

Venice September 1 to 23, 2015

September 1 Spent the night at O'Hare because of the early flight. Got to sleep before 10pm, so got enough sleep, even though up at 6am.

September 2 Uneventful flight to Heathrow. Taxi to the hotel.

September 3 Up at 6am again for an early flight, with about 2 hours of sleep. There was no problem with our flight (we left a little bit late because the inbound aircraft was delayed, but not much); we had a long delay at customs in Venice. We couldn't figure out what they were looking for. They took about 3 seconds with us, and about 1 second with the Italians, but they had everyone in the same lanes so everyone had to wait. The main organizer, Mario Mainardis, had to be in Udine giving exams, so his wife, Clara Franchi, met us. We walked about 15 minutes to the port and she managed, after another 10 minutes or so, to get a water taxi. Totally cool. There was a very controlled lane that the water taxis have to stay in, going to and from the airport, and at one point there was quite a bit of traffic. We came along the shore with great buildings, then suddenly turned the corner and the view opened into the famous stuff, the palace and the cathedral, with churches everywhere, of course. The water taxi then went into one of the little canals. As we later realized, this was a shortcut through the main island to avoid having to go all the way around the east end of the main island (Giardini, etc.). We were delivered to the edge of the small canal next to the flat (as we now know, Fondamenta Ca' Balá). We then climbed 3 or 4 steps to cross a bridge, turned into a very narrow alley (Calle Barbaro), and there was the door. The flat that Mario and Clara were loaning us was a third-floor walkup, so we were happy many many times that we had done the trip with just carryon luggage. Mario and Clara live on the 2nd floor of the building. The flat we were in is Mario's mother's, and she was on vacation.

The flat was on two levels, one half up from the other, and there was a lot of space. Most of the floors are very old stone, and the walls are mostly plaster and wood. There was a tiny kitchen and a tiny washing machine. They had just bought a huge TV for the bedroom (the box was still in one of the rooms) and there was an air conditioner which we used some days. On other days, there was a nice breeze through the flat. There was a little sitting room at the top level, and just before that was a little enclosed outside space with a winding staircase up to the roof. From the roof you can see the Grand Canal and also a little canal and lots of rooftops, etc. I rushed up and took photos while there was lots of sun. The light changed during the day, and there were different weather conditions, giving me different colors, so I took lots of photos from the roof during the trip. All the buildings are so old, and we loved our views, in all directions.

We took showers and tried to take a nap, then had a very successful walk around the general area. Besides some great window shopping (glass, clothes, books, art, pizza...) we managed to find an ATM that took our card, and a grocery store that had been recommended. We had been told about two grocery stores, a 20 minute walk from the flat, in different directions, and we went NW to one called Simply. We were relieved that we knew we could get money, and at the market we got fresh pasta (and jarred pasta sauce) cheese and bread and peas and yoghurt, etc. There was a boat outside loaded with vegetables and fruit as we were walking to the store, and we had hoped

that at some point we would be able to buy fresh canal-boat vegetables, but that never happened. We bought a Museum Pass, and a "Chorus" pass for some of the churches.

One of the first things we saw about 3 blocks from the flat was a shop with the window filled with dolls like the wonderful doll Dallas and Holly gave us for Christmas, though that doll was much better than the ones in the window, of course. I think they were selling for about 250 euros, and seem to be antiques.

At 6pm, all the church bells in the area started chiming...different tempos and bell tones, of course. The first thing I did when we got back in was open all the windows, so it was as if they were all in the room with us. The undertones were really beautiful. We cooked dinner and washed up the dishes, then walked down to the Punta della Dogana (the east end of the Dorsoduro island, about a 10 minute walk) before going to sleep.

September 4 We managed to get a fairly good night's sleep. 4 hours of deep sleep, an hour of fighting mosquitos, and then periods of deep sleep until 8am. We managed to get most of the mosquitos out, then had to shut the windows overnight the rest of the trip to keep them out. The air conditioning helped, but it was a shame, because the sounds from the canals and from the people walking on the streets were charming. Since we were on the 3rd/4th floor, the sun came streaming in in the mornings, so it was hot without the air conditioning.

One thing we couldn't find in the area was a little coffee shop, and there was no coffee maker (that I was comfortable using) in the flat, so I made our morning coffee by putting ground coffee in a filter, the filter in a cup, and pouring boiling water over it. I had my heart set on the Italian croissants with chocolate in the middle, but we didn't find any nearby, so we had a very European breakfast of bread and cheese.

After breakfast, we walked SW and shopped at the other grocery store, the Conad, which was on the Giudecca Canal. There was no shade, and lots of sun, so it was pretty hot. We found a post office so I could buy stamps, a little kiosk where I bought a better map, and then loaded ourselves down with groceries and went back to the flat. We were starting to recognize the streets right around the flat, and generally had a good idea of the close area. We then checked email and thought we would rest for a bit, but we both fell asleep. We finally woke up and made lunch, then set out for the Piazza San Marco. There were five museums on our museum pass in that area, but we ended up not using any of them that afternoon.

