

## VISIT TO THE MAIN HOUSE AND THE GARDENS

*Villa Marcello is one of the most beautiful and well-maintained examples of Palladian style villas which lays in the middle of the Veneto region. It is still lived by some descendants of the noble Venetian Marcello family who built it in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In 1700, the villa was enlarged, finely decorated with frescoes and plaster works and enriched with precious furniture, built or bought in that period for this house. The building is encircled by an harmonious park of the same period, which is more than 9 hectares wide.*

## CA' MARCELLO



### HISTORY

This villa, such as other important Venetian villas, for the first two centuries had mostly a farm-house function. In fact, the discovery of the American continent in 1492 put Venice quickly out of main trading routes, which had been linking Europe to Asia and Africa for centuries and being the Mediterranean Sea the real centre of the known world. This led many Venetian wealthy families to move their interests towards the hinterland, to acquire land, clean it up and then grow it. Through the construction of the great estates known as Venetian Villas, the owners were able to control both business and work-flows of their properties. Only during the 18th century the villas became

also places of glamour and elegance, open to convivial pleasure, rich in architectural embellishments, full of refined furniture and rare objects d'art.

This is what happened also to Ca' Marcello. This family-house built at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century is now one of the most beautifully preserved historic houses in Italy, and this is due to the clear and deep choice that the Marcellos of the last generation made: to continue living it as their private home while finding new ways to maintain his splendour alive by letting other people enjoy its magnificent beauty and charm.



### ARCHITECTURE

The Marcello archive disappeared in a fire occurred to another family manor in 1920, leaving much of the villa's original period to speculation.

The monumental 16th century complex in Palladian style is structured with a central main building which is flanked on both sides by arcaded wings ("barchesse") which frame an Italian style garden with a fountain, Greek mythical statues, flower beds, lawns and bushes.

The interiors contain all the original 18th century furniture and a collection of period paintings, ancient clothes and objects belonged to the family. Count Marcello will guide you through a visit of the centuries-old park and then inside through splendid living rooms, bedrooms and a ballroom with fresco paintings by G.B. Crosato and incredibly beautiful stucco works.



The park of 90.000 sq. metres is rich in wonderful plants and is pleasantly framed by long rows of hornbeams, lime trees and oak trees, which meet in front of a lovely dove cote, a chapel and a large fish pond with running water. Other areas consist of woods with century old trees and numerous statues depicting realistic and fairy-like animals and humans.

## THE GARDENS



A garden is not thought to have existed at Ca' Marcello until the eighteenth century, when the house was impressively renovated for large-scale entertaining. In that period the new façade was enriched adding the semi-columns, the balconies, the lateral loggias, and the series of statues on the tympanum and the terrace. The comparison between 18th century's front façade and the back one is very interesting: the back façade has remained unchanged since 16th century, more rigorous and sober with its Palladian classical stamp. The centuries-old park can be divided in two different architectural areas: the Italian garden and the English park.



### THE ITALIAN STYLE GARDEN

In front of the villa the Italian Garden holds eighteenth and nineteenth century statuary of mythological figures, centred around a fountain and simple grass parterres. There are several flowering plant varieties, which flourish alternatively from April to October. From this point you get a complete view of the villa's majestic project, with the main building linked to the lateral arcade wings ("barchesse").

On each side the gate piers are surmounted by statues of the Four Seasons, with Winter depicted as an old man and Summer grasping a scythe. This austere elegant lay-out was put in place in the twentieth century to replace a fussier, nineteenth century composition. The more recent introduction of soft powder-blue plumbago in pots successfully lightens the severity of the stone.



### THE ENGLISH PARK

Continuing the walk in the wide and luxuriant English park, through long rows of hornbeams, lime trees and oak trees you can find some essences which are very rare in their longevity. It is worth mentioning the three-hundreds-year old hornbeam and liriiodendron, which are among the oldest in Veneto. Trees of particular interest are also the age-long red beech and plane. A small portion of the park is dedicated to the nursery and to the flowers. Apart from the naturalistic-botanical heritage, the walk leads the visitor to an picturesque sixteenth-century dove cote ("colombaia"), used for breeding the pigeons (useful to send daily messages to Venice, but also exquisite ingredients of many traditional Venetian recipes). You can also see a private chapel and a large fish-pond (obtained by filling the quarry, needed to build the house, with running water). Some parts of the park are left as woods with age-long trees and numerous statues representing animals and realistic or fairytale characters (among them the curious series of "the dwarfs" and of the "musician monkeys").



## THE MAIN HOUSE AND ITS ARTISTIC HERITAGE

At the end of the walk the internal visit begins starting from the main ground hall. Accompanied by the owner, you can admire all the finely furnished and decorated rooms. The furniture were crafted or bought expressively for the villa, between 16th and 18th century. What impresses is the almost perfect condition of the interior, thanks to the dedication of the owners living here.



