

Institute of Classical Architecture and Classical America

THE VENETO: THE VILLAS AND PALAZZOS OF ANDREA PALLADIO

April 23 – 28, 2015

Tour Arranged by Classical Excursions

“Andrea Palladio,” writes Prof. Bruce Boucher in his book *Andrea Palladio: The Architect in His Time* “is arguably the most influential architect the western world has ever produced.” The institute is pleased to offer a tour of 26 of the great architect’s villas and palazzos that will transport the participants directly to the work of this genius.

Andrea Palladio lived during the 16th century at the height of the Italian Renaissance and ever since his creations have been a source of inspiration for classical architecture especially in Europe and North America.

The German writer and traveler, Goethe, after viewing Palladio’s buildings, wrote to a friend in 1795: “The more one studies Palladio, the more incomprehensible the genius, the mastery, the richness, the versatility and the grace of this man become.”

Vicenza was Palladio’s adopted city where he became a stonemason and stone carver, considered unusual background for that time, when other architects were trained as painters or sculptors. In the late 1530’s, Palladio came under the patronage and mentorship of Giangiorgio Trissino (1478-1550), a wealthy Vicentine intellectual and talented amateur architect who recognized the younger man’s talents. At his villa at Cricola near Vicenza, Trissino established a humanist academy where young aristocrats received a classical education. Palladio, the son of a miller, became a member of the group and there studied classical architecture. Part of his education then and later included trips to Rome where he studied contemporary buildings and ancient classical ruins, both of which had a great impact on his own designs. Palladio was to become as an architectural scholar “the most learned and exact of his time,” states English architectural historian John Summerson.

Although commissioned to take on such special projects as the loggia of the Basilica, the Teatro Olimpico, the Palazzo Chiericati, all in Vicenza, as well as his great Venetian churches, the majority of Palladio’s work was city palazzos and, more famously, country houses built throughout the Veneto. According the architectural historian Howard Burns, “No architect up to that time...had had as many commissions for villas and palaces.” Whereas other Renaissance architects created and “changed the rules” as they progressed from project to project, Palladio was able to create a unique system of standardized forms and dimensions that could be modified as needed.

Throughout his forty-year career as an architect, he created drawings and used these, as well as drawings by other architects, as resources for his work. From this material he produced *I Quattro Libri dell’ Architettura* (1570), which was to be reprinted and

translated over the centuries, influencing builders and architects alike. The four books focus on construction techniques and principles, palazzos, villas, public buildings and urban works, and restorations of Roman temples.

The tour commences in Vicenza, where we will visit Palladio's magnificent palazzos, with the incomparable La Rotonda, Palazzo Chiericati, Palazzo Porto-Breganze and Palazzo Thiene among them. Not to be missed are his ingenious Basilica, the origin of the Palladian window and his amazing Teatro Olimpico, a Renaissance theatre based upon the ancient Roman theatre and still in use today.

This is only the beginning. From centrally located Vicenza we will travel into the Veneto countryside with stops at some dozen villas such as Villa Godi, Villa Saraceno, Villa Emo, Villa Badoer, Villa Barbaro and its elegant Tempietto, Villa Cornaro to name a few. These will be viewed under special auspices.

Our guide will be Laura Leonardi, who is a trained expert for the Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio on the architecture, art and cultural history as they pertain to Palladio. She has attended the Università di Trieste, the University of Essex (UK) and the Università La Sapienza di Roma.

We will be entertained at private functions, and throughout the tour will be provided with four-star accommodations in Vicenza.