We walked down to the Punta della Dogana to take a boat at the Salute stop (which became our regular stop) across to the Piazza, but it turned out that the little boats that were supposed to be a euro or so weren't running, and the only option was a Vaporetto for 7 1/2 euros. A single price, no matter how far you went, and we were only going one stop. We decided we would walk instead, and managed to get there in about 20 minutes. The shortest way was to use little twisty streets that were loaded with people, but for the most part they were moving. There were lots and lots of glass shops and shops with heavy winter clothes, and so forth. The most fun part besides looking in the shops, was taking pictures from the little bridges over the little canals.

When we got to the Piazza San Marco we found that it wasn't nearly as crowded as we expected, and took pictures around the square. As we walked passed the Basilica di San Marco, we noticed that there was a very short line, so decided to see if we could get in. In less than 5 minutes we were in! It helped that there was a group a

Chinese that were pulled out of line because they had backpacks that they had to go check, and a woman in a very skimpy outfit that had to go wrap herself in paper before she could go in.

Once in, we were especially amazed by tiles on the floors. Really wonderful and intricate. We were surprised that we didn't remember them, but then it occurred to us that the only other time we had ever been there, the water was very high and they had wooden planking on the floors. So we had never seen them before. Also, I had been surprised weeks ago when I was looking at photos of that previous trip that we had no photos in the Basilica, but it turned out that you are not allowed to take photos, so I was sure that was the case the first time, as well.

After that, we walked around the plaza and took pictures and looked at the museum locations. By that time, it was too late to actually do a museum, but we knew where they were for the next time. We did stop at two churches, Santa Maria del Giglio (2 Tintoretts and a pretty organ) and San Vidal, that were on our church pass, and when we stopped at a third, San Maurizi; that was free (so not on our pass) it turned out to be a musical instrument museum, the Museo della Musica.

At 6:30 we met Mario briefly, then made our dinner.

September 5 We slept really well and were awakened by the doorbell. No one was there, so we thought it was an accident, but apparently the garbage collectors ring all the bells, in hopes of finding someone home. So we got up and had breakfast, yoghurt, granola, grapes, and stale croissants, and then it started to rain. The weather said 0% chance of rain at the time it was raining. When it stopped raining, we paid the 7 ½ euros for the Vaporetto ride to the train station (Piazzale Roma) where we needed to go to buy our transit pass. We weren't sure if this was going to work, but it was a really scenic boat ride, and we figured the 7.50 charge was more reasonable for the long ride than just one stop.

At the ticket office, they had a really good system where you used a touch screen to touch what you wanted, a number was produced, and then you waited until your number was called. When we were called up, it took a few minutes, the teller filled out some forms and took our photos with a little camera like they use at Costco, only flexible, took our money, and gave us the passes. The pass was 50 euros and the monthly part was 37 euros, so we figure we'll use more transportation than that (in fact, we broke even within 3 or 4 days!). And I think the basic pass will always be good, if we should come back, you just buy another month or whatever.

From there we walked back to an area where the Vodafone company has a big store, stopping at a church on our pass on the way, St. Pantalon, but were not particularly surprised to see that the Vodafone was closed from 12:30 to 3 for lunch. (It was about 1) So we walked on, with our next stop the grocery store and walked right past a very tiny Vodafone shop that was open. The woman was busy helping people who had some kind of problem with a phone that wasn't even a Vodafone phone, and couldn't figure out what the problem was. Finally they left, and I explained that I wanted two cheap phone to put minutes on, and she immediately pulled one out from under the desk and showed it to us. We talked about it for a few minutes and said sure. Then she said, oh she only had one. After we said that didn't work, she remembered that she had a different kind for the same price. So we had working phones that we carried with us

and kept on the rest of the trip. We were able to get a strong signal everywhere, and when the battery died in our travel alarm clock, I used my phone as our alarm.

Then we went to the grocery store, then back to the flat and had our lunch.

We decided then to test both our transportation passes and our museum pass, so took the boat to the Ca' Rezzonico Museum, a museum of Venice art in the 17th century (there were a few 15th century things, as well.) There were 3 startling glass pieces made on Murano. They looked similar to some of Chihuly's modern works, and he had studied on Murano, so that's not surprising...but these were made in the 17th century.

When we came out of the museum it was raining again, but we had umbrellas. When we got back to the flat, I opened some of the windows to cool off the rooms, and Steve saw an egret on the roof outside the window!!! While I was taking photos of the egret, I saw that there was a beautiful double rainbow. So I have a photo of the egret on the roof with the Grand Canal in the background with the rainbow over it!!! How cool was that?

Mario and Clara had invited to us dinner at 7:30 that night, so I looked for flowers while we are out, but couldn't find any. It was a lovely meal with their children. Very relaxed and fun.

September 6 Our day was interesting. After breakfast we took the transit boat over to Piazza San Marco and went the Correr Museum. It has several sections:

Some 15th century Italian paintings and altar pieces, and 16th century mostly from Italy, and later.

