

LA BELLA VITA - CLASSIC ITALY CRUISE

Venice to Mantua

Sunday, Day 1 Venice

Guests are met at the Best Western Hotel Bologna in Mestre or Piazzale Roma in Venice** and transferred by private chauffeured minibus to La Bella Vita for a Prosecco welcome. An afternoon cruise takes us along the Giudecca Canal past some of Venice's most famous monuments: the Chiesa del Redentore, the impressive Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute and the Punta della Dogana to our mooring outside the Naval Museum. Then time for a stroll to St Mark's Square and a guided tour of the Doge's Palace before dinner on board.



Monday, Day 2 Venice to San Pietro in Volta

Guided walking tour to Castello District, perhaps discovering some hidden parts of the city of Venice: the gardens of the Biennale Exhibition of Modern Arts, Palladio's Church of San Pietro in Castello and the Venetian Ships Pavilion, an annex of the Naval History Museum Venice, housing vessels of historical importance including ceremonial barges and warships. Late afternoon cruise to Pellestrina which separates the Venetian Lagoon from the Adriatic Sea, along the Canal of the Orphans passing lagoon islands with their ancient monasteries, painted fishing boats and tiny churches. Time perhaps for a walk or cycle ride along the 18th century Istrian sea wall. Dinner on board.



Tuesday, Day 3 San Pietro in Volta to Taglio di Po

After breakfast, we cruise to Chioggia, city of Goldoni's plays. Here we visit the 18th century Church of San Domenico set on its own island, to see Carpaccio's St Paul, his last recorded painting and other works of art by Tintoretto and Bassano. We also admire the Piazzetta Vigo and visit the colourful fish market. There will also be the opportunity to enjoy a short tour of Chioggia's pretty canals in a traditional locally-built boat, before re-joining La Bella Vita. Passing through a nature reserve with flamingos and occasional heron, snipe and other wildfowl, we travel upriver to Taglio di Po for dinner ashore hosted by the owners at the beautiful 17thC Villa Ca'Zen, a private stately home by the river where Lord Byron courted the Countess Guiccioli and wrote some of his best poetry.



Wednesday, Day 4 Taglio di Po to Zelo

This morning we join the Bianco canal and cruise to Adria, an ancient Etruscan town where we visit the Archaeological Museum. After lunch on board, we drive to the Bagnoli Estate to tour the Renaissance gardens and wine cellars of the 17thC Villa Widmann Borletti to enjoy a private tasting of their renowned estate-grown vintages. This winery has been supplying Venetian society for centuries. Afterwards, we rejoin La Bella Vita moored at Zelo. Dinner on board.



Thursday, Day 5 Zelo to Governolo

Morning excursion with a guided tour of the Renaissance city of Ferrara, including the Schifanoia Palace, renowned for its fabulous 15thC frescoes. We also admire the exterior of the Estense Castle and its moat and visit the magnificent cathedral with its façade of sculpted images described as an illustrated Bible. Return to the hotel barge moored in Trevenzuolo for an afternoon canal cruise past villages and farmsteads to Governolo and dinner on board.



Friday, Day 6 Governolo to Mantua

Our final cruise has a dramatic approach to Mantua, home of the poet Virgil, artists Mantegna and Donatello and a captivating lakeside setting. Mantua displays extraordinary neo-classical and baroque architecture, portrayed in the 14thC Ducal Palace housing some 15 gardens and courtyards, a museum, basilica and theatre. The intricate frescoes, Gallery of Mirrors and exquisite Rivers Room and 12,000 paintings and sculptures all create a Grand Finale to our Italian Renaissance adventure. Captain's Farewell Dinner on board.



Saturday, Day 7 Mantua

After breakfast, guests are transferred by private chauffeured minibus to the Best Western Hotel Bologna in Mestre or Piazzale Roma in Venice**.

This is a sample itinerary and is subject to change.
On alternate weeks the cruise is in the reverse direction.

** Other locations available for Private Charter bookings



LA BELLA VITA - CLASSIC ITALY CRUISE

Mantua to Venice

Sunday, Day 1 Mantua

Guests are met at the Best Western Hotel Bologna in Mestre or Piazzale Roma in Venice** and transferred by private chauffeured minibus to La Bella Vita for a Prosecco welcome. Then we stroll through the historic city centre and visit the magnificent 14thC Ducal Palace, before perhaps a short cruise around the lakes surrounding the city, before dinner on board.



Monday, Day 2 Mantua to Governolo

This morning we enjoy a guided tour of Mantua. This imposing city was home to the poet Virgil, artists Mantegna and Donatello and under the Lordship of the powerful Gonzaga Family. Mantua has early Etruscan origins but today is a centre of extraordinary neo-classical and baroque architecture. We have a guided tour of the city squares, the Cathedral and the Baptistry, and then enjoy lunch back on La Bella Vita and an afternoon cruise through the Mincio Natural Park to Governolo. Dinner on board.



Tuesday, Day 3 Governolo to Bosaro

A morning cruise along the Bianco Canal to Zelo past villages and farmsteads to our mooring at Bosaro. This afternoon we take a guided tour of the Renaissance city of Ferrara, including the Schifanoia Palace, renowned for its fabulous 15thC frescoes. We also admire the exterior of 14thC Estense Castle and its moat and visit the magnificent cathedral with its façade of sculpted images described as an illustrated Bible. Afterwards, we rejoin La Bella Vita at Bosaro. Dinner on board.



Wednesday, Day 4 Bosaro to Taglio di Po

This morning we drive to the Bagnoli Estate to tour the Renaissance gardens and wine cellars of the 17thC Villa Widmann Borletti, to enjoy a private tasting of their renowned estate grown vintages. This winery has been supplying Venetian society for centuries. We return to La Bella Vita for lunch, then an afternoon cruise downstream along the Bianco Canal to enter the River Po and arrive at our peaceful mooring place at Taglio di Po. This evening we have dinner ashore at the beautiful 17thC Villa Ca'Zen, a private riverside stately home, where we are hosted by the longstanding family owners. It was here that Lord Byron courted the Countess Guccioli and, whilst a guest at the Villa, wrote some of his best poetry.



Thursday, Day 5 Taglio di Po to San Pietro in Volta

A morning cruise to Porto Levante, passing through a nature reserve with flamingos and occasional heron, snipe and other wildfowl, before visiting Chioggia. Here we visit the 18th century Church of San Domenico set on its own island, to see Carpaccio's St Paul, his last recorded painting and other works of art by Tintoretto and Bassano. We also admire the Piazzetta Vigo and see the colourful fish market. There will also be the opportunity to enjoy a short tour of Chioggia's pretty canals in a traditional locally-built boat. After lunch back on board, we cruise through the lagoon past rustic fishing huts on stilts and the island of Pellestrina, to San Pietro in Volta. Perhaps time to stroll or cycle along the 18thC Istrian sea wall. Dinner on board.



Friday, Day 6 San Pietro in Volta to Venice

This morning we cruise to Venice, passing several lagoon islands including San Servolo, once a hospital for the Crusaders and San Lazzaro degli Armeni, an early 18thC Armenian monastery. These islands sport brightly coloured houses, painted fishing boats and tiny churches. After mooring on the waterfront outside the Naval Museum not far from St Mark's Square, we have lunch on board. In the afternoon, there is a guided tour of the Doge's Palace, the magnificent palace that was the seat of the government of Venice for centuries and the home of the Doges. Captain's Farewell Dinner on board and perhaps a final evening stroll to St Mark's Square.



Saturday, Day 7 Venice

After breakfast, guests are transferred by private chauffeured minibus to the Best Western Hotel Bologna in Mestre or Piazzale Roma in Venice.

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On alternate weeks the cruise is in the reverse direction.

** Other locations available for Private Charter bookings



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