

CLASS ROOMS

Venice's Ca Maria Adele is a world apart in every respect so expect the finest service, rooms, and atmosphere the city has to offer.

W edged onto a boat like masked sardines. And this was quiet for Venice. The vaporetto finally stopped at Salute on the Grand Canal.

If it was in any other city, Ca Maria Adele's facade of exposed brickwork, ornate balconies, and arched windows would get more attention, but in the La Serenissima you'd be forgiven for passing by the boutique hotel without giving it a second glance. However, this relatively unassuming appearance veils a world of opulence.

Silver service

Marco, the immaculately presented concierge – waistcoat, pressed trousers, shoes polished into mirrors – was standing patiently on the wooden decking outside the hotel's entrance across the water, just a stone's throw from the Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute. He politely called our names without a trace of doubt in his voice; perhaps our searching eyes gave us away. Whatever it was, it soon became clear that each and every one of Ca Maria Adele's staff is forever one step ahead of the game, from the maids to owners Alessio and Nicola Campa; everything was taken care of before we had time to consider it needed taking care of.

Immediately after entering the hotel our bags were dispatched to our room (three

“ Everything was taken care of before we had time to consider it needed taking care of ”

rooms, in fact, with a private terrace) and we were led into a beautifully decorated area lined with marble and sofas wrapped in red velvet. A waiter emerged moments later carrying two G and Ts on a silver tray. Only minutes before we had been socially distanced tourists, now we were sipping cocktails in a vision of luxury.

Alessio, a tall, elegant Venetian opened the hotel with his equally stylish (and lofty) brother Nicola in 2004. It was no surprise to learn that they hail from an ancient family boasting artisan glass makers and interior designers among its ranks; the attention to detail in Ca Maria Adele is exquisite. Both welcomed us after the drink and asked if we needed any assistance. A water taxi later on? Restaurant recommendation? How about a gondola? The outside world already seemed like a distant memory but we'd have to return

to it eventually and reality demands sustenance, so the duo kindly made sure a table was booked that evening at Quadri in Piazza San Marco.

Now, what to say about Suite 339 on the top floor of the hotel? A huge outdoor terrace, king-sized bed, en suite bathroom, and an office/TV room, all decorated in gold patterned wallpaper, soft carpet, and polished tiles. The soft scent of sandalwood infused the space. Three nights holed up in the apartment would have been a holiday in itself. In the evening we managed to tear ourselves away and summoned up enough courage to confront actuality on the cold hard Venetian streets.

The next morning (Quadri was excellent by the way) breakfast was brought up to our apartment on several silver platters by a trio of attentive staff. Eggs, bacon, pancakes, fruit, coffee, all completely delicious. Venice's flood sirens sounded off. Would we be stranded here all day? I mused, sinking further into the enormous bed.

Monumental day

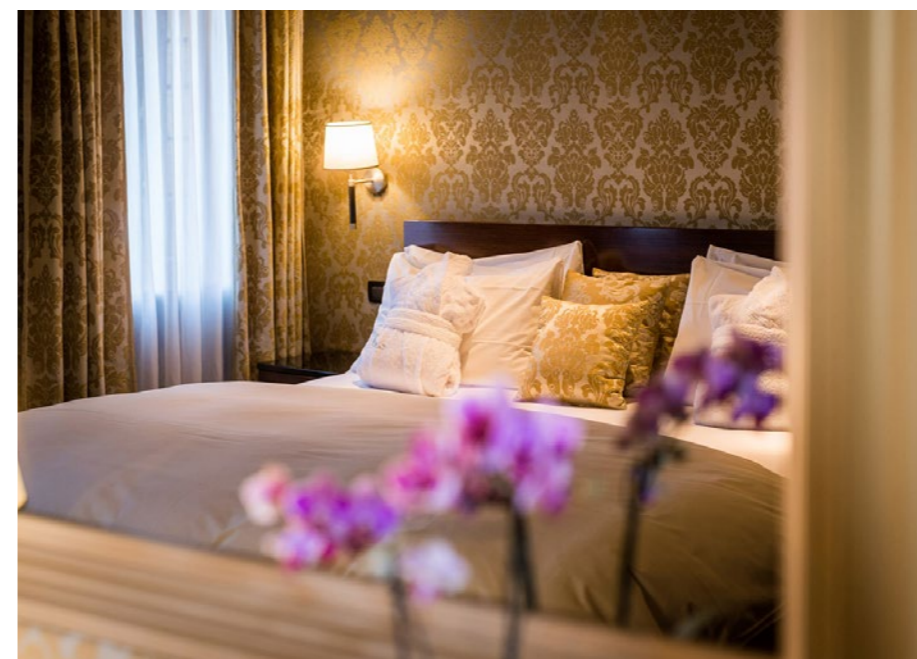
Downstairs we bumped into a beaming Alessio. There was cause for celebration. The city's flood defences had managed to hold back acqua alta (high tide) for the first time in Venice's 1,599-year history. Usually Piazza San Marco would have been submerged in knee-deep lagoon water at this point but it was bone dry (half a metre of Ca Maria Adele was once immersed). If ever there was an excuse to hit the bar early, such an historic day was it.

Unrivalled room service comes in handy if you return to your hotel in the wee hours, liver lightly pickled in Aperol spritz, flying high after roaming aimlessly around the arid streets of Venice. Med, another well-dressed concierge, asked the kitchen to rustle up some fine food, not to mention a couple of Camparis so we could toast the city's MOSE flood barrier one final time before hitting the hay.

I should say that every time we returned to our rooms they were spotless. Fresh bed linen, clothes folded (washed and ironed upon request), bathroom sparkling clean, and the staff were never seen or heard. The atmosphere throughout the hotel was always serene. Alessio said each of the 12 rooms has its own theme (The Room of The Moors, The Noir Room, The Doge's Room...) and is “ded-



Suite 339's private terrace



icated to those who celebrate love.” I'm still wondering just how palatial the Mini Palace Apartment is, given it would be a fitting name for our humbly christened Suite 339. The hotel has won numerous awards for its design and service, no surprise there.

Return to reality

How tragic to leave such a place. Sadly Alessio and Nicola were nowhere to be seen – there was something brilliantly mysterious about them – when we left, hearts heavy yet fulfilled, but not before Marco gave us both a parting gift: a pair of miniature Venetian paintings on wood by the owners' mother. What had we done to deserve this? I was half-expecting Ca Maria Adele to vanish as we walked towards Salute's vaporetto stop, where another horde of masked tourists waited to play sardines on a boat. 📍

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