Several "Imperial Rooms of the Royal Palace in Venice" from roughly 1836--58 have been reconditioned with furniture, paintings, and so forth.

"Venetian culture" has paintings, sculpture, dishes, coins, and so forth. Venice and the Sea was one section of this, with a couple of ship models and lots of paintings and sculpture that represent armadas.

Archeology had a handful of Egyptian pieces and a couple of Assyrian, but lots of statues from the first century BC on. (The Sansovino-designed library rooms seemed mostly closed for restoration.)

When we were finished at the Correr we took the Vaporetto back (it's just one stop) and went back to the flat to have lunch. We then intended to walk in the neighborhood before we went up to the roof at 4 to watch the "Regatta Storica" on the Grand Canal, but we both fell asleep and didn't wake until 3. So no walk, but it was relaxing!

We had thought we would watch a few minutes here and there of the regatta, but it turned out to be really fun. At 4 was a parade of boats with people in historical garments. Then throughout the afternoon were races, and we could see the teams going past in our little view of the canal. We could hear the announcers from loudspeakers throughout the city, so had a good idea about when the races had started and ended. While we were watching, a sea gull flew up and rested on a chimney top nearby, so I got some good photos. After the regatta, we had dinner, then walked in the neighborhood, and went to bed, since Steve had a 9am lecture the next day.

September 7 We had breakfast, granola and yoghurt, and left for the seminary, where the summer school was held. I was able to greet our friends, and make sure Steve could get started with his lectures. During the two weeks, Steve lectured for 90 minutes from 9:30 to 11 Monday to Friday, then there was a half hour break. Then Gernot Stroth lectured from 11:30 to 1. The first week there was a problem session Wednesday and Friday from 3:30 to 6, and the second week the problem session was Monday and Wednesday. Since Steve had all of his lecture notes prepared in advance (also available on the web) and sent them to the organizers, Mario had one of his students print them out and hand them out, so everyone could follow along and make notes in the margins. Steve is thinking of turning these lecture notes into a book, so the students' feedback will be useful. He sent them around to experts in the field as he got them ready, to make sure that everything was right, and got a lot of praise for putting the work in one place. So it sounds like a book is really needed.

We had no trouble finding the area in the seminary, but went to the wrong room! Fortunately, he didn't load his talk onto the computer in that room, and when the organizers arrived, we all moved to the correct room. They had to find the computer guy to put in the password, and then it all went fine. We had taken along our laptop for backup, but Steve was able to upload his talk so I took the laptop back to the flat with me. I stayed for a few minutes and left Steve teaching. As I passed the Santa Maria della Salute church I saw that it was open, so went in and took some photos. The tile floors are especially interesting. I did a load of laundry and walked in the area, and then met Steve back at the Santa Maria della Salute and we went back to the flat for lunch. (His lecture had gone really well. He felt like his timing was good and that the students were following him.) He went over the next talk before we went out for the afternoon.

Our intention had been to take the boat to an area with two museums and a church that were on our passes, but fortunately Steve checked before we left, because both museums were closed on Mondays. So we went to the Palazzo Ducale instead, which is next to the basilica. There were crowds in the area when we got there, and we were surprised by how long the lines were to get into the basilica. We really lucked out the first day. We think there were 3 cruise ships in port, so that was probably the difference...or one difference, anyway. There were no lines to get into the Duke's Palace. The formal rooms of the Palace are huge, with vast paintings and carvings. The fireplaces have statues on either side! I mean life-sized statues. Steve realized at one point that we could see a bit of the Bridge of Sighs by peering through a bit of a window; and when we went down into the prison area, we actually walked across (inside) the Bridge of Sighs. Too cool. It was divided into two lanes, so on the way out we could walk on the other side.

One of the things we were especially interested in was the room that Palladio had worked on, the Sala delle Quattro Porte, since we had read up on Palladio before the trip. (In particular, Bruce Boucher's book.) This was the room where ambassadors waited to see the Duke, for example. The palace was vast, and the "public" rooms are astonishingly ornate, with paintings by people like Titian and the Tintoretts (father and son, Jacopo and Domenico). (Many are "school of" and there are vast numbers of Tintoretts in the city, with some attributed to the "school of", though I imagine it was the Rembrandt system where someone in the shop did most of the work and Rembrandt came in and added the final touches.) One of my favorite rooms was the Senate room,

which has a line of bench seats along the walls. There was a Council Room, Collegio, also designed by Palladio, a Compass Room, a Sala Consiglio dei Dieci (Trial Chambers of the Council of 10), etc. Some of the rooms were vast. It was difficult to take photos because of the vastness and the glare of light coming in through the windows. And some things had glass in front of them, of course. One of the astonishing features was the Scala d'Oro which has 24-carat gilt stuccowork on the ceilings. As we climbed the stairway, I tried to take photos, but it was hard to get more than a bit of them at a time. Very astonishing place. One of the interesting things was that the marble used in the prisons came from the looting of Constantinople. I had learned the day before that the horses on the Basilica di San Marco had come from the looting of Constantinople in about 1400.

