

C a r d i n a l S i n s

SWIM AGAINST THE TIDE AND FIND A DIFFERENT WAY TO SEE AN OLD CLASSIC.

I have always been fascinated by water - intimidated by the murky still variety yet invigorated by brutal jade breakers. I cannot lay blame at a lunar door although I suspect Nordic fishermen in rustic roll-necks are a more likely culprit.

Naturally the remedy was to take to the Venetian lagoons. Like many before me I had trekked across Venice with the clichés still ringing in my ears, and had never seen this gem of a city from the water - the gondola rides accompanied by the well worn compliments, were of course exempt from this.

So having flown to Marco Polo airport taken a taxi to the mooring stop in Chioggia, it was my very own fully spec'd boat that would be home. Well home to me and two others, as this was the 6-berth Cardinal Europa 600. So this wasn't a super yacht like the Roman Abramovich monster that I would see moored in Venice some days later, but a worthy vessel nevertheless. As long as you had the inkling to captain the boat under the initial tutelage of handy base staff.

Granted we were never going to cut up the waters like the swathes of archetypal speedboats carrying their bronzed human cargo. But we would discover the use of free mooring spots around the prime Venetian waterways, courtesy of our hosts the European Boating Holidays - as well as a spot of indulgent people watching at St Giorgio Island just across the water from the Venetian mainland!

Self skippered cruising is apparently very de rigueur these days, understated both metaphorically



and literally with smooth bio diesel-run eco friendly engines, these boats hit the 'green' mark. With a designated driver on board it was a case of casting off and negotiating the navigators bricola and off it was to explore the surrounding islands that make up the Veneto region. From the glass makers of Murano to Vignole, this was certainly a more placid perspective, which still left room for the hustle and bustle of tourist encrusted St Mark's Square or the fabulously eerie views of the stricken Ca' Dario house on late night Vaporetto rides.

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