

LA BELLA VITA: CRUISING THE VENICE LAGOON & PO DELTA



Duration: 7-days / 6-nights

Cruising: Mantua to Venice or return

Departs: Every Sunday from 3rd April to October 23rd 2011

Highlights: Tour of historical Venice, including hidden gardens, the Naval Museum and the Pavilion of Gondolas, cruise on the Canal of the Orphans past picturesque lagoon islands, tour of Chioggia with its Roman, Etruscan and Byzantine history. Wonder at works of art by Carpaccio, Tintoretto, Tiepolo and Bassano, visit Chioggia's colourful fish market with your chef, tour of ancient Adria, including the archaeological museum, 6th century basilica, opera house and cathedral, private visit to the wine cellars of Villa Widmann-Borletti, renowned for its Friularo vintages since the 17th century, visit to the Ducal Place in Mantua, with its 15 gardens, 500 rooms and its 12,000 paintings and sculptures

Cost:

Stateroom:	AU\$3665 per person twin share
Suite:	AU\$4,395 per person twin share
Single cabin supplement from:	AU\$1,475 per person

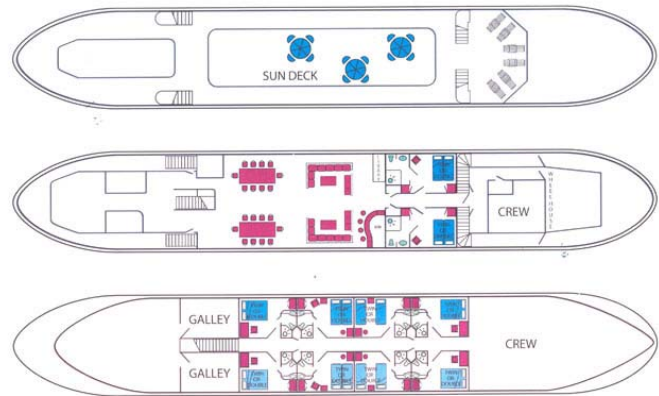
Includes: Stateroom or Suite accommodation with ensuite bathroom - all meals with wine, transfers from the pick up point to the barge and return, excursions, full open bar, tour guide and professional crew

Rest and relax whilst our comfortable hotel barge meanders its way through the tranquil waterways of the Venice Lagoon and the Po River delta. La Bella Vita is a stylish 20-passenger vessel that was newly refitted in 2010 to the highest standards. There are two upper-deck suites and eight cabin staterooms, each with ensuite facilities. The dining room, bar and saloon areas are bright and spacious and the entire barge is air-conditioned. Louvred doors open to the side decks to give a perfect viewing platform, whilst above is a huge sun deck with comfortable sun loungers. For those who wish to explore the area further there are bikes available on board and an expert tour guide to recommend the best routes to take.

Delicious regional cuisine, fine Italian wines and the services of an attentive crew of seven will make this an unforgettable cruise. Between 2 to 6 hours a day are dedicated to cruising. Guided excursions are organized each day by air-conditioned coach. These excursions have been designed exclusively for our passengers, often to places where perhaps other tourists rarely are allowed. We visit some of the more famous monuments and places of interest across the region usually avoiding the busy periods. On the last day, we transfer you from the boat to a defined transfer point (usually by bus) for your onward travel connections.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

Full group Charters also available on selected dates at discounted rates – ask for details



Suggested itinerary (subject to change – cruises may be offered in reverse on alternate weeks):

Sunday: MANTUA

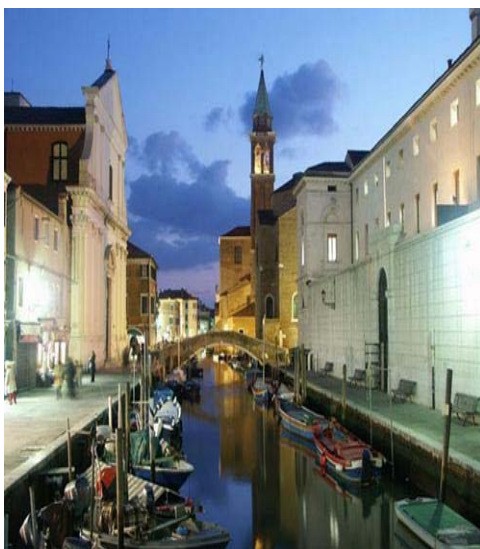
Guests are met at Villa Laguna Hotel in Venice on Sunday afternoon at 5pm and transferred to La Bella Vita. A Prosecco welcome gives you a chance to meet the crew. Dinner aboard followed perhaps by an evening stroll around the captivating lakeside setting of Mantua.