We then headed for the Palazzo Fortuny, which we thought was covered by our museum pass, but it turned out that the pass just allowed us to pay a reduced price so we decided not to do it that day. We then headed for Chiesa di Santo Stefano, which was covered by our church pass, though no one checked it. It was built in 1325 and has a seriously leaning tower that we can see from our roof. The ceiling was built by shipbuilders as the keel of a ship, and very beautiful.

We went back to Salute on the Vaporetto, the closest stop to the flat. Since I had stopped at the Santa Maria della Salute in the morning and really liked the tile floors, we stopped in when we got off the boat so that Steve could see them. Steve found a notice that there would be a concert there Sunday afternoon (including Bach cello and organ pieces). As we were standing there, the performers started practicing! We stayed for a while listening to the practice.

Then we went back to the flat, showered and got ready for the pizza dinner with the group. We met at 7:30 at the Santa Maria della Salute and walked about 20 minutes along the Giudecca Canal ("the tourist route," they called it) to the restaurant. The restaurant had been billed as "the best pizza restaurant in Venice," and in fact had a menu with at least 6 columns of choices. The pizzas were about 14 inches in diameter, very very thin crust, with a layer of tomato sauce (except the "white pizzas" which had no tomato) and then the toppings. With the choices so vast, it was really hard to decide, and we ended up ordering meat and fish dishes off the regular menu, and our choices were very good. This was our first restaurant meal in Venice. The restaurant was very close to the Conad grocery store we use in that area, so after dinner we ran into the store to buy a few things just before they closed at 10pm and carried them back to the flat.

September 8 We had cheese and bread for breakfast, and Steve went off to lecture. I started a load of laundry (those tiny washing machines, but thank goodness there was one in the flat!), took my bath and washed my hair. We met the organizers, along with Bernd Stellmacher and Gemma Parmeggiani, at 1pm in front of the flat, and walked to a restaurant on the Rio di San Sebastiano. It was a real Italian lunch that lasted hours, though we mostly talked. Then we went to the "best Gelato shop in Venice", Gelati Nico, and had the traditional chocolate ice cream with hazelnuts in it and whipped cream on top, called Gianduiotto <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gianduiotto> . Yum, but very filling! We then went to the Chiesa dei Gesuati (Santa Maria del Rosario), which was on our church pass, and close to the ice cream shop. The grocery store was also close, so we

went back and got a few things, including Greek yoghurt (It turned out to be too sweet, and we never did find good yoghurt). We also found some Brie that was very good, but tasted like "Brie cheesecake" (Steve) or (to me) ricotta, and some pears that were really beautiful, but not yet ripe. Once they ripened, they were wonderful

September 9 That morning we had the too-sweet yoghurt and a really great peach, plus a so-so croissant for breakfast, and I went over to the seminary with Steve for the walk. We went out to the Dogana point and I took some photos. We then realized that Steve had left his water bottle in the room (there were no fountains in the seminary) so we walked back to get it and then back again to the seminary.

I wandered around the streets in this area taking photos until the shops opened and then I started walking into little shops that looked interesting. One thing I wanted to do was buy patches for Jimmy, and I had seen some displayed on a kiosk near the Pont dell' Accademia. They turned out to be paper! I was totally disappointed. I walked into a couple of tourist shops and looked into others, but none of them had patches. Then I went into a newspaper shop to see if they had the Scientific American (they didn't) and they had patches! I was so surprised. So that mission was accomplished.

By this time the bookstore had opened, so I spent quite a bit of time there, then went into several jewelry stores. Not surprising, the glass necklaces that I liked were several hundred euros. Oh, well. They were pretty to look at!

Steve and I met up at the flat for lunch (his talk went well again), and then we took the Vaporetto to the Rialto Bridge. The area was really crowded, but we managed to get on a side street and visit the Chiesa di San Salvatore, not on our pass but free. It had a Titian (Tiziano Vecellio) and a really nice tiled floor. We then crossed the bridge and visited the Church of San Giovanni Eleemosinario which was free, on our pass. It has a really good Titian and a Tintoretto.

We quickly went through the Rialto Market, because I wanted to look for mushrooms, etc., but most of the vegetable stands were closed up. One of the reasons that the area was so crowded was that there are a lot of tourist stalls down the middle of the "streets", which cause traffic jams.

We got back to the flat at 3, so Steve was in plenty of time to get back to the seminary. We cooked dinner and stayed in for the night.

September 10 After breakfast, I walked over to the seminary with Steve to test the key card that the organizers had gotten for me. It worked, so I could get into the building if I needed to.

I walked around the Dogana point and took some photos. I walked along the Giudecca Canal and took photos. Four couples who were American tourists (ahem) were standing on a bridge taking pictures of each other and I offered to take a photo of all of them. They asked if I would take a photo with each of their cameras and I said of course, so I took several photos of them. One of the men offered to take mine, so I said sure...it's actually a pretty good photo. I kept walking until I got to the grocery store, and then did some grocery shopping. Since we could only buy as much as we could carry 20 minutes back and then up 3 flights of stairs, it really was easier to shop more often. And, by going early, I found beautiful mushrooms!!!!!!! Hoooooray!!! It was a large box

(3" x 3" x 6") of little bellas, so they were soon eaten, but at least I knew how to find mushrooms in Venice!