### THE GROUND FLOOR

In the main lobby (the *Hall of Ancestors*) you can see some period paintings representing the most important members of the Marcello family, who marked the social, military and political life of the Serenissima Republic of Venice. Among them Niccolò Marcello, elected doge in 1473, and the great humanist and maecenas Jacopo Antonio who in 1438 defeated the Visconti family, Lords of Milan. Then Jacopo, *Generale da Mar* (chief of the fleet of Venice), who conquered Apulia and died hit by a bombard during the Gallipoli conquest in 1484. An important member was also Lorenzo Marcello, supreme captain of the Venetian fleet in the bloody Dardanelli battle

against the Turks, in 1656. Near the main hall there are two living rooms, rich in original furnishing elements and objects of art. In particular, the private collection of chairs, dating back to 1700, used by the family for the reserved stages at “La Fenice” theatre. At the villa’s ground floor you can also find the studio and the dining room. The first room was used for daily meetings between the owner and the farmers about the management of the large property, originally 4000 hectares wide. The second one, the dining room, is also known as the *Chinoiserie room*, due to the original Chinese paintings which date back to the end of the XVII century. In the middle of this room you can also notice the most precious of the Murano hand-made chandeliers of the house. Its structure, entirely in glass of an asymmetric shape, without any metal support, makes this chandelier an extremely rare piece.



### THE NOBLE FLOOR

The guests are then led to the noble floor through the splendid staircase, enriched with wrought-iron railings, and a big and precious wooden hand-manufactured article. This wooden piece comes from the admiral ship of Lorenzo Marcello, leader of the Venetian fleet in the triumph against the Turks in the Dardanelli battle.

Through the staircase you reach the solemn ballroom, where the floor is made in typical Venetian “terrazzo”. This radiant hall is decorated with five frescoes by Giovan Battista Crosato framed by stucco works and appliques. Born in 1685 in Venice, Crosato affirmed himself as a painter and a decorator when he was at the service of the Savoia Royal family in Turin, where he frescoed the Stupinigi Palace. Then, in 1734, Crosato came back to Veneto, where he distinguished himself for some villas decorations, such as those of Ca’ Rezzonico, in Venice. Ca’ Marcello’s frescoes are his last work, which show the whole technical knowledge and the creative content of the artist. The walls show scenes from Alessandro The Great’s life, from his wedding with Rossane to Dario The Great’s murder. The walls are dominated by a balcony, limited by a lacquered wood balustrade that frames the ceiling, entirely painted by Crosato



and representing the Olympus and its marvellous gods.

Each corner of the dancing hall leads to the main bedrooms. Each room, apart from the refined furniture, has some wide admirable stucco paintings. Some of them were designed by Giuseppe Zais and represent mythical subjects and exotic animals populating fairytale landscapes. These rural life scenes, with a naïf and surrealistic look, had the function to accompany the villa’s guests in the enchanting world of dreams.



## THE MARCELLO FAMILY, TODAY

The Marcello family has an ancient story. It participated to the birth of Venice and was one of the most powerful soldierly families of the city until the 18th century, when the great Serenissima Repubblica collapsed leaving to Venice its decadent and romantic atmosphere.

Today, a part of the family still lives in Venice, while some members live in the mainland areas of Padua and Treviso. Count Vettor Marcello and his family live at Ca' Marcello, which was inherited through generations and became first of all their private home, and then also the centre of their interests, life and businesses.



When Count Vettor and his wife Carlotta decided to move from Treviso and to settle down here in the country side, their children Jacopo and Niccolò were aged 6 and 2.

Since the beginning, the Marcellos understood the great efforts that would have been necessary to preserve and maintain this villa as a private, alive and shiny home, but they always felt the deep responsibility of it and at the same time felt the unique privilege to live in such a wonderful and welcoming ambient. As part of a glorious family, the Marcellos recognize their noble origins by keeping alive tradition while facing to nowadays world and life-style.

In the latest ten years many things changed for the four components of the family: Count Vettor decided to give up with agriculture, because of the increasing costs of management versus flat profits, and started thinking of a new way to link his activity to the valorisation of the villa. The Marcellos began opening the house to groups of private visitors - mostly members of cultural associations located all over the world- who were interested in having a real experience of being guests of a private historical home and its family's daily life. This was a successful idea, and briefly were followed by another one: opening the house to organize cultural events, such as expositions or small congresses, and finally private and refined receipts. This was a perfect match between letting other people admire a part of the magnificent beauties that the villa preserves – the beautiful stucco-works, frescoes and furniture especially made in the 18th century for this house - and earning enough to continue maintaining it properly. Countess Carlotta put her experience in interior decoration – which is now her main activity - to restore numerous sides of the house and pieces of furniture. With strength and passion she gives continuous impulse to the family's purpose: to exalt the cultural and educational potential of reconciling history and tradition with present times.

Also the elder son Jacopo is now helping his father. He passed his 20s studying and working both in Italy and abroad, then he decided to come back to his home and put all his efforts in keeping its splendour alive and making it visible to the guests. He says: “ My choice came out of both my heart and mind. Even if I had the possibility to grow professionally out of my family, I preferred to dedicate my activity to help my father, because here I feel my life has a complete meaning and my efforts aim at preserving something which is not only a property and is not just ours, but firstly belongs to the artistic, cultural and almost ideal heritage of our society. My real privilege is not living in this wonderful home, but living and working for its conservation through the years”.

