

Harper's

# BAMBI

A photograph of Cameron Diaz, smiling and wearing a red dress, serves as the background for the magazine cover. She has long, wavy blonde hair and is wearing gold hoop earrings and a ring on her left hand.

CAMERON DIAZ

**478**  
**NEW**  
**IDEAS**

**CHIC**  
**AT EVERY**  
**PRICE**

**BEST**  
**BAGS &**  
**SHOES**

**BEAUTY**  
**SECRETS**  
**+ QUICK TIPS**

**FIRST**  
**LOOK**  
**AT FALL**

**FASHION**

**STYLISH**  
**STEALS**

**BEST OF**  
**WHAT'S NEW**

The moon rises over the canals, and Palazzina Grassi, in Venice.

# On the WATERFRONT

History, art and romance. That's the Venice we know. But boutique hotels, placid neighbourhoods and Hollywood stars? They're all there too, says *MARION HUME*



IVAN TERESCHENKO, BAR, ALDO E CRISTIANA MARTINELLI

Modern glamour: a room, with playful interiors by Philippe Starck, at Palazzina Grassi.



Boutique gem: Ca Maria Adele, Venice.

s I write this here in Venice, Johnny Depp is asleep. Sure, there are several solid walls between us, and his suite has a sweeping view of the Grand Canal while mine overlooks terracotta rooftops, but we

are both staying at Palazzina Grassi, which has to be one of the most delightful hotels in town.

Now, Palazzina Grassi, with its playful interiors by Philippe Starck, is not to be confused with Palazzo Grassi. That's the gigantic palace next door, owned by François Pinault (owner of Gucci Group), which is open to the public and full of the sort of contemporary art that makes me laugh. (Surely I'm meant to? Given Rob Pruitt's *101 Art Ideas You Can Do Yourself* includes sticking googly eyes on the marble statues?) In contrast, our place — by which I mean Johnny's and mine — is much more intimate, although alas, I've had to arrive by the back door rather than be flashy and disembark from the hotel's gorgeous private boat at the swanky water entrance on the Grand Canal, because Johnny and his pals have got that roped off right now.

He's starring in *The Tourist*, which will be released next year and which also stars Angelina Jolie (whose brood are staying in their own private 16th-century palazzo). The presence of such Hollywood hotties (Brad Pitt is here too, hanging out and taking the kids for gelato) means that actor Paul Bettany can walk about unobserved and as for



The whimsical bar at Palazzina Grassi.

Vincent Cassel, a superstar in his native France, and also in Venice to make a movie, he can be normal for the first time in years. For everyone has Johnny fever — even those wealthy, aristocratic Venetians with palazzos of their own keep leaning over their balconies to catch a glimpse of Mr Depp.

I've been hotel-hopping (you really must try it, it's like getting several holidays in the same city). Checking into a bijou gem called Ca Maria Adele the other day, I had a peek in the Doge's room, which has a vast Murano chandelier right over the bed, but chose the Moorish room, for its pretty Juliet balcony overlooking the imposing Salute church. And what did I see when I poked my head out to admire the view? Lights, camera, action and another scene from *The Tourist*. Johnny's certainly getting to visit all the best places.

I had wanted to tell you about the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, an extraordinary modern art gallery housed in a palazzo and this year celebrating its 30th birthday. But although I've sailed past it on the *vaporetto* (ferry) many times this week (and admired the Marino Marini sculpture of a child astride a horse, the latter with an equine phallus so enormous it used to be unscrewed every Sunday for fear of offending nuns on their watery way to church), the day I wanted to actually visit, guess what was happening? Yup, taken over by the film crew.

Damn it, last night, I just missed Brad and Angelina when they popped in, unannounced, for bellinis at Harry's Bar. But the great thing about Harry's, founded in an old cordage warehouse by the water in 1931 and regularly flooded since then (the barman often teams his white double-breasted jacket and black trousers with gumboots and keeps on fixing the drinks), is everyone who walks in is a star. Owners always like to make boasts like that, but here, it's true.