After lunch we went to what I claim was 5 museums and 2 churches, and then shopped again. Our first stop was the church of San Stae, which has the most beautiful ceiling. Then we went to a museum, Ca' Pesaro, which I counted as 3 because it has a great modern collection (Klee, Miro, Calder, Kandinsky, Max Ernst, Moore, etc.....) and the Oriental Museum, which has some really lovely pieces and was well laid out. And then it has a Cy Twombly exhibit on, which feels like a completely different place. Also, there was an exhibit of Cagnaccio di San Pietro's work, whom I wasn't familiar with, but more like some of the works in the permanent collection. The rooms in the museum have high ceilings and lots of paintings from when it was built, plus great ceilings and floors.

We then went to the Palazzo Mocenigo which was really fun. The idea was to "evoke the different aspects of the life and activities of a Venetian nobleman between the 17th and 18th century", so in addition to the furniture and art, they have mannequins in some of the rooms wearing "valuable ancient garments and accessories". They also had an exhibit on the development of soap and scent in Venice, which was interesting. It was a lot of fun. They had Plexiglas boxes that you could lift the lid and sniff...the scents were very powerful. And they had a table with bowls of herbs and things, so you could see where the scents came from. I have to say that the scents didn't really match my expectation. For example, they had one labeled lavender that smelled more like sandalwood.

We then went to the Museo di Storia Naturale di Venezia. We were expecting the old-fashioned bones-in-old-cases, but they have recently redone some of the rooms. For example, they have some fossil footprints, which usually would be in cases or in raised areas, and they are in the floor with (probably) Plexiglas over them, so you walk across the footprints. I'm guessing that their dinosaur collection isn't very big, and they have displayed it to good effect.

Our last "tourist" stop was the Chiesa di San Giacomo dell' Orio, which has lovely art, including a Lorenzo Lotto.

We then took the Vaporetto to the area of one of our grocery stores and bought a few things, then took another boat back to our stop, Salute, went to the flat and cooked dinner.

September 11 I went over to the seminary with Steve in the morning, but then went back to the flat and did small odds and ends and rested. Steve got back early so we had a quick lunch and went back to the Vaporetto. We went to the Museo Fortuny which is considered a museum of art and design, and it was great. I really loved the way they installed the art, and there was some interesting architecture. The first room, which had symbols everywhere (mirrors, doors, walls...) was especially great. We got back to the flat in plenty of time for Steve to get off to his problem session, and I spent time doing odds and ends and resting. When he got back, we made and ate dinner.

The only other time we were in Venice, many many years ago, we stayed out in Mestre and took the train in during the day and just walked around and did a few tourist things. And I think we were only here a couple of days. This was totally different!! And living where we were, we were outside the total tourist crush (it can be a little crowded

in the tiny streets, but not bad) and if we had time, we could have learned when to go to the "hot" sites when there weren't a lot of tourists. I think early in the morning and late afternoon when the cruise ship people have left. But really, because we bought the museum pass, we didn't have to stand in any lines, and the sites themselves, once you got in, were not crowded. There were almost no people in the museums.

September 12 We finally found what we thought was real Greek yoghurt, so we had that with granola and a fresh peach for breakfast. (It turned out that the yoghurt went off really fast.) The peach was wonderful. We made sandwiches to carry for lunch, and headed out to the Vaporetto. We had a really great day. The islands were very interesting, and each one unique:

Since we were using public transportation, it took us about an hour and a half to get to the first island that we were going to visit. We were headed to Torcello (small, not very developed, with a museum and a church), and then Burano (great lace museum) and then Murano (fabulous glass museum). Because of the public transport schedule, we landed first at Murano and had a few minutes before the next boat (we had to change lines), so took a few photos. That boat took us to Burano, but just a short stop to let people on and off, and then we went on to Torcello.

Landing on Torcello, there was no signage. But there was a really nice brick road along a canal, and people from the boat headed that way, so we decided that maybe they knew what they were doing and followed them. We had been told that there were water taxis, if we wanted to splurge, but we didn't see any, and it was a lovely walk anyway. As we walked toward the "town", there was a nice wild field on our left, and the canal on our right.

We realized that we were definitely on the right path when we started seeing people coming toward us with bags from a shop, plus there was an accordion player by the side of the path. Then we saw a few buildings. There was a church, a museum, a shop, and I think 3 restaurants, and that was pretty much it. We bought a combined church/museum ticket (the church was free, but you had to "buy" the ticket. The museum was free for Italians over 65, but for us it was 3 euros each.) Since the ticket office was close to the church, we went there first, and it turned out that there was a wedding going on. We only stayed for a bit, but it added to the experience. The church has lovely tile mosaics. We weren't allowed to take photos. The guard was pretty in-your-face, probably because of the wedding. The museum was a tiny little thing but actually had a few artifacts from 4th century BC!! So we totally enjoyed it. As we walked back to the boat, I happened to look into one of the restaurants and noticed that they had at least 2 long tables set up for meals, plus in front was a table loaded with champagne glasses, so I said, "That's where the wedding reception will be!" Then when we got to the dock, a large boat arrived and the people who got out were dressed up (two more boats arrived while we were waiting with dressed up people), so obviously the guests for the reception. We ended up eating our sandwich standing in the shade of the boarding platform, since that was all the shade there was and it was really hot in the sun.