Monday: MANTUA TO TREVENUOLO

This morning we enjoy a visit of Mantua. This imposing city was home to the poet Virgil, artists Mantegna and Donatello and is the capital of Lombardy. Mantua has early Etruscan origins but today demonstrates extraordinary neo-classical and baroque architecture, perhaps best portrayed in the 14th century Ducal Palace housing some 15 gardens and courtyards, a museum, basilica, theatre and some 500 rooms. Here we find precious wooden ceilings, intricate frescoes, the Gallery of Mirrors and exquisite Rivers Room, some 12,000 paintings. This afternoon we cruise to Trevenzuolo. Dinner aboard

Tuesday: CANDA / TREVENUOLO TO BUSSARI

This morning we enjoy a guided tour of Ferrara's 14th century Estense Castle and Renaissance surroundings. This ancient ducal fortress with moat, drawbridges, unusual battlements and towers, houses marble balconies and sumptuous apartments. We see the Cathedral façade with its sculpted images, described as an Illustrated Bible. Ferrara has a lively commercial centre in what was originally the medieval Jewish Ghetto and over the centuries has absorbed a rich cultural life, with renowned artists, writers, musicians, scientists and intellectuals all leaving their mark We enjoy delicious local dishes during lunch ashore, with further time to wander Ferrara's Renaissance-inspired setting and perhaps visit the university which was founded in 1391 by the Marquis of Este, before rejoining La Bella Vita and our evening dinner cruise to Bussari to the accompaniment of live piano music. Dinner aboard.



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Wednesday: BUSSARI TO ADRIA

This morning we visit the superb Manor House gardens and wine cellars of 17th century Villa Widmann-Borletti. For over 1000 years wine, balsamic vinegar, organic Carnaroli rice, grape seed oil and truffles have been farmed in the Dominio di Bagnoli estate, which has also been famed for its exclusive D.O.C. Friularo vintages since the 17th century. Concerts, opera and art exhibitions are regular features in this magnificent property. Return to La Bella Vita and cruise to Adria where we have a short walk to Adria's Archaeological Museum. The Greeks, Etruscans, Gauls and Romans left a precious historical insight, with earlier artefacts dating back to the Iron Age. We stroll through ancient Adria and see the 6th century Basilica Santa Maria Assunta, the Opera House and Cathedral of Saints Pietro and Paolo. Dinner aboard

Thursday: ADRIA / CHIOGGIA / PELLESTRINA

Morning stroll or cycle along the 18th century Istrian sea wall looking out over the mighty Adriatic or back to the Venetian lagoon. We cruise past wild beach dunes and pinewoods and may spot Kingfishers, Cuckoos, Little Terns and Kentish Plovers. Entering Chioggia, city of Goldoni's plays with ancient origins dating back over 2000 years to Roman, Etruscan and Byzantine links, we visit the Piazzata Vigo, Vigo bridge and 12th century Vigo column. At the Chiesa di San Domenico, set on its own island, we see Carpaccio's St Paul, his last recorded painting together with works of art by Tintoretto and Bassano. Chioggia's cathedral beckons with works by Tiepolo, Giovane, Piazzetta and Diziani. A visit to the colourful fresh fish market with your own Chef choosing tonight's seafood delights completes the picture. After lunch we cruise Bianca Canal, which follows the Po River, and cruise the Po Delta towards Pellestrina where we moor for the night. Dinner aboard.

Friday: PELLESTRINA / SAN PIETRO IN VOLTA TO VENICE

This morning we cruise to Venice to St. Mark's Basin passing several lagoon islands: San Sevolo, once a hospital for the Crusaders, San Lazzaro degli Armeni, an early 18th century Armenian monastery, San Clemente, a luxury hotel and poetical Poveglia. These islands sport brightly coloured houses, painted fishing boats and tiny churches. Guided tour to the centre of Venice, experiencing the unique atmosphere of this magical city and perhaps discovering some hidden parts of it: the gardens of the Biennale Exhibition of Modern Arts, the Church of San Pietro in Castello planned by Palladio, the impressive surrounding walls of the Arsenal with its magnificent Renaissance main gate and the Naval Museum hosting a model of the Bucintoro (Doge's Boat) and the Pavilion of Gondolas housing Peggy Guggenheim's own vessel.

Captain's Farewell Dinner on board and perhaps an evening stroll to the magnificent St Marks Square.

Saturday: VENICE

After breakfast, passengers disembark for transfers to the Villa Laguna hotel in Venice by 11am.



Outdoor Travel offers a wide variety of cruising holidays - including hotel barges on canals & rivers; narrowboats, self-skipped motor cruisers and Bike & Barge cruises in most regions of France and in many other destinations in Europe including, England, Scotland and Ireland.

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