The first drink has to be a bellini, given that the heavenly pink mix of crushed white peaches and prosecco was invented here. You might follow that with a plate of carpaccio; the dish of thinly sliced beef with a mayonnaise sauce laced with mustard was invented here too, taking its name from the Venetian painter Vittore Carpaccio, who, sadly for him, is much less known now than the beef tenderloin named for his red and white colour palette. Unless you are an art buff, Giovanni Bellini's paintings are also far less famous than his utterly delicious namesake drink. *Salute!*

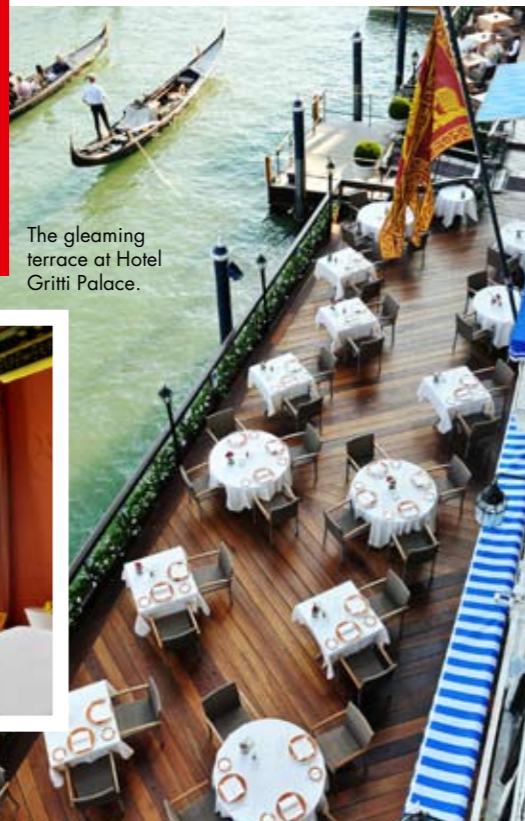
The only way to arrive at Hotel Cipriani for lunch is by boat — literally.



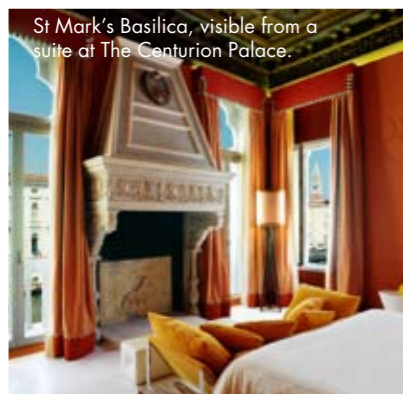
Angelina and Johnny hit the water.

## INSIDER TIP

Visit Burano — not for the lace (much of which now comes from China) but for a leisurely lunch at Venissa, just opened on the Isola di Mazzorbo (access via a wooden bridge). It's set in what were once the island's communal allotments, so all the food is fresh, and chef Paola Budel, who has worked in top restaurants all over the world, is terrific. Go for local dishes such as cuttlefish caught in the lagoon. Stay all afternoon. [www.venissa.it](http://www.venissa.it)



The gleaming terrace at Hotel Gritti Palace.



St Mark's Basilica, visible from a suite at The Centurion Palace.

If you want to know about art in Venice, buy a guide book, or better, hire Bellini Travel, who will not only arrange private tours with Renaissance experts but also secure intimate night-time access to St Mark's Basilica. Apparently those golden mosaics look even lovelier when you haven't had to queue. But if you want to know about fashion in Venice, follow me, because otherwise you might miss the Palazzo Pesaro degli Orfei, black with the soot of centuries. That few come here is evidenced by the pigeons that seem mighty surprised to be disturbed.

Fashion master Mariano Fortuny created the Knossos scarf and Delphos dress here, both still startlingly contemporary. Fashion can be desperately dry without a living body inside it, but enter the first-floor salon here and it feels as if the creator has just wandered out for lunch. Please don't miss this, even though people will tell you that you are a barbarian not to spend your time looking at another church or another altar piece instead.

My favourite altar in Venice? It would have to be the marble one taken from a derelict church and now in Bar Longhi at the Hotel Gritti Palace. Order a Cedrata

cocktail (refreshing and it packs a punch) to give you the strength to defend yourself against those aghast that you don't intend to spend the day jostling to look at Tintoretto and Titians, then stroll out to the terrace to enjoy sea bass with lagoon shrimp under the blue-and-white-striped awnings as the gondolas glide by. Or better still, don't. Come to the Gritti for breakfast instead and linger over the vast Continental buffet while you make the most of the best ringside seats in Venice. (Was that Angelina who just whizzed by in the sleek motorboat?)

To balance the budget, the good news is there's a great little eatery called Naranzaria, just a stone's throw from the Rialto Bridge, where you can sit by the banks of the Grand Canal and enjoy crisp salads and sushi thanks to the Japanese chef. Alternatively, the Castello neighbourhood is good for affordable eats. Nowhere is really "off the beaten track" in a city which welcomes 20 million tourists a year, however here you can turn a corner and feel entirely alone. Or not. See those klieg lights? The movie guys again. Where's Johnny? Annoyingly, he just sauntered by.