We then caught the boat to Burano, which was much more developed than we expected. The streets had lace shop after lace shop, and it was really fun to look in as we walked to the museum. In fact, we missed the museum and kept walking, so were

able to see a bride and groom walking around with their photographer, and the sea front that faced Venice. We walked back toward the town square, and Steve asked where the museum was, and it turned out we had been about 10 yards from it when we had first walked that direction. It was a very interesting museum with the history of lace patterns and lots of examples in pullout drawers. And the paintings were all of people wearing lace or making lace. One really interesting thing was a set of chairs used by lace makers with high foot rests, so your lace could rest on your knees as you made it. (The museum was on our pass.)

We then went to Murano and transferred to another boat to take us around to the side of the island with the glass museum. We expected Murano to be built up, since it was so close to Venice and one of the usual tourist sites, and it was. Of course the shops lining the canals there were all glass shops. The glass museum was glorious (plus it was on our museum pass!). There were rooms of historical glass and an explanation of the history of glass making in the area, but what we both loved the most were the more modern art glass. So beautiful. I especially love the thick geometric vases with primary colors in geometric patterns. Steve said that I had taught him to love those as well. After the museum we walked along the canals stopping in shops and looking at the glass. We noticed that the closer we got to the main boat station, the more expensive (and amazing!) the glass became. There were lots of pieces that could have been in the museum, and we went into the shops as if they were museums. It was really interesting to be in a town totally revolving around the creation and sale of glass objects.

In a sense, the islands were museums, because the houses were so old and the bridges over the canals mostly seem old. There were no cars (motor vehicles at all, actually) on Torcello, Burano, or Murano, and the only cars allowed in Venice are over on the bus/train station section

The trip back on the boat was uneventful, and we made our transfer to "our" boat with no problem. Altogether we were out 8 hours. We made dinner and fell asleep.

September 13 An art day. We started a bit later, and took the Vaporetto across the Canale della Giudecca to Giudecca and walked around. To our surprise, the fabric showroom for the Fortuny fabric was open. They make museum-quality fabrics that were used in the wealthy houses in the old, old days, and are on display in some of the museums. The fabrics on show were pretty amazing.

We walked through some of the back streets (the island isn't very wide), past a fairly modern theater building, and to the Chiesa del SS Redentore, designed by Palladio. This was on our church pass, but because it was Sunday, they didn't check. We then walked past the Santa Maria della Presentazione, which wasn't open, and then took the boat over to San Giorgio Maggiore.

We first did the Chiesa di San Giorgio Maggiore (also Palladio), which included 2 works for an art exhibit called Together. One was an angel made of symbols, hanging from the ceiling, and the other was a giant wire head in the middle inside the door. Very interesting.

Then, at a free museum, Le Stanze del Vetro, there was a show of glass works by Fulvio Bianconi, active in the 1950s and 1960s, that was really wonderful. And they allowed us to take photos.

Outside the museum was an art installation called Glass Tea House Mondrian. It has a long blue pool with pebbles around the sides, and walls made from old Japanese straw brooms. Very interesting. We ended up sitting on some steps next to the museum to eat our sandwich, since there weren't any benches.

We then went to an exhibit called Map of the New Art. Each of the 6,930 artists from over 40 countries created an art work about 3" x 3", and these were arranged on vertical sheets of plywood. At first we thought we would just walk through, but of course you had to keep stopping and looking at the different art.

After that we took 2 boats to get over to the island of Lido, and this was a real culture shock. Because it was a larger island and not chock full of ancient buildings, it was a more modern town with lots of trees, etc., and beaches on the Gulf of Venice. It was amazing to have to watch out for the traffic when we crossed streets. We walked around and over to one of the beaches, then back to a grocery store that was much bigger than those we've been shopping at. We had intended to take 2 boats back to the grocery store we mainly used and shop there, but instead shopped on Lido and took one boat back directly to our usual stop.

Our boat got in to the stop at 2:40, and as we stepped off, Steve remembered the organ and cello concert that was going to be at 3:30. So we rushed to the flat and put away the groceries, cleaned up, changed clothes, then rushed back to the concert. After that, we went back to the flat and had dinner.

September 14 I walked over to the seminary with Steve after breakfast and walked around taking photos for a bit. It had rained during the night, so there was a thin film of water still on most things, so I wanted to get that effect.

After lunch, we went to Casa di Carlo Goldoni, which was a theater museum in the house where the actor Carlo Goldoni was born in 1707. I had thought this was our last museum on the pass, but we noticed that the Naval history museum was on the map of the pass (it turned out that it was not included, even though it was on the map, so we had finished the passes.)