Jacopo is now developing new services and activities connected to the villa, such as hosting small groups of guests in a and arranging cultural, artistic and gastronomic itineraries for them in the Veneto region.



# GARDENS MAP



## LEGEND

### CENTURY-OLD TREES

- |    |  |    |  |
|----|--|----|--|
| 1  | LIGUSTRO – ( <i>Ligustrum japonicum</i> – Oleaceae)                          | 17 | FAGGIO COMUNE – ( <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> – Fagaceae)                     |
| 2  | PIOPPO CIPRESSINO – ( <i>Populus nigra italica</i> – Salicaceae)             | 18 | IPPOCASTANO COMUNE – ( <i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i> – Hippocastanaceae) |
| 3  | TASSO – ( <i>Taxus baccata</i> – Taxaceae)                                   | 19 | PIOPPO BIANCO – ( <i>Populus alba</i> – Salicaceae)                      |
| 4  | TIGLIO – ( <i>Tilia x europaea</i> – Tiliaceae)                              | 20 | CIPRESSO – ( <i>Cupressus sempervirens</i> – Cupressaceae)               |
| 5  | PINO NERO – ( <i>Pinus nigra</i> – Pinaceae)                                 | 21 | OLMO – ( <i>Ulmus carpinifolia</i> – Ulmaceae)                           |
| 6  | MAGNOLIA BIANCA – ( <i>Magnolia soulangeana alba superba</i> – Magnoliaceae) | 22 | CEDRO DEODARA – ( <i>Cedrus deodora</i> – Pinaceae)                      |
| 7  | LAUROCERASO – ( <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> – Rosaceae)                       | 23 | FAGGIO PENDULO – ( <i>Fagus sylvatica pendula</i> – Fagaceae)            |
| 8  | CEDRO DEL GIAPPONE – ( <i>Cryptomeria japonica</i> – Taxodiaceae)            | 24 | MAGNOLIA – ( <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> – Magnoliaceae)                 |
| 9  | BOSSO – ( <i>Buxus sempervirens</i> – Buxaceae)                              | 25 | ACERO CAMPESTRE – ( <i>Acer campestre</i> – Aceraceae)                   |
| 10 | AILANTO – ( <i>Ailanthus altissima</i> – Simaroubaceae)                      | 26 | IBISCO – ( <i>Hibiscus syriacus</i> – Malvaceae)                         |
| 11 | CIPRESSO ARIZONICO – ( <i>Cupressus arizonica</i> – Cupressaceae)            | 27 | PIOPPO NERO – ( <i>Populus nigra</i> – Salicaceae)                       |
| 12 | CARPINO – ( <i>Carpinus Betulus</i> – Betulaceae)                            | 28 | LIQUIDAMBAR – ( <i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> – Hamamelidaceae)         |
| 13 | ROBINIA – ( <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> – Leguminosae)                       | 29 | FAGGIO ROSSO – ( <i>Fagus sylvatica purpurea</i> – Fagaceae)             |
| 14 | FARNIA – ( <i>Quercus robur</i> – Fagaceae)                                  | 30 | PLATANO – ( <i>Platanus acerifolia</i> – Platanaceae)                    |
| 15 | TUIA – ( <i>Thuja plicata</i> – Cupressaceae)                                | 31 | LIRIODENDRO – ( <i>Linodendron tulipifera</i> – Magnoliaceae)            |
| 16 | NOCCIOLO – ( <i>Corylus avellana</i> – Betulaceae)                           | 32 | CASTAGNO – ( <i>Castanea sativa</i> – Fagaceae)                          |

Most remarkable aged trees

## ADMISSION

Visits and services described below are available all year round, upon request for groups of minimum 20 people.

### 1. MAIN HOUSE AND GARDENS VISIT

**€ 10 per person**

*Average lenght: 75 mins.*

Count Jacopo Marcello welcomes and accompanies the guests through a private visit of the Italian style garden, the old century park and all rooms of the villa, revealing stories and anecdotes of its frescoes, plaster works and magnificent original furniture.

### 2. MAIN HOUSE AND GARDENS VISIT + REFRESHMENT

**€ 20 per person**

*Average lenght: 110 mins*

At the end of the visit as described at n°1 some refreshments are served, which include sweet and salty pastry, mineral water, juices, wines and coffee.

### 3. MAIN HOUSE AND GARDENS VISIT + LIGHT LUNCH

**€ 30 per person**

*Average lenght: 120 mins.*

At the end of the visit as described at n°1 a light lunch buffet is served, which include typical Venetian specialities as: sliced ham and salame, varieties of cheese, tortellini ham and cream, bread and bread sticks, sweet and salty pastry, mineral water, wines and coffee.

### 4. MAIN HOUSE AND GARDENS VISIT + PRIVATE DINING

**€ 50-60 per person**

*Average lenght: 180 mins.*

At the end of the visit as described at n° 1 a private reception is hosted by the owner in the park or inside the villa. Menu samples are available upon request and all include 4 courses, matching wines, mineral water and coffee. Gala dinners are also available upon request.

## INFORMATION AND BOOKING

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