GETTY IMAGES

"Johnny Depp loves the 50/50," the sommelier at Cip's Club tells my photographer/husband (while barmen are the souls of discretion in front of journalists, there are ways and means). The 50/50 is a heavenly wine that you should splash out on if it's a special occasion (making a movie would count).

Cip's, the glamorous restaurant of the Hotel Cipriani, is also an investment, but a wonderful one. You travel by the hotel's private launch. Your table has a peerless view across the water to St Mark's Square. You nibble on mozzarella with baby artichokes flavoured with thyme and celery; next, you might share a *primi piatti* of *linguine allo scoglio*, with clams and mussels ("the best I have ever tasted" says husband, who has been ordering this dish all over Italy for years).

People from Milan travel to Cip's for the *cotoletta di vitello alla Milanese* because, they say, the paper-thin, breaded veal cutlet is better than any found in the city where the dish was invented. Then an espresso, perhaps a grappa and the boat back or, if you are lucky enough to spend the night at the Hotel Cipriani, you'll discover it has the best crisp Czech linen sheets of anywhere. If you don't believe me, ask George Clooney, a regular, if he happens to be sitting in the bar.

In the 19th century, Grand Tourists would stay in Venice for a month; in the jet-set 1950s, the fancy people came for a fortnight. Now, the average stay is just a day and a half. Of course, Venice is a very long way from Australia and the temptation is to tick the box and move on. But how much more chic to copy Johnny (and George and Brad and Angelina) and stay for as long as you can afford to keep showing up at Harry's Bar?

Venice Biennale Architecture festival runs from August 29–November 21; Music from September 23–October 2. For more on Venice visit [www.turismovenetia.it](http://www.turismovenetia.it).

## WHERE TO STAY?

If you are including a five-star hotel in your Venice mix, make it either the first or last night to take advantage of private boat transfers from the airport. Centurion Palace fuses modern interiors with a terrific location. For the intimacy of a boutique gem run by Venetians, don't miss a few nights at Ca Maria Adele. For modern glamour and the new Krug Lounge try Palazzina Grassi. Dine at the Gritti Palace and Hotel Cipriani or, if money is no object, check in. Venetians themselves rate Oltre il Giardino, a delightful six-room B&B.

**CENTURION PALACE**, Dorsoduro 173, 30123 Venice, +39 0 41 34 281; [www.sinahotels.com](http://www.sinahotels.com).

**CA MARIA ADELE**, Dorsoduro 111, 30123 Venice, +39 0 41 520 30 78; [www.camariaadele.it](http://www.camariaadele.it).

**PALAZZINA GRASSI**, San Marco 3247, 30124 Venice, +39 0 41 52 84 644; [www.palazzinagrassi.com](http://www.palazzinagrassi.com).

**HOTEL GRITTI PALACE**, Campo Santa Maria del Giglio, 30124 Venice, +39 0 41 794 611; [www.starwoodhotels.com](http://www.starwoodhotels.com).

**HOTEL CIPRIANI**, Giudecca 10, 30133 Venice, +39 0 41 520 77 44; [www.hotelcipriani.com](http://www.hotelcipriani.com).

**OLTRE IL GIARDINO**, Fondamenta Contarini, San Polo 2542, 30125 Venice, +39 0 41 27 50 015; [www.oltreilgiardino-venezia.com](http://www.oltreilgiardino-venezia.com).

## RESTAURANTS/BARS

**HARRY'S BAR**, San Marco 1323, +39 0 41 52 85 777; [www.harrysbarvenezia.com](http://www.harrysbarvenezia.com).

**NARANZARIA**, San Polo 130, 30125 Venice, +39 0 41 72 41 035; [www.naranzaria.it](http://www.naranzaria.it).

## PEARLY KING

Autore head designer, Alessio Boschi, could talk for hours about the extraordinary jewels he creates. Standing in the new Autore store on Sydney's King Street, we're visually transported to Venice, the inspiration behind his new collection, Venezia. He describes in vivid detail each inspiration, from the city's ornate glasswork to the grand Baroque chapels. "The waters of the Venetian canals accent a city that has inspired romance for hundreds of years," he says in his syrupy Italian accent. "The reflections from the water, the sky and marble buildings, all unique to Venice, are integrated into the delicate and refined jewellery pieces." It's not surprising to hear Boschi was awarded Italian jewellery designer of the year at the UK Jewellery Awards 2009. The new jewels are nothing short of spellbinding — much like the city which inspired them.

— Georgie McCourt



Autore earrings, \$18,750, (02) 9223 9906.

Autore The Doge Palace Reflection ring, \$16,100, (02) 9223 9906.

Autore Café Florian bracelet, \$29,800, (02) 9223 9906.