We then went to two churches that were on our church pass, first San Polo, which had a beautiful wooden ceiling and of course a Tintoretto. And then the huge Basilica of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, It has a particularly good Titian, plus a Donatello, etc. The streets in the area were crowded, so we had to rush to get Steve back to his afternoon problem session, and didn't spend as much time in the Frari as it deserved.

September 15 We had another art day, though I guess all of Venice was art, in some sense. After lunch, we took the boat to the stop with the main Biennale pavilions and bought a day pass which was good for one entry in each of 2 locations, Arsenale and Giardini. The site was huge, and different countries have their own permanent pavilion (plus Swatch, which was a sponsor, had its own pavilion, and one of the best installations!) A lot of the art was fairly derivative and didactic, of course, and some of the anti-war art was unpleasant without being moving. We got the impression that the point was to shock, even at the expense of an artistic statement. That said, there were lots of good installations that did have a lot to say and were really interesting. We

walked the entire area, stopping at each pavilion and spending more or less time at each, depending on what grabbed us.

We then took a boat to the stop that had the other huge Biennale site, and also the Naval Museum (which we thought was the last museum on our pass, but we had not read the fine print. We got a senior rate.). It turned out that the historical museum was closed for renovation, but we could go to a display of old boats (which was what I had thought the museum was.) It was fun. Outside was the entrance to the modern naval yard, which had some interesting statues. We spent the rest of the day at the 2nd huge Biennale site, Giardini, and really enjoyed it. The art installations were much more creative and interesting.

September 16 After breakfast, I took the boat up to the Rialto Market to see if I could find some flowers to take to the dinner that night at Mario and Clara's. They had invited the 2 speakers and their wives and the 2 other organizers. Because that day's problem session didn't end until 6, and Mario and Clara did the cooking, the dinner didn't start until 8. (That was the last problem session, and then just two more lectures.)

I was so glad I finally got to the market early. It was absolutely filled with beautiful vegetables. Including lovely mushrooms but no flowers. Steve had found, on the internet, a florist, Fantin, on the other side of the Rialto bridge, but we weren't sure if it was an actual shop, or just an office where you could have flowers sent. I really enjoyed walking around the area of the market, then walked across the bridge and immediately found the florist on a side street. It was small, but had some beautiful orchids in the window, so the assistant had to completely rearrange the window to get the ones I wanted. They seemed to find me very amusing and were very jolly about it. The hard part was the crush on the boat on the way back but I got them back safe and sound. (I was worried that one of the tourists would bump me, so I kept a good watch on the people who didn't seem to know what they were doing.)

When Steve was finished with the morning session we had lunch, and then went to the Peggy Guggenheim Museum (modern), which was about 100 yards from our outside door. The lines had been pretty long there, but we were able to get in pretty quickly. We were impressed by the collection, not to mention the Grand Canal location.

We went back to the flat and started organizing and got ready for the dinner. It was a lot of fun, and the orchids were a hit. The "informal" meal had several courses, and ended in Gelato, of course.

September 17 After breakfast, while Steve was working, I took the boat over to the St. Marks area, took a lot of photos, then walked around the little streets for a while before going back to the flat to meet Steve for lunch.

Then we went to the Gallerie dell Accademia, with a few Titians, tons of Tintoretts, etc. Mario had sent us an email that he thought the Scientific American article was in the September Italian version, which was called Le Scienze (no wonder I had so much trouble finding it!!!). We tried to look it up online, with no success. So we looked at the newsstands on the way to the museum, then walked down to the Giudecca Canal and checked the one I knew about there. They did have one that looked like it had some of the same cover, but it had a book bound with it, and we didn't want to risk the price. When we got back to the room, Steve was able to find it on the

web, and it was the correct issue, so he rushed back down to the newsstand and bought it while I did my bath and hair.

We met the group in front of the Santa Maria della Salute and walked around to the Giudecca Canal for a chartered boat. There were 20 of us all together, though one of the students had been delayed by a phone call and caught up with us at the island. The boat ride was over an hour to the island of Pellestrina, which is one of the barrier islands along the Venice lagoon. There were cars on the island, but we easily walked to the other side to see the actual Adriatic. The banquet was fun and there was a ton of food. Two appetizers, a first course (which was a salad) a main course and a little sherbet for dessert. I thought it was so funny that the plumpest student complained that he didn't consider a spoonful of sherbet a dessert. After the banquet, the boat took us back to the Santa Maria della Salute.

September 18 Steve finished the course!!!! To great acclaim, of course. Since he had been able to buy a copy of *Le Scienze*, he held it up at the end of the lecture.

After breakfast, I took the boat a few stops to the Ca' Rezzonico stop and walked back, taking photos and looking into shops.

