamenta della Tana, turning right down Calle di San Francesco di Paola – you'll soon hit the broad Via Giuseppe Garibaldi. The **Chiesa di San Francesco di Paola** **16** is a fairly uninteresting 18th-century remake of the 16th-century original.

Follow the road east and cross the last bridge northwards across the Rio di Sant'Anna (named after the ruined **church** **17**, that's now encased in restorers' scaffolding, and looks out over the Canale di San Pietro). Proceed north across Campo di Ruga and take the last lane on the right (east). The bridge at the end of it takes you across to the Isola di San Pietro, where you may wish to visit what was long the city's official cathedral, the **Cattedrale di San Pietro in Castello** **18** (p104).

There is no need to rush through. An aimless wander through the simple grid pattern of residential streets allows you to immerse yourself in the simple, gritty, everyday world of ordinary Venetians. No sights, just life.

The only other way off the Isola di San Pietro is by the more southerly of the two bridges, which brings you back to the ruins of Sant'Anna. Walk past them (heading west) and duck down Calle Correra. Cross the broad Secco Marina, keep on down Corte del Solda and cross the bridge. A stroll past the **Chiesa di San Giuseppe di Castello** **19** will bring you into the somewhat tatty **Giardini Pubblici** (p106), one of the city's few public parks and location of the Biennale.

From here, wander over Rio dei Giardini to Sant'Elena, the quietest and leafiest residential corner of Venice. Housing construction began in 1925, before which there was little here but an abandoned pilgrims' hospice and the now closed **Chiesa di Sant'Elena** **20**, a small Gothic number abandoned in 1806 and reopened for a while from 1928 when people started moving into the new residential district. The arrival of riot police and armies of football supporters occasionally snaps it out of its usual (and not unpleasant) torpor. The crowds make for the **Stadio Penzo** **21** to see the home side struggle to the occasional victory.

## Towards San Marco

At this point the weary could get the circle line vaporetto 42 or 52 from the Sant'Elena stop to San Zaccaria to continue this itinerary, or hop on to the 1 and potter up the Grand Canal to do something else altogether. Otherwise, it's a pleasant and leafy walk from Sant'Elena through the Parco delle Rimembranze and then the Giardini Pubblici along the waterfront.

You will eventually find yourself on the waterfront boardwalk known as Riva degli Schiavoni (p107), just as busy now with tourists as it once was with all sorts. Just at the point where you turn inland is the **Chiesa di Santa Maria della Visitazione** **22** (or more simply La Pieta; see p107), associated with Vivaldi.

A short walk north brings you to the rear side of the **Chiesa di San Giorgio dei Greci** **23** (p107). Walk around the church to reach the main entrance alongside Rio dei Greci. Virtually next door is the Hellenic Institute's **Museo delle Icone** **24** (p106).

As you leave San Giorgio and cross the bridge to the west, take Fondamenta di San Lorenzo north. At the second bridge east

across the canal is Campo San Lorenzo, dominated by the rather shaky-looking brick façade of the **church** **25** of the same name. It is an odd structure, divided down the middle to form a section for the general public and another for members of a Benedictine nunnery that has long since ceased to exist. The church is closed for restoration. Also being restored is the massive Renaissance **Palazzo Grimani** **26**, at Ramo Grimani 4858, one of whose grand façades dominates the Rio di San Severo. Initially the home of Doge Antonio Grimani (who reigned from 1521 to 1523), the palace is a curious combination of Venetian and Tuscan-Roman grandeur.

From here the objective is Campo Santa Maria Formosa, a winding walk to the northwest. One of the most appealing squares in Venice, it is full of local life, eateries, benches where you can take the weight off your feet and some interesting buildings. There was a time when all sorts of popular festivals were played out here (chasing bulls around the square was one of the less sensible activities). One of Venice's best-remembered courtesans, Veronica Franco, lived in a house on this *campo*. Poet, friend of Tintoretto, and lover, however briefly, of France's King Henry III, Miss Franco was listed in the city's 16th-century guidebook to high-class escorts as 'Vero, Franco a Santa Mar. Formosa. Pieza so mare. Scudi 2'. The last bit is the base price for her services, which ranged from intelligent conversation to horizontal folk dancing. Perhaps there was always a little ribaldry in the air around here: the **Chiesa di Santa Maria Formosa** **27** takes its name from a curiously saucy legend (see p105).

Among the ageing mansions facing the square, **Palazzo Vitturi** **28** is a good example of the Veneto-Byzantine style, while the buildings making up the **Palazzi Donà** **29** are a mix of Gothic and late Gothic. While you're here, a further quick circuit suggests itself. Leave the square and head northwest. Don't cross the canal – veer right (north) instead along Calle del Dose and then left along Calle Pinde-monte. You end up in Campo Santa Marina, faced by the 13th-century **Palazzo Dolfin Bollani** **30** and the Lombard-style **Palazzo Loredan** **31**. A side lane north off the square leads you to the 15th-century **Palazzo Bragadin-Carabba** **32**, restored by Sanmicheli.

Coming out of the square to the west, head south along Calle Carminati, which brings you into Campo San Lio. Pop into the **church** **33** (p107) of the same name. A brief detour

## SESTIERE DI CASTELLO



bridge you've all been waiting for: the [Ponte dei Sospiri](#) **45**, which you behold from Ponte della Paglia. Now breathe a sigh of relief that you've seen it. Some people walk away inconsolably despondent that the bridge in no way corresponds to their romantic imaginings.

The pink and white walls of the Palazzo Ducale lead you back to the Piazzetta di San Marco, Venice's gateway, where you complete

this tortuous circuit of the lagoon city that for more than a thousand years was the Most Serene Republic. Perhaps now is an opportune moment to again gaze out over the Bacino di San Marco and let your well-primed imagination wander.

On the other hand, maybe it's time for a drink. Why not loosen the old purse strings and pop across to [Harry's Bar](#) **46** (p187)?

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