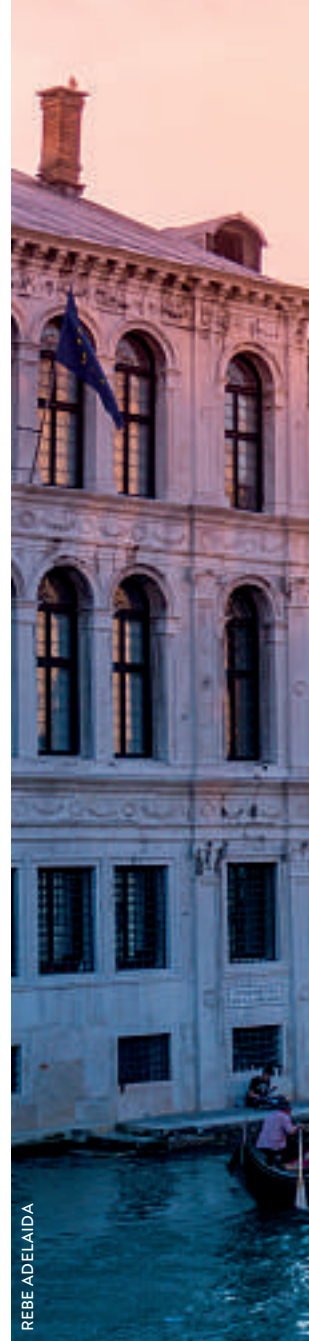


# La Dolce Vita

At the tender age of 14, Paris stole my heart. My best friend and I flew over to visit her older sister, who had made the City of Lights her temporary home. Freedom as a young teenager in one of the most picturesque cities in the world, coupled with fresh croissants, led to love at first sight. The French capital retained the most prominent place in my heart for a weekend escape. But a long-awaited visit to Venice has seen a new rival for my affections, with its restorative powers and generous abundance of Aperol Spritz. A labyrinth of knotted streets and humble bars, the Floating City is a place where pretty gondolas weave between ancient waterways and grandiose Gothic buildings. There are secret gardens, galleries and delicious gelato to enjoy. Despite a daily tourist influx that outnumbers the actual population, Venice still allows for wondrous accidents of discovery – and even, surprisingly, of solitude, when you venture off the beaten path and avoid the biggest tourist traps like St Mark's Square. A handful of strategic turns will lead

Venice makes for an idyllic weekend escape, says **ROSALEEN McMEEL**. Tour in style and take in the sights of the Floating City...

you into peaceful neighbourhoods that will easily give you a year's worth of Instagram posts. A genteel city of canals and culture, Venice hums with local artisanal cuisine, craftspeople keeping traditions alive, and authentic neighbourhoods. Birthplace of Vivaldi and muse to Shakespeare, it's the perfect place to truly get away from it all.



REBE ADELAIDA



A luxury room at Palazzo Venart

## WHERE TO STAY

Along the Grand Canal lies what was known for hundreds of years as Palazzo Bacchini delle Palme, and was reopened after almost 50 years of neglect as **PALAZZO VENART** last August. Since then, the luxury hotel has been welcoming clientele more interested in savouring neighbourhood Venice than joining the droves of tourists seeking out famous landmarks to tick off a list. Situated in the pretty Santa Croce district, Palazzo Venart boasts 18 extravagantly decorated rooms and suites that boldly challenge some of the most well-established hotels. Service is exceptional, leaving you with the impression you are the only guest in the building. The décor is luxe classic Venetian: rich colours, lush furnishings and great attention to detail, with a quirky, extravagant edge.

A canal-side garden and a leafy inner courtyard are great for relaxing after a busy day of culture. At lunch and dinner, the dining room becomes GLAM, the Venetian outpost of Italy's youngest two Michelin-starred chef Enrico Bartolini. Taking the city's traditional dishes as his starting point, Bartolini and his team create delicate, delicious dishes, which resemble edible works of art. During warmer weather, dinner is served in the waterfront garden, by candlelight, overlooking the Grand Canal, which is an experience to treasure on so many levels, [palazzovenart.com](http://palazzovenart.com).



## WHAT TO DO

Located in Peggy Guggenheim's former home, Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, on the Grand Canal (and right next door to Ca Maria Adele), the **PEGGY GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION** presents Guggenheim's personal collection, masterpieces from the Hannelore B and Rudolph B Schulhof Collection, the Nasher Sculpture Garden, as well as temporary exhibitions, [guggenheim-venice.it](http://guggenheim-venice.it).

Unleash your inner creativity with a visit to **CA'MACANA** and make your very own traditional mask for Carnevale, using the same techniques the Venetian artisans did 800 years ago. Set up by a former architect, Ca'macana is the oldest and finest mask making workshop in Venice, and a pleasant way to pass the day with young and old, [camacana.com](http://camacana.com).

### THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

was inspired by the Perfume Museum, which in turn crowns the creation of The Merchant of Venice fragrance. First of its kind in Italy, the museum guides visitors through multimedia presentations, sensory experiences, and rare objects, revealing the centuries-old continuity

between the Republic of Venice and the history of perfume. Follow this up with a visit to the atelier itself, where the luxury line of perfumes offers an assortment of exclusive scents. Discover why this century-old perfume atelier is one of the most sought-after fragrance houses in the world, [themerchantofvenice.net](http://themerchantofvenice.net).

No trip to Venice is complete without a visit to at least one of the splendid artisanal workshops, which lie nestled within the recesses of the waterways. One such workshop is **TESSITURA LUIGI BEVILACQUA**, whose jacquard hand looms date back to the 19th century and where, to this day, they continue to make the best silk brocades in the world for high profile customers such as The White House and the Kremlin, and for some of the most iconic couturiers and fashion brands of our time, such as Prada, Valentino and Dolce & Gabbana. Their age-old hand looming techniques is a thing of true beauty and an exceptional experience to see first-hand. Entering their workshop transports you back to ancient Venice, where craftsmanship, passion and creativity abound, [luigi-bevilacqua.com](http://luigi-bevilacqua.com).

**CA MARIA ADELE** is deceptively unassuming from the outside, and undoubtedly overshadowed by the dominance of its neighbour, the domed Santa Maria della Salute, one of the largest churches in Venice. Inside, however, opulence is the order of the day, leaving you in no doubt as to which city you are waking up in. Ca Maria Adele is a blissfully quiet 14-room residence, despite being just a short hop from the main tourist mecca of San Marco. Breakfast can be served on the rooftop terrace of this 16th century palace or in an elegant dining room. Generous servings will set you up for a day of exploring this magical city, [camariaadele.it](http://camariaadele.it).