After lunch, we went to a very interesting museum, the Fondazione Querini Stampalia. The building was very modern inside, with touches of Bauhaus, and they had gone for a zen kind of atmosphere. Very nice. Then we went to the Palazzo Grimani (the entry was included in our ticket to the Gallerie dell'Accademia) which had some really great contemporary art on one floor, and another floor had the traditional "very-important-person" architecture and paintings on the ceilings, etc. On the ground floor was a musical contraption made out of pots and pans that I loved. I did a short movie. The sound reverberated through the building, so as you went through the rooms, the sound was there. Fabulous place.

We then went to two churches for the art, the Santa Maria Formosa and the Santa Maria Nova (Miracoli). We wandered back to the Rialto stop on the canal and took the boat to the area where one of the grocery stores and the phone store were. We had heard that the phone company was going to charge us 10 euros a month, whether we used the phone or not, so we wanted to confirm that our "plan" was really pay as you go with no monthly charges. They did confirm this for us, so we were fine. Then we did a quick shop at the Simply Market. The Conads are bigger and have lots more stuff, but the Simply has better deli vegetables and a flatbread with olives to die for. I told Steve that I needed to buy another suitcase to fill with the flatbread, but of course it doesn't stay fresh very long, and it breaks into pieces at a tap. We also stopped at an ATM for money for the water taxi to the airport on Tuesday (very expensive, but it saved an hour and a half standing on the Vaporetto!)

September 19 After breakfast, we started at the San Zaccaria church, then the Greek Orthodox church, St George of the Greeks. Next door was the Museo di Icone which has icons back to the 14th century. I was so annoyed that they would not allow photos. Grrrr. But astonishing stuff, including a 16th century work that reminded us of El Greco's work. The colors were so vibrant that they could have been painted last week. We then went to the San Francesco della Vigna designed by Palladio. They allowed visitors into

a lot of the back rooms and private chapels, which really impressed me. Then we went to the gothic Basilica SS Giovanni e Paolo before going back to the flat for lunch.

After lunch we went to the Palazzo Cini which has two portraits on special exhibit "two portraits of Daniele Barbaro, masterpieces by Titian and Veronese, on loan from the Museo del Prado and the Rijksmuseum and reunited for the first time"...they are really astonishing portraits. Barbaro was a prominent scientist and backer of Palladio. The rest of the museum was interesting as well, but the portraits were the star. We then went back to the Basilica dei Frari, since we hadn't had time to do it justice the first time; and couldn't find Monteverdi's tombstone. We fear it was covered by scaffolding. We then went to the Carmini, St Sabastian, and The Chiesa dell'Angelo San Raffaele churches before doing a light shop at the usual Conad. We had gelato on the walk back up the Giudecca Canal. I had dark chocolate, Steve had Pistachio. We walked along the canal to the point, then turned and walked along the Grand Canal and into our street to our flat. One of the reasons for going that way to check out the modern art galleries along the end section of the Giudecca Canal.

September 20 We got a late start and went over to the Ghetto area. The synagogue we had in mind was not open, so we wandered around for a while and then went back to the flat for lunch. I started to get the packing organized, and then we went over to the Fenice Theater. We had thought of doing a tour, but a performance had just started, so tours were not available. We walked through the streets in that area, then walked back to our area, sat on our roof for a while, and then had dinner.

September 21 After breakfast, we went back across the Giudecca Canal to the island of Giudecca to revisit the Palladio-designed Redentore church there, then went to San Giorgio Maggiore Island first to the church (the Chiesa di San Giorgio Maggiore, where an organist was practicing). We went up the tower and got some good views. Then back to the glass exhibit there. We walked around a little and took "last photos" from that side. We took the boat back across and went to a Cicchetti place (Italian tapas) for a snack, then went back to the flat and had lunch. After that I did a little more packing, and then we went out for a last walk around this area and then had a last gelato. Me chocolate, Steve vanilla.

We dressed to take our "host and hostess" out to dinner. We took the Vaporetto across the canal with them to the Ristorante al Covo (recommended by friends we had met on the Antarctica trip; Tom Bortolazzo's family is from the Venice area), and had a really good meal. When we got back we finished the packing and got some sleep.

September 22 Mario and Clara arranged for a boat taxi to pick us up at the gate of the building that opens onto the Grand Canal, so we didn't have to go out of the building. Too cool. The water taxi arrived exactly on time and Mario and Clara saw us off. It was so awesome to embark from a private entrance on the grand canal! The water taxi driver was a friend of Mario and Clara's, and it was a brand new boat. We were at the airport in 20 minutes or so. You then lug the luggage for 7 minutes to get to the terminal. They are building a moving sidewalk, but it looks like they just started the project. I was glad many times that I managed to get away with just carryon luggage this trip, and that

was one of the times! There were only a couple of people in the check in line in front of us, and they let us use fasttrack and the lounge because of our AA status.

After that, it was one of those days that make you roll your eyes and laugh. (the plane was delayed, we think because of weather at Heathrow, then it took an hour to get through immigration, we just missed the bus to the hotel and had to wait 40 minutes, and then they gave us a room with one bed instead of two so we had to wait for them to change our room.) But we got into our room at Heathrow, had a light dinner, and got to sleep

September 23 Uneventful flight back to